



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



**Lila Shower,
President & CEO**

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

Thank you to everyone who attended our 87th Annual Meeting in April at Wittenberg-Birnbaumwood High School. We had more than 240 members and guests attend, and we appreciated the opportunity to discuss the business of the cooperative from the previous year. We gave away a lot of door prizes, along with a grand prize, and every member who attended received a \$20 bill credit on their May bill.

Also, thank you for your participation in this year's director elections. Al Zander and Todd Pamperin won their respective races and were seated as directors at the conclusion of the meeting. Service as a director is a challenging, but extremely rewarding experience. Our success depends on engaged and committed members willing to serve on our Board of Directors and our member committees.

With summer upon us, whether we like it or not, it means the threat for severe weather is also here. While we do our best to make sure electricity keeps flowing to your property, there are times when Mother Nature has other ideas. When power is knocked out due to severe weather, our linemen work as fast and safely as possible to restore power.

Please remember, when you experience a power outage, it is imperative that you call your outage into the office. The phone number to call is 715-677-2211 or 800-377-2932. Do not post your outage to our Facebook page or send an email to our general address, as they are not monitored 24/7 and we will not know you are experiencing an outage.

Another item I want to mention is do not tamper with the meter at your home or business. These meters are the property of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative. Each meter has a seal on it to prevent people from tampering with the meter. If you are doing construction work and need to have your power disconnected for a period of time, please call the co-op and we will send a certified technician to your location to safely remove the meter and then reconnect it when you are finished with your project. We do not charge for this service.

With our new AMI meters, we are automatically notified anytime a meter is disconnected, and we know how long the meter has been off. Once we receive a notification, we will send a meter technician to your home or business to see why your meter was disconnected. We need to determine whether it is an outage or whether it is someone tampering with the meter.

Unless you are certified, you could be injured when trying to disconnect or reconnect the meter. If you remove the meter yourself, you will be charged a \$500 meter tampering fee, no exceptions.

Summer is also a busy time for our linemen to complete projects pertaining to our overhead and underground power lines. This means there is a greater chance that you will encounter a CWEC truck parked along the side of the road with orange cones around it. We ask that you please provide our linemen plenty of room to do the work they need to do. If we all work together we can keep everyone safe and avoid injuries.

June is Dairy Month and we want to thank the dairy farmers in central Wisconsin and those served by our cooperative. You have been a part of the cooperative since our creation 87 years ago and we appreciate the value that you bring to our community and our state. I encourage our members to pay tribute to our dairy farmers and support them by purchasing dairy products found at our local merchants.

Lastly, enjoy your summer, the warm weather has arrived, and I hope you are able to spend plenty of time outdoors.

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held at 7:57 a.m. on March 27, 2025. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of February 27, 2025 meeting, new and terminated memberships, and the monthly safety and compliance report were approved.

Action Items

- Monthly Financial Statements and Reports were reviewed by the Finance Committee.
- The Board approved \$102,935 to American Transmission Company (ATC) for the second call for voluntary additional capital contributions.
- Board Policy 303 – Delegations of Authority from the Board of Directors to the President/CEO. The Policy was approved with the changes presented.
- Two new members were approved to serve on the Member Advisory Group: Les Dobbe and Jeffery Check.

Operations and Engineering – Mr. Kurtzweil submitted a written report. Kevin thanked staff for their hard work during the storm that came through the service area on March 23-24. Kevin asked for the board's approval to start the process of replacing truck 51. The board did approve this request.

Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were presented by Ms. Claussen. The PCA for January was -\$0.00000. 631 past due notices were sent out on March 7.

Member Services – Ms. Mazemke submitted a written report. The Scholarship deadline is April 1, 2025. Two key account visits were conducted. Bert Lehman participated in the mock interviews at Wittenberg – Birnbaumwood High School on March 19, 2025.

President and CEO – Lila Shower, CEO, reported on her submitted report.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Routine maintenance is important to keep your refrigerator running efficiently. Lint and dirt should be cleaned from the refrigerator coils every six months to a year, and more often if there are pets in the home.

When coils are coated with lint, dust or pet hair, your refrigerator works harder than it's designed to, which can prevent the appliance from cooling properly and efficiently. The additional work can increase the energy costs of the refrigerator by as much as 35% and shorten the life of the appliance.

Source: *energy.gov*

ALMOST 250 MEMBERS & GUESTS ATTEND CWEC ANNUAL MEETING

The 87th Annual Meeting for Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) was held April 10 at Wittenberg-Birnhamwood High School in Wittenberg. There were 242 members and guests in attendance, with 179 of them registered members of the co-op.

For the safety message, Kevin Kurtzweil, vice president of Operations for CWEC, told those in attendance about how important it is to hook up a generator properly. He also mentioned three storms that occurred over the three weeks prior to the meeting and the safety concerns about downed power lines. Because it can be difficult to determine if a downed power line is still energized, everyone needs to stay away from downed power lines and they need to call the co-op to rectify the situation.

Kurtzweil also provided an update on the installation of CWEC's new meter system, which he said has been completed. The new meter system will help crews be more efficient in responding to outages. Kurtzweil also shared information about CWEC's inspections on its electrical grid, including inspecting poles, overhead lines, and underground lines.

Kurtzweil also spoke about the co-op's vegetation management program. He said CWEC spent just over \$1 million for vegetation management that encompassed 140 miles of power lines.

Brenda Mazemke, manager of Member Relations for CWEC, shared information about how the co-op's Operation Round Up program helps its members and the communities the co-op serves. In 2024, there were 32 donations totaling \$20,250 made through the Operation Round Up program to community organizations and for individual hardships.

In addition, the Operation Round Up program provided \$24,400 in education scholar-

ships last year. Mazemke also discussed the co-op's STEAM grant program available to school districts in the CWEC service area. Through the STEAM grant program, CWEC has issued \$6,400 in STEAM grants since the program began. The STEAM grant funds are used by school districts for projects centered on science, technology, engineering, art, or math.

Key statistics for 2024, the statement of operations, and the balance sheet for the co-op were presented by Stacy Claussen, manager of Accounting & Finance for CWEC. She said electric sales in 2024 were 105 MWh, the lowest in the past 10 years, which was attributed to a milder winter.

Members were also informed about how CWEC's investment in the West Riverside Power Plant has been beneficial for members. In 2019, CWEC invested \$5 million in the power plant. Claussen said since that investment in 2019, the co-op has received \$4.98 million in total returns. She added that 75% of the returns go directly to the members to offset their electric bills.



CWEC Board Director Al Zander (left) speaks to co-op members prior to the annual meeting. After the meeting, Zander was elected Board Chairman.

During the Chairman's Report, Board Chairman Tom Smith talked about safety, reliability, and affordability. He concluded his remarks with, "the electric industry is



CWEC Board Chairman Tom Smith spoke about safety, reliability, and affordability during his annual meeting speech.

going through a period of rapid change, and the cooperative must be engaged at all levels to protect the members' interests and that requires all of us to stay on-board."

CEO & President of CWEC Lila Shower stated that the success of CWEC can be attributed to the dedicated employees and loyal members of the cooperative. She also thanked CWEC Director Lee Lehrer for his 17 years of service on the board.

Director Allen Zander was unopposed in his reelection bid and was reelected in District 3.

In District 2, Todd Pamperin received the most votes to win the director seat vacated by Lehrer's retirement from the board. Pamperin received 195 votes, while Nathan Reichle received 149 votes.

A total of 30 door prizes were given away to members during the Annual Meeting.

Members also donated 220 non-perishable food items to be donated to area food pantries.

After the Annual Meeting, the CWEC Board of Directors met to elect the officers for the board. Allen Zander was elected as chairman, while Lou Oppor was reelected as vice chair, and Sue Rombalski was elected as secretary-treasurer.



CWEC Member Service Representative Lori Elmhurst registers a co-op member for the CWEC 87th Annual Meeting April 10. | Todd Pamperin, who was elected to the CWEC Board of Directors during the Annual Meeting, speaks with co-op members prior to the meeting. | Delbert Seefeldt was the lucky winner of the electric grill that was given away.





PAMPERIN ELECTED TO CWEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Living in the northern portion of the township of Wyoming, Todd Pamperin, of Tigerton, said he knows how important electricity is to rural areas. That importance was one of the reasons he decided to run for a seat on the Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors.

"Electricity is one that I think a lot of people take for granted," Pamperin said. "I wanted to know more than just flipping a switch on and there's electricity."

Another reason he ran for a seat on the CWEC Board of Directors was to give back to the co-op members in his district—District 2.

The election for the vacant seat was contested, as Nathan Reichle was also on the ballot. Pamperin said he knew Reichle and had a good relationship with him. When the results of the election were announced at the CWEC 87th Annual Meeting, Pamperin had received 195 votes, while Reichle had received 149.

Since Reichle had run for a seat on the board the previous year but was defeated,

Pamperin said he was surprised when he heard he had received the most votes.

"I thought that the second time through, it was going to be his (Reichle) chance," Pamperin said.

Pamperin said he plans to bring to the board the things that he learned from his parents—honesty, being fair, and sometimes having to do things that aren't easy choices.

He added, "My time on the township of Wyoming Town Board really made this choice a little easier, knowing that sometimes you have to make decisions that don't always work for everyone else."

Pamperin grew up in the area, but after high school, he attended a trade school in Chicago for horticulture. He eventually moved back to the area. Since then he worked in a greenhouse for a few years, at Mills Fleet Farm for 10 years, and then at Great Lakes Veneer as a yard foreman and a log buyer.

"After 14 years there, I had built up a small horticulture business and I jumped into it in 2007," Pamperin said. "It had everything to do with putting in lawns, food plots. I had a small lawncare business

fertilizing lawns, pruning trees, all the stuff that wasn't work. It was more that I enjoyed getting up every day. I did that from 2007 until last weekend (mid-April). I sold it to a kid who's been working for me part-time."

To become familiar with the ins and outs of CWEC, Pamperin said he plans to learn how the co-op works "from the ground up."

"My plans are to talk to the guys in the shop," Pamperin said. "Talk to everyone to find out what it takes to get from point A to B to C. I think that as a whole that will help me understand a lot of the decisions we have to make."

This falls in line with advice that his father and grandpa gave him, "Learn every day. Try to become a productive side of society."

Pamperin said he is looking forward to serving on the board, and he has one simple goal: "To serve my district well."

"To know that I am their voice," Pamperin said. "To really become knowledgeable on the whole aspect of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative."

ANNUAL MEETING DOOR PRIZE WINNERS

Helen Basinkski – \$50 electric bill credit, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative

Gene Groshek – \$100 Amazon gift card, Altec Industries

LaVonne Block – \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, American Transmission Company

Kevin Mueller – Smart Watch, The Benefit Works

Gary Jacobson – \$25 BP/Amoco Gas gift card, AJ Construction of Wisconsin

Allard Meverden – Leatherman Tool, Zielie's Tree Services

Jerry Onesti – Collapsible Backpack Cooler & \$25 Amazon gift card, NISC & Vanguard Utility Partners, Inc.

James Kryll – Toaster Oven, RESCO

Pamela Sitko – \$50 Nueske Meats gift card, Irby Utilities

Greg Weller – \$100 Amazon gift card, Cooperative Response Center (CRC)

Gareth Sturms – \$50 Nueske Meats gift card, Irby Utilities

Rainold Mlodik – \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, Recloser Services LLC

Dennis Mlodik – \$100 Kwik Trip gift card, Weld Riley, S.C.

Dennis Felts – \$25 BP/Amoco gift card, AJ Construction of Wisconsin

Tim Hollfelder – \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, Alliant Energy

Lucas Boge – \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, American Transmission Company

Thomas Frederick – \$50 VISA debit card, National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC)

John Kruzicki – Grilling Tools & Grill Spice Set, Border States

David Meyer – \$100 Kwik Trip gift card, Power Service Engineering, Inc.

Kim Meisner – \$50 cash, Country Vision Cooperative

Randall Olson – \$25 Amazon gift card, Vanguard Utility Partners, Inc.

Mary Jo Reed – \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, American Transmission Company

Brian & Rose Hamilton – \$25 Amazon gift card, Vanguard Utility Partners, Inc.

Gene Lettau – Cooler Bag with goodies, Complete Office

Daniel Betker – \$50 Visa gift card, National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC)

Evan Bestul – \$25 Amazon gift card, Vanguard Utility Partners, Inc.

Leah Wierzba – \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, Recloser Services, LLC

Case Reynolds – \$50 Service & Repair gift certificate, Gordy's 66 Service & Towing

Duane Johnson – \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, American Transmission Company

Lori Rowe – Alliant Energy Swag Bag of goodies, Alliant Energy

Dennis Seefeldt – Electric Grill, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative

We would like to thank all the vendors for their generous door prize donations to the 2025 CWEC Annual Meeting. We also congratulate the winners of those door prizes.

CWEC TO RECEIVE ALMOST \$1.3 MILLION IN GRANTS

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) has been awarded almost \$1.3 million in grants as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, also known as the bipartisan infrastructure law.

CWEC had originally applied for the grants in February 2024, and was previously notified that it would be awarded the two grants. With the change in presidential administrations, though, there was a delay in the final awarding of the grants, as the new administration reviewed all grant expenditures.

The funds from the two grants will be used on two different projects.

A grant award of \$405,339 will be used to convert 2.5 miles of overhead lines to a three-phase underground line along Fairview Road in the townships of Bartelme and Almon in Shawano County. This line feeds the Stockbridge-Munsee Community.

By converting this line from overhead to underground, it will help make the infrastructure more resilient to natural hazards. Kevin Kurtzweil, vice-president of Operations for CWEC, said that burying the power line will help prevent long power outages in the Stockbridge-Munsee area like the long outage in 2022 after a tornado hit the area.

"It's an aged three-phase (line) that feeds into Stockbridge-Munsee," Kurtzweil said. "That being the only feed, chances are, if it's underground, we're not going to lose power off of it as often."

He added, "When you have busted poles and wires down everywhere, the restoration process just takes forever. Underground is a lot better. And the new cable is predicted to last 60-70 years."

With trees and the forest playing a crucial role in the culture of the Stock-

bridge-Munsee Community, CWEC President & CEO Lila Shower said having the power line underground will eliminate the need to remove trees from that 2.5-mile stretch.

Not having to do vegetation management will also save the co-op money. On average, it costs the co-op \$4,500 per mile to have vegetation management done.

A grant award for \$887,666 will be used to provide a tie-in between CWEC's Wittenberg and Groenier substations. The tie-in will give the co-op another tie-in option, as well as the opportunity to back feed electricity. This will mean less time co-op members serviced by those substations will be out of power when there are power outages.

According to the grant stipulations, the two projects must be completed within two years. CWEC is currently in the process of ordering materials for the projects, as that could not begin until the awarding of the grants was finalized. Another stipulation of the grant is all materials used must be made in America. Work on the two projects will begin when materials are received, but supply issues could factor into that.

The total cost of the two projects is just under \$2 million. The grants will fund just under \$1.3 million of the projects, and CWEC will supply around \$650,000 to cover the remainder of the costs for the two projects.

"Without the grants, we would not be able to do these two projects," Shower said. "We're not an investor-owned utility. They have people who buy stock and they can plow money into projects like this. We can't do that because we service the rural area. We have five people per mile of line, and investor-owned utilities have 35 people per mile of line, so they can get more money to do these types of projects."



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Our Mission

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

