



By Mike Wade,
President & CEO

FROM HERE TO THERE

At our December meeting, the board of directors approved our goals and budget for the 2017 calendar year. Approving them is the culmination of many hours of work by the staff and the board to define our plans for the upcoming year. As part of this annual process, we begin the discussion with what we accomplished in the previous year. I am always amazed at the progress we make to grow and develop our cooperative. The accomplishments we achieve serve to maintain reliability to our members, create a more efficient and responsible organization, protect our employees, and improve the communities in which we serve.

The foundation of our budget is our strategic plan. Our current strategic plan was developed in 2015 and is a joint effort between the board and staff to determine our strengths and weaknesses, to analyze the challenges we face, and to determine the best path to the future. Out of the strategic plan came the action items that advanced our strategic goals. In short, each year we take active measures to ensure we are moving the cooperative forward in a positive direction.

This year's budget contains over \$1.4 million in capital improvements and \$340,000 in capital expenditures. Upgrading and maintaining our electric system as well as

constructing new services to our members is the heart of what we do as an electric utility. We have over 1,431 miles of electric lines in place, and the poles and wires do not last forever. As in past years, we have earmarked a significant portion of our budget to ensuring these facilities are well maintained and offer our members the reliability they need.

To help us lower outages and maintain access to our electric facilities, we are expecting to spend \$425,000 on

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vegetation management, which will include tree and brush removal and herbicide spraying. Fortunately, the cooperative has made significant investments in this area in the past, so we are spending less

today because our easements are in good shape. However, due to the fast growth of our vegetation, we must maintain the rotation cycle of our vegetation management program.

These are just some of the projects we have underway for the new year. We remain dedicated to working on programs and services that offer the best value to the membership. Together, we can meet the challenges that lie before us, and I look forward to a bright year ahead.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE THROUGH OPERATION ROUND UP PROGRAM

Once again, scholarships will be available to college, vocational, and technical school bound students through the CWEC Operation Round Up program. Both traditional and nontraditional students are encouraged to apply.

To be eligible, either the student or parents must have their primary residence located on CWEC lines and participate in Operation Round Up. Applications are available from your high school guidance counselor, online at www.cwecoop.com (Services Section), or by contacting Brenda Mazemke at 715-677-2211 or by email at brenda.mazemke@cwecoop.com.

Since the CWEC scholarship program began in 2005, we have provided more than \$200,000 in scholarships to area students. Giving back to the community is one of the cooperative principles; furthering the education of our members is another.

The deadline for returning completed applications is Monday, April 3, 2017. Please mail your completed scholarship application to the address below, or drop it off in person at the CWEC office in Rosholt.

CWEC
Attn: Scholarship Program
P.O. Box 100
Rosholt, WI 54473

Scholarship winners must maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average and full-time student equivalent during their first quarter or semester of college or vocational-technical school. Payment will be made upon completion of the first quarter or semester of college, vocational, or technical school and

will be issued to the student. The recipient will need to provide the cooperative with a copy of his/her grades and proof of enrollment for second semester.





Ask Your Cooperative: CWEC Answers



This month's column is from Lila Shower, vice president of accounting and finance.

Meet Lila Shower

Job Description: My job description includes pretty much all of the financial aspects of the cooperative including preparing financial statements, budgeting, billing, accounting, accounts payable, capital credits, and working with our lenders. I also supervise our member service representatives.

Favorite part of my job: Meeting and talking with our members is one of my favorite parts of my job. The other favorite thing about my job is making sure we are charging our members the best rates possible for their energy needs. I am always looking for ways to cut costs when possible to keep our energy rates as low as possible.

Q My electric bill looks different—what's changed?

A Thanks for the great question. First off, let me say you're very observant. You're absolutely correct we have made some changes to the bill format. The changes were made based off suggestions we received from our members on how to make the bills easier to read.

I'll highlight the changes by the section of the bill their located in.

kWh Usage History Section

In the past, the month listed was the billing month not the month the electricity was used. It now matches the actual month the electricity was used.

Current Bill Information Section

Here we've retitled a few of the charges to better align with what they represent.

Power Rate and Transmission charges are what we pay our wholesale supplier of electricity and the transmission cost to get the power to our substations. Since they're both associated with us obtaining the power we supply our members, we thought why not consolidate them into one charge called Power Supply.

Facility Cost is now called Service Availability. This charge recovers some of our fixed costs associated with having the power available to you when you need it. It's important to note that there are expenses the co-op must pay, regardless of how much electricity each member uses.

We changed Public Benefit to Public Benefit Tax. We

added the word tax because the collection of this charge is state mandated. The funds collected are used for energy assistance and energy conservation. All CWEC members who are at or below 60 percent of the state's median income are eligible to apply for energy assistance. All CWEC members are eligible for a variety of energy conservation incentives. Please contact us for more information on both programs.

If you have a prior balance to the current billing listed in the Activity Since Last Bill section, it will also be listed in the Current Bill Information section.

We hope you find that these changes make your bill a bit easier to read. As long as we're on the topic of billing, did you know we offer an online billing system called SmartHub? With SmartHub you can receive and pay your bill online in a secure manner. SmartHub also allows you 24-hour access to view your electric usage history. This is a great tool to help you manage your energy consumption. The quick and easy SmartHub sign up can be found at www.cwecoop.com.

Do you have a question?

Please submit your question for Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative to cwecoop.com or call 1-800-377-2932 and ask for Brenda. Questions can relate to anything regarding your cooperative. When sending in a question, please include your name and hometown. Unless indicated, names submitted will be printed. Submitting a question gives us permission to print it.



MY CO-OP

MEMBER APPRECIATION PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Annual Member Appreciation Pancake Breakfast was held on Saturday, October 29, at the CWEC headquarters in Rosholt. Over 500 turned out to enjoy a delicious pancake and sausage breakfast on a beautiful and sunny morning. Plenty of activities for young and old were available. There were kids games, a bounce house, bucket rides, goodie bags for the kids, a petting zoo, fire extinguisher demonstrations, hotline demonstrations, a number of displays with energy-saving tips, and free blood pressure screening provided by Rural Health Initiative.

Member Appreciation Day is an opportunity for members to learn more about their co-op. CWEC had information on load management programs, and information on how you can save money this year and down the road.

In addition, CWEC kicked off its annual Toys for Tots drive and Stuff the Cart-Back to School Supplies drive. The response was overwhelming; over 100 toys and over 300 school supplies were donated, plus monetary donations were

made to both causes. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. This is a great opportunity to help those who are less fortunate. All toys are given to children locally, and school supplies are distributed to schools in our service area. Even though we did not promote our Food Drive for this event, our generous members donated over 90 items, which will be donated to an area food pantry.

A special thank you to Rural Health Initiative for providing blood pressure checks, the firemen from the Rosholt Fire District, and the families from the Pioneer 4-H Club and Rosholt FFA that brought animals for the petting zoo.

The prize winners were: Steve Grill, Jane Yenter, Lynn Kostka, Delbert Anderson, John Bonikowske, Robert Knitter, Roger Jolitz, Toni Kaminski, Rose Ann Mlodik, Charles Vierck, and Joyce Hoeksema.

This year we gave away a girl's and boy's 20-inch bike and helmet. The winners were Connor Gollmon and Rachel Ruthie.



CHRISTMAS COLORING CONTEST WINNERS!

Christmas is such a special time of year, especially for our children. They have so many opportunities to display their talents whether it is a Christmas program at school or church, or drawing a ornament to bring the Christmas spirit to the CWEC office. We had 17 submissions this year, making it very difficult for our judges. There is a lot of talent out there; keep up the great work kids. We want to thank all the kids who entered for their hard work; we look forward to seeing your great drawings each year. Here are our choices in each category:

6 & under

- \$25 Winner – Josh Trzebiatowski
- \$15 Winner – Elaine Michaelis
- \$10 Winner – Cole Erdmann

7 to 10 years old

- \$25 Winner – Hailey Rose Erdmann
- \$15 Winner – Jacob Trzebiatowski
- \$10 Winner – Gracie Casper

DATES TO REMEMBER IN FEBRUARY

Third Annual Iola Snow Bully Fat Bike Race Friday, February 3

6:30 p.m., under the lights at the Iola Winter Sports Club. For more information Contact Scott Cole at 715-340-3683.

56th Annual Iola Winter Carnival Saturday, February 4



- 8 a.m.–noon, Ice sculpting at the Iola-Scandinavia High School.
- 9:30 a.m.–2 p.m., Free Children's Ice Fishing Contest on Lake Iola (ages 16 and under).
- 1–6 p.m., Norwegian Lutefisk Supper and Indoor Craft Sale, includes lutefisk, lefse, Norwegian meatballs and all the trimmings, plus a craft show held at the Iola-Scandinavia High School.
- 1 p.m., Skijoring at the Iola Winter Sports Club. For more information contact Jerry Thompson at 715-824-2014.
- 6 p.m., Twilight Snowshoe Race at the Iola Winter Sports Club. For more information contact Jeff Crumbaugh at 715-701-0360.

Sunday, February 7

- Noon, Central Ski Jumping Championships at the Iola Winter Sports Club. For more information about the outside events go to www.iolawintersportsclub.org or call 715-445-3411.

First Annual Tree Lake Association Fisheree

Saturday, February 18

8 a.m.–4 p.m. Fishing prizes in all categories for adults/children. Food will be served, beverages, and hot chocolate. Many great raffle prizes. Come enjoy a winter event and participate in fishing and/or just come out to enjoy the day. Set up will be at the boat landing on the west side of Tree Lake. For more information contact Jan Kraetsch at 715-581-195 or email jankratesch@gmail.com. If you would like to donate a prize contact Jan.

To submit your community events email

brenda.mazemke@cwecoop.com or call Brenda at 715-677-2211.

Mike Wade, President & CEO

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715-677-2211 • 800-377-2932
www.cwecoop.com

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATE REMINDER

Did you know your cooperative offers rebates for energy efficiency upgrades? If not, we're pleased to inform you we offer rebates for all sorts of upgrades including Energy Star appliance purchases, insulation, new windows, heat pumps, alternative water heaters, LED lighting, and much more. For a detailed listing please visit www.cwecoop.com or give us a call.

3 STEPS to ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Identify ways to save energy when using appliances and electronics in your home. Buy ENERGY STAR-rated appliances when possible and turn off electronics, such as computers and gaming consoles when not in use.



DIY projects can help you save energy. Caulk around drafty windows; use LED bulbs and check insulation levels in your home.



Check with your electric co-op about energy saving programs.



Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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