



**Central Wisconsin
Electric Cooperative**
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Lila Shower,
President & CEO

WELCOME TO OUR WISCONSIN WINTER WONDERLAND

I come from a family of ski jumpers, cross country skiers, and downhill skiers, and we love the winter months. Snow removal duties as an adult may have lessened my love of the winter months a bit, but I still enjoy the many activities winter provides.

If you are looking for something interesting to do in February, I hope you will stop by the Iola Winter Sports Club on Sunday, February 4, for their annual ski jumping tournament which starts at noon. There will be ski jumpers from around the Midwest competing on the 5-meter ski jump up through the 60-meter jump, which is the club's largest. Food and beverages will be available. It is always a fun time watching the ski jumping competition. Check out the Iola Winter Sports Club website at www.iolawintersportsclub.org for details.

We had our first snowfall last month and I am sure we will have more in the coming months.

Mother Nature has thrown us quite a few curveballs over the last several years. High winds and tornadoes have caused damage to our electric system that has resulted in extended outages. Winter snow and ice can also cause damage and make it difficult for our line crews to access rights-of-way because of the downed trees and limbs.

You may notice our line crews in the field performing a visual inspection of our overhead lines looking for trouble spots. They are identifying hazards that have the potential to cause an outage in the future. Winter is the perfect time for us

to perform this type of work before the leaves are back on the trees and the busy summer construction schedule has begun.

As you see our crews in the field, I encourage all our members to be courteous and respectful to our employees and contractors as they work on our system. If you have any questions about the work being done, do not hesitate to contact our office to get answers. Safety is our number one priority, so let's all do our part to keep our employees safe on the job.

Our Toys for Tots campaign concluded for 2023 and I cannot thank you enough for your tremendous support. We appreciate the help of our community businesses who participated, and the support of our members who donated to the campaign. This was one of our best years yet, with almost 1,200 area children receiving toys through the campaign. Cooperatives support their communities and it is a pleasure for CWEC to support our members in the communities in which they live.

At the December CWEC Board of Directors meeting, the board approved our capital and operating budget for the new year. As always, our focus will be to replace poles and wires that have exceeded their life spans. In particular, we are focused on replacing some of the underground cable and copper conductor that is beginning to show signs of failure. These upgrades will help improve reliability to our electric grid.

In addition, we will be finishing the installation of a new metering system, which will give us more capabilities than we had before. As always, our focus will be to make improvements that enable us to better serve our members and provide you with safe and reliable electric energy.

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

The November regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held on November 30, 2023 at 8:05 a.m. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the October 26, 2023 meeting, new and terminated memberships, monthly safety and compliance report, and the estate capital credit retirements were approved.

Action items

- Annual Meeting. The CWEC Annual Meeting will be April 18, 2024, at the Iola-Scandinavia High School.
- The 2024 Annual Budget. The expense budget, capital budget, and work plan were approved.
- The Board approved to discontinue the water heater LMR program and have electricians remove the units from members' homes.
- The Governance Committee approved to discount capital credits to apply to bad debt.

Accounting and Finance – Stacy Claussen reported that the audit has been scheduled for the end of January. Inventory will be taken the first part of January.

Operations – Kevin Kurtzweil gave an update on the HVAC. The new plow truck is in. Kevin went through the sections of the Safety Improvement Plan. We received an award for safety.

Member Services – Brenda Mazemke reported on the MAG updates. Bert Lehman attended a workshop for Touchstone and Web Builder. We will be getting our lighting grant soon.

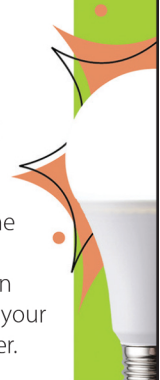
President & CEO Report – Lila Shower reviewed her submitted report.

Meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Area rugs are an easy, cost-effective solution to cold floors. Adding area rugs to hard-surface flooring can add warmth to any room and keep your feet cozy on cold winter days.

Choose rugs made from wool or other natural fibers and plush or high-pile textures for the most insulation. Place rugs in areas where you need additional warmth, like the foot of a bed or under a coffee table. Area rugs can enhance the aesthetic of your home and keep you cozier.



TOYS FOR TOTS CAMPAIGN REACHES ALMOST 1,200 AREA CHILDREN

The generosity of area residents, organizations, and businesses helped make sure almost 1,200 area children received toys for Christmas through the Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) Marine Corps Reserves Toys for Tots campaign.

That marked an increase of almost 150 children when compared to the 2022 CWEC Toys for Tots campaign.

Toy donations were collected at more than 30 area businesses in Birnamwood, Bowler, Clintonville, Elderon, Iola, Manawa, Marion, Rosholt, Scandinavia, Tigerton, Waupaca, and Wittenberg. Monetary donations were also collected, which were used to purchase toys. With those donations, roughly 3,200 toys, 350 books, and 1,000 stocking stuffers were distributed to area children. Those totals were an increase from 2022.

“With inflation still an issue for families, we were not surprised that there was an increase in requests for toys for this year’s campaign,” said Bert Lehman, Toys for Tots coordinator and member relations specialist for CWEC. “But thanks to the monetary donations and the donations of toys, we were able to supply toys to all who requested them.”

The toys were collected, sorted, and then distributed to

communities and families in the CWEC service area. This area covers parts of western Waupaca County (including Iola-Scandinavia and Manawa school districts), northern Portage County (including Rosholt School District), southern Marathon County (including Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District), and western Shawano County (including Tigerton and Bowler school districts).

For more than 20 years Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) has partnered with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve to organize a Toys for Tots campaign in the CWEC service area each Christmas. Through the campaign, CWEC provides help to area families in need by supplying donated toys to the families, so they can give their children Christmas presents.

The campaign’s success was also aided by the involvement of the departments at the co-op.

“There is a lot of work done in a short amount of time for the Toys for Tots campaign to be successful, but it is very rewarding for everyone involved, knowing that Christmas for area children is a little brighter because of this Toys for Tots campaign,” Lehman said.



Top row, left to right: Nancy Nueske, who coordinates the toy distribution in the Wittenberg-Birnamwood area for the CWEC Toys for Tots campaign, has been overseeing the Wittenberg-Birnamwood Giving Tree for around 40 years. Students from Wittenberg Elementary School help haul toys from the CWEC Toys for Tots campaign in preparation for the toys to be distributed to Wittenberg and Birnamwood families prior to Christmas. Employees from Premier Community Bank in Iola with the toys their customers donated to the CWEC Toys for Tots campaign.

Bottom row, left to right: Many toys were purchased for the CWEC Toys for Tots campaign during a shopping spree at Fleet Farm in Waupaca. Members of Waupaca County Health Services take time to pose for a photo prior to unloading a trailer full of toys provided by the CWEC Toys for Tots campaign.



OPERATION ROUND UP CONTINUES TO HELP AREA COMMUNITIES

WHAT IS OPERATION ROUND UP?

Operation Round Up provides funds for worthwhile causes, including member hardship cases, educational purposes including scholarships, and charitable organizations. It is funded by volunteer donations from CWEC co-op members, allowing them the opportunity to give back to our local communities, a few cents each month. Electric bills are simply “rounded up” to the next whole dollar amount. The monthly “round up” could be as little as a single penny, but never more than 99 cents. The average donation is \$6 annually, which is tax deductible. Operation Round Up is an opt-out program.

The funds are held separately from any Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative funds and are administered by a member Board of Trustees. Applications are made for grants and these are reviewed quarterly for disbursement of funds.



Central Wisconsin Order of the Sleepless Knights



Rosholt Food Pantry



Scandinavia Food Pantry



TRACK Food Pantry



Wittenberg Food Pantry

THIRD QUARTER DONATION RECIPIENTS:

- **\$500 – Eland Baseball Club** to be used to help fund having new lights installed at the Eland Baseball Park.
- **\$500 – Town of Sharon** to help with the needs of Polonia Park.
- **\$250 – Central Wisconsin Order of the Sleepless Knights** to help pay for creating baskets for the raffles and silent auction items for the Bowl with the Band event.

FOURTH QUARTER DONATION RECIPIENTS:

- **\$1,000 – Individual medical hardship** donation.
- **\$1,000 – Individual medical hardship** donation.
- **\$500 – CWEC Toys for Tots campaign** to help with purchasing toys for children in need in the CWEC service area.
- **\$500 each to nine area food pantries** to help with their needs.
- **\$100 – Boys & Girls Club of Portage County – Rosholt Extension** to help with its Taste of Rosholt fundraiser, which benefits the boys and girls attending the Rosholt Extension.
- **\$100 – Walls of Wittenberg** to be used to support promotional expenses associated with its quilt events in January and February.

**TOTAL
OPERATION
ROUND UP FUNDS
DONATED:
\$648,014**

CWEC WELCOMES JODI BRUMER

Jodi Brumer started as an administrative assistant with Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) on Jan. 2.

Prior to joining CWEC, Brumer worked for Marshfield Medical Center for 10 years in a similar position. In all, she worked in the healthcare field for more than 20 years.

With many changes occurring in the healthcare field, Brumer said she was looking for a change, and is happy to be joining CWEC.

She said she is interested to see what things are similar between the healthcare and energy industries, as well as what things are completely different.

She added that she is looking forward to, "Just learning more things about something other than healthcare."


At CWEC, Brumer's main focus will be working closely with CWEC President and CEO Lila Shower. In addition, she'll work with directors and employees regarding education, as well as assist with the monthly board meeting.

"I'm looking forward to the journey," Brumer said about her start at CWEC.

Brumer lives in Iola with her husband, Mike. During her spare time, she enjoys reading, crafting, scrapbooking, and spending time with her grandkids.



**Central Wisconsin
Electric Cooperative**

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Our Mission

**We are your trusted energy
partner and provider of
valued community support.**

LETTERS TO SANTA CONTEST WINNERS



Russell
Galbraith



Oden
Jankowski

The following children were randomly chosen for the top prizes for the Letters to Santa contest hosted by Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative.

First Prize: Russell Galbraith, Bowler

Second Prize: Luken Schreiber, Bowler

Third Prize: Oden Jankowski, Iola

CWEC OFFERS BUSINESS LOANS

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) has funds available to assist in the financing of new or expanding businesses that create or retain jobs. Partnering with USDA, CWEC offers low rate loans ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to qualifying applicants. CWEC's loan fund is designed to complement local lender financing programs including conventional, SBA, CDBG, and WHEDA. For more information please call CWEC at 715-677-2211.

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider.

