



Lila Shower,
President & CEO

IMPROVING GRID RELIABILITY

For those of you who live in or around the Iola area, we know that July means it is time for the Iola Car Show, which is held annually the second weekend in July. This is a great opportunity for service groups to earn money for their individual organizations by donating their time to work at the Car Show.

I think the first year I worked at the Iola Car Show was 1975 and I don't think I've missed a year since (once they have your name and phone number you are in for life). I will say things have certainly changed at the Iola Car Show since 1975. The show now features 2,500 show cars, 4,000 swap spaces, 1,600 campsites, 400 for sale car corral spaces, and some of the best food anywhere. It is an amazing event and fun for the whole family, as well as a great way to earn money for your favorite charity.

Earlier this year Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) applied for two grants through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) program. Wisconsin was awarded \$10.24 million in grant funds to help fund projects for electric utilities. CWEC submitted applications for two projects that will improve reliability of our grid. The total cost of both projects is \$1,939,509.

We submitted our applications to the Public Service Commission (PSC) of Wisconsin, and we are delighted to be chosen as one of the recipients of the PSC's grid resilience grants. We have passed the first phase of the grant process, and our applications have now been submitted to the Department of Energy (DOE). Once approved by the DOE, we would receive grant funding of \$1,293,000 for the projects. CWEC would not have to pay back the funds received via the grants. CWEC

would have to cover \$646,503 of the cost of the two projects. Approval by the DOE is expected by the end of July.

One of the projects would tie our Wittenberg and Groenier substations together. The area affected by the project services a number of larger commercial and agricultural businesses. Once the project is completed, it will be a game changer in reducing outage lengths and it will add redundancy to our system by hardening existing electrical infrastructure. It will increase reliability, flexibility, and efficiency of services to utility members in disadvantaged communities as we will be able to back feed from our Groenier substation to our Wittenberg substation.

The second project would convert 2.5 miles of three-phase overhead line with three-phase 4/0 underground line. CWEC members benefiting from the proposed project would be the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians, which only receives their power through one substation feeder and does not possess a backup tie-in for power supply. This project aims to reduce the risk of power failure to this community. The Stockbridge-Munsee Indians have a deep reverence for trees and plant life. Converting the overhead line to underground will greatly reduce the need for costly vegetation management in this area.

CWEC would not have been able to complete either of these projects without the Grid Resiliency Grant opportunity. It is a dream come true for CWEC and its membership. These two projects will help the redundancy in our system and lower outages in this area. It will help with future maintenance as well.

In closing, be safe as you celebrate our nation's independence on the Fourth of July. Enjoy the festivities and remember the debt we owe to all of those who came before us to protect our freedom. Enjoy your summer.

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held at 8:03 a.m. on April 29, 2024. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the March 28, 2024, meeting, minutes of the board meeting on April 18, 2024, new and terminated memberships, and the monthly safety and compliance report were approved.

Action Items

- a. Monthly Financial Statements and Reports reviewed by the Finance Committee.
- b. A Revolving Loan Fund loan was presented to the board and approved.
- c. Director Zander and Lila Shower, CEO and President, attended the Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.
- d. Jim Halvorsen from CliftonLarsenAllen presented the 2023 audit to the board. Results were approved by the Board.

Operations and Engineering – Mr. Kurtzweil gave an update on the HVAC systems. It is up and running. The power outage on April 27, 2024, was caused by a tree on ATC lines. The removal of the water heater LMRs continues with over 400 removed. The pole inspection from Karz has been completed.

Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were presented by Ms. Claussen. Work continues with Eaton on getting the 4-meter configurations set up with the new software for the 320-amp meters. This is the first month of disconnects after the moratorium. Currently there are 13 members disconnected.

Member Services – Ms. Mazemke reported that the Annual meeting was a big success. Operation Round Up approved 65 scholarships totaling \$24,000. Two Electric Utility Worker Scholarships will be given out.

President and CEO – Lila Shower, CEO, reported on her submitted report.
Meeting adjourned at 12:47 p.m.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Electricity used to operate major appliances accounts for a significant portion of your home energy use. Here's an easy way to lighten the load on your clothes dryer. Before you dry a load of damp clothing, toss in a clean, dry towel. The towel will absorb excess water, shortening the drying time. If your dryer does not include an autosense feature, reduce the timer to about half of what you normally would. Remove the towel about 15 minutes after the cycle begins. Shorter drying times will extend the life of your dryer and save energy.

Source: [homesandgardens.com](https://www.homesandgardens.com)

WORK CONTINUES TO BRING ELECTRICITY TO THE NAVAJO NATION

For the second year in a row, two linemen from Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWECC) traveled to the Navajo Nation in Arizona to take part in the Light Up Navajo Project. Mack Yarbrough and Josh Wick spent a week working to bring electricity to residents of the Navajo Nation.

Wick said he decided to participate in the Light Up Navajo Nation Project because he thought it would be a cool experience.

“Everyone around here has power who wants it,” Wick said. “It was weird to hear that people in America, who want power, still don’t have power.”

Yarbrough said it was a good opportunity to use his skills to help people.

During the week, Yarbrough and Wick worked with a lineman from Massachusetts and six linemen from two different electric utilities in Utah, as well as linemen from the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority. They were able to complete one project from start to finish during the first part of the week.

The project that was completed from start to finish was a 1.75-mile stretch in which a new power line was installed to bring electricity to a single residence. In all, 29 primary poles were set, along with one secondary pole.

“We dug all the holes, set the poles, and strung in the wire,” Wick said. “And did their service wire too. I think they said most of the time they just have crews come in and set poles and then they’ll have another crew, in another week, string the wire. But, because this first one was so long, that’s why they had so many people out there too. That way we could have a bunch of different people working on different things and do that from start to finish.”

Yarbrough and Wick said the homeowners were grateful for the work the crews did to bring electricity to their home.

“They were out there while we were working on it, so they’d come by and talk to us,” Wick said.

The couple invited the crews into their home, and cooked them a meal that included Navajo tacos. They also shared the history of their family and the property.



Left: While spending a week working on the Light Up Navajo Project, CWECC linemen Mack Yarbrough and Josh Wick climbed a lot of power poles. Right: Wick operates a pressure digger. Most of the pole holes required a pressure digger because of rock in the area.



CWECC linemen Mack Yarbrough (far left) and Josh Wick (far right) with the homeowners who had electricity brought to their home via the Light Up Navajo Project.

“She said her parents built the house in the 1960s,” Wick said.

He added that the homeowners said they had wanted to be part of the Light Up Navajo Project, but they were

usually told that the 1.75-mile distance was too far.

“Normally, they were keeping them (projects) to less than a mile,” Wick said. “I think they kept getting pushed back because it was so long.”

After completing that project, Yarbrough and Wick worked on a project that, when completed, will have 5.5 miles of power lines installed to bring electricity to one person. That will be the longest line extension that is part of the Light Up Navajo Project.

“A crew had already been there before us setting poles. Then we came in and set more,” Yarbrough said.

He said he was surprised that only one person would benefit from that line extension.

“It provoked a lot of thought on that, and that’s kind of the point as to why we were there, because nobody else was going to do this,” Yarbrough said.

Wick said he is glad that he helped on the project.

“It’s something I’ll remember forever,” Wick said. “It’s good to know I helped out, even though we only turned electricity on for one family. Without the small amount of time we spent there, they would have been waiting for more years to actually get electricity.”

Yarbrough, who traveled to Guatemala in 2019 to help bring electricity to residents there, said it’s “the right thing to do” to help people.

“If we can make it work around home and we can make the slight sacrifice and slight inconvenience, and actually help people with something, that’s cool,” Yarbrough said.



STEAM GRANTS AWARDED TO AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Two school districts in the Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) service area have received STEAM grants to be used for projects and initiatives related to science, technology, engineering, art, and math.



Jennie Drath, fourth-grade teacher at Rosholt Elementary School, and her students, accept a STEAM Grant check for \$500 from CWEC. The funds were used to purchase rocket kits.

ROSHOLT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Rosholt School District received \$500 for the purchase of 20 rocket kits for fourth-graders to build and shoot off at the end of the school year.

Having the fourth-grade students build and shoot off rockets at the end of the school year has become a tradition that was started by a former teacher, according to fourth-grade teacher Jennie Drath.

“I saw how much fun the kids had with it, so I figured it was a great thing to do, and spend more time with,” Drath said. “The rockets we were using last year were from probably the 1990s. There were pieces missing, so we needed new rockets. It’s something that we can use year after year.”

The rockets won’t be used for just fun; students will also learn about trajectory, force, thrust, and aerodynamics, Drath said.

“You can move the different parts around. You can change the cone, you can change the tail, so they can troubleshoot and learn from the hands-on trial and error experience,” she said.

The goal Drath has for students is to learn, while also having fun.

“I hope they learn how they can manipulate the different variables that make the rockets go further, or higher,” she said. “And I hope they work together cooperatively.”

Since the rockets are reusable, future fourth-grade students will also have the opportunity to learn with the rocket kits.

Drath said without the STEAM grant from Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative, purchasing the rocket kits would not have been possible.

“This was more than we have in our science budget,” Drath said. “This was way above and beyond what we could have ever done without it (STEAM grant).”

She added, “For a small school district, for science, we just got new curriculum books, so getting any extra money to do things like this is appreciated.”



Bowler High School science teacher Kathleen Hansen, paraprofessional Sheri Beilke, students Anna Dassie, Natalie Rickert, Ava Paiser, Autumn Thix, and middle and high school science teacher Tracy Laude accept a STEAM grant for \$400 from Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative.

BOWLER SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Bowler School District received a STEAM grant in the amount of \$400 to purchase 10 electronic balance scales. The scales will be used by students in middle school and high school science classes, but could also be used by other classes, such as agriculture classes.

“I will be using them for specific measurements in chemistry and physical science classes because we need to get more precise with our measurements,” said Kathleen Hansen, high school science teacher in the Bowler School District.

She added, “If we’re just looking at diagnostic testing, if we don’t do more precision (measuring) then students lag back. If they’re getting fertilizer, they need to know precisely how much they need to put on their field. That’s really the basis for what we’re teaching in chemistry and ecology.”

When the district applied for the STEAM grant, it had two electronic balance scales. With the addition of 10 more scales, student will be able to work on projects in smaller groups, thus enhancing their learning experience.

“Rather than 10 students per scale, we’re going to be able to lower that number,” Hansen said. “They’re going to get more hands-on with more scales available, rather than having to share (a scale) with 10 people.”

Tracy Laude, middle school and high school science teacher in the Bowler School District, added, “The more hands-on we can be, the better. We can demonstrate, but it will create more of a meaning if they can actually work with the tools themselves. This will definitely enable us to be in groups of two or three. That way we can go around to see where everybody is at.”

Both Hansen and Laude said they are thankful for the STEAM grant, because without it, it would not have been possible for the district to purchase that many scales.

FOURTH-GRADERS LEARN ABOUT ELECTRICITY SAFETY

To help promote Electrical Safety Month in May, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) once again provided electricity safety demonstrations to fourth-grade students at six elementary schools in the CWEC service area. Elementary schools included those located in Birnamwood, Bowler, Iola, Rosholt, Tigerton, and Wittenberg.

The demonstrations were conducted by CWEC linemen, and showed students firsthand the dangers that could occur if they aren't safe around electricity. Students learned about some of the safety equipment a lineman has to wear when they work around power lines. They were also shown examples of what overhead and underground power lines look like, and learned why they are constructed the way they are. Linemen also showed the students what happens if a tree branch, kite string, and fishing line come in contact with a power line.

"It's important for students to understand how dangerous electricity can be, and that they should never go near a downed power line or something that is in contact with a power line," said Bert Lehman, CWEC member relations specialist. "During the classroom demonstrations, students see smoke, sparks, and flames, which help to reinforce that they need to stay away from power lines."

To help convey how dangerous electricity



Above: CWEC lineman Wyatt Phillips teaches fourth-grade students at Tigerton Elementary School about the flags used to mark underground utilities. Left: CWEC lineman Gabe Pospyhalla uses a hot dog to demonstrate to fourth-grade students at Bowler Elementary School how dangerous electricity can be.



is, one of the demonstrations used a hot dog to simulate what would happen if a human body contacted a power line.

"Students are always amazed by the hot dog portion of the demonstration," Lehman said. "They generally have a lot of questions about electricity after that."

Finally, students were informed about what to do if they are involved in a vehicle accident that resulted in a downed power line. And if need be, how to properly exit a vehicle in that situation.

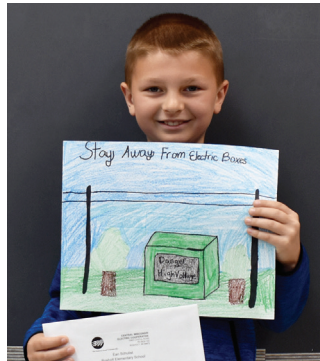
"Our linemen enjoy giving back to the community by providing these demonstrations to students," Lehman said. "They feel it is important for kids to know why linemen take so many precautions when working around power lines, and why the public needs to stay away from power lines."

ELECTRICITY SAFETY POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

Congratulations to the top three students, and thank you to all the students who participated. Some of the posters submitted for the contest are on display in the lobby at CWEC headquarters in Rosholt.



First Place – Everly Hauser, Tigerton Elementary School; \$25 prepaid debit card from WECA and a \$25 check from CWEC.



Second Place – Ean Schulist, Rosholt Elementary School; \$15 check from CWEC.



Third Place – Charlotte Parker, Tigerton Elementary School; \$10 check from CWEC.



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