



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER GENERATOR USAGE

Lila Shower, President & CEO

Now that the two ice storms that hit the Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) service territory Easter weekend are two months in the rearview mirror, we have seen an uptick in the number of members who are having a generator hook-up added to their house.

While we invite our members to use a portable generator during a power outage, it is important to have it installed correctly. It is also important to take the proper safety precautions while a generator is in operation. On page 18 of this issue of *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*, we have included an article about generator safety. I encourage you to take the time to read that article.

To help our members who want to hook up a generator properly, any member who purchases a GenerLink Transfer Switch can have it installed free of charge by CWEC.

A GenerLink Transfer Switch is a socket-mounted transfer switch that is installed behind your electric meter. The switch allows you to easily and safely connect a portable generator to your home during a power outage. The GenerLink Switch delivers the generator power directly to your electrical panel which eliminates the hassle of running

extension cords throughout your home.

The switch prevents back feeding of utility lines, and no rewiring or subpanel installation is required. It works with most portable generators (see their website for specific generator brand names) and takes 30 minutes to install by CWEC personnel. For more information about the GenerLink Transfer Switch, visit our website at [www.cwecoop.com](http://www.cwecoop.com) and click on the “Products” tab.

One of the most dangerous risks of improperly connecting a generator is backfeed, which occurs when electricity flows back through a power line that appears to be de-energized. This can put CWEC linemen working on the line in serious danger.

During the power outage restoration process during and after the two ice storms Easter weekend, linemen in the field found a few members who had removed the electric meter at their home to hook up a generator to the home. This is strictly against the CWEC meter tampering policy. One of the electric meters had been altered in a way that had pennies connected to wires and placed inside the meter socket. Each of these members were charged a \$500 meter tampering fee. It should also be noted that a member would

be responsible to pay for the cost of all labor, material, and equipment necessary to repair or replace all equipment damaged due to meter tampering.

If a CWEC member needs the meter at their home removed for any kind of work, the member must call the CWEC office at 800-377-2932 and schedule a time for a lineman to come remove the meter. If a member has any questions about this, please call our office.

Before concluding this month’s column, I want to thank everyone who attended our 88th Annual Meeting in April at Rosholt High School. We had a record attendance. See page 16-17 for a recap of the annual meeting.

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 88 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 26, 2026. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of February 26, 2026 meeting, new and terminated memberships, and the monthly safety and compliance report were approved.

### Action Items

- a. Monthly Financial Statements and Reports were reviewed by the Finance Committee.
- b. The Board approved \$82,833 to America Transmission Company (ATC) for the second call for voluntary additional capital contributions.
- c. Board Policy 501 – Examination of Books and Records. Recommendation from the committee was to leave Policy 501 as written.
- d. The Annual Meeting Agenda was reviewed by the Board.
- e. The Special Board Meeting Agenda was reviewed by the Board.

Operations and Engineering – Mr. Kurtzweil submitted a written report. Hazardous recognition should be completed by the end of March. A service agreement has been set up with PGA to perform semi-annual maintenance on the HVAC system. Several items have been listed with Wisconsin Surplus.

Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were presented by Ms. Claussen. The PCA for January was (\$0.00493). As of March 13, 2026, 13 members were being cycled during the day.

Member Services – Mr. Lehman submitted a written report. The Operation Round Up scholarship deadline is April 1, 2026. Mr. Lehman participated in the mock interviews at Wittenberg-Birmamwood High School on March 25, 2026.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As temperatures start to rise, many homeowners focus on staying cool. Don't forget about the small gaps around windows and doors. While air sealing is often associated with keeping cold air out during winter, it's just as important during summer. Tiny cracks and worn weatherstripping allow cool, conditioned air to escape and hot, humid air to seep indoors. This forces your air conditioner to work harder than necessary and increases energy costs. Take a few minutes to check for drafts, replace weatherstripping and seal leaks. A tighter home keeps you more comfortable and helps manage energy use.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)





# MORE THAN 300 MEMBERS & GUESTS ATTEND CWEC ANNUAL MEETING

The 88th Annual Meeting for Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) was held April 9 at Rosholt High School in Rosholt. There were 309 attendees, with 224 of them registered members of the co-op. This was the highest attendance for a CWEC Annual Meeting since it was moved to a weeknight event in 2019.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Board Chairman Al Zander addressed attendees about the co-op's storm restoration response to the two ice storms that hit the CWEC service territory the prior week. In addition to sharing information about what the restoration process entailed, Zander also addressed some of the comments that members posted on Facebook. One of those comments asked why the co-op doesn't bury all its power lines. Zander said it would cost \$41.2 million to bury its single-phase power lines, or approximately \$4,900 per meter.

For the safety message, Kevin Kurtzweil, vice president

of Operations for CWEC, explained that it is important for members to hook up generators properly during an outage. If a generator is not hooked up properly, it can be a hazard to linemen working on restoring power.

Kurtzweil also provided an update on two future projects that would have an impact on the communities where they will be located, as well as help grow the load for the co-op. One project is a 60-unit apartment complex in Wittenberg being constructed by Swiderski. The second project is the construction of the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council 36-bed treatment center for members of the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe.

Kurtzweil also said that through 2025, the co-op had 96,733 incident-free hours of work time and 821,364 miles of incident-free vehicle travel.

Bert Lehman, 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 2025, the co-op awarded \$24,650 in organization and hardship donations, along with \$22,900 in educational scholarships. The use of Federated Youth Foundation funds provided \$2,900 in STEAM grants to area schools during the 2024-25 academic year.

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 co-op electricity sales rebounded in 2025. CWEC reported nearly \$19.8 million in revenue and net margins of \$2.45 million



Al Zander, president of the CWEC Board of Directors, presents information about two ice storms that hit the area the prior week, to attendees of the CWEC 88th Annual Meeting.



Top: CWEC members vote during the CWEC 88th Annual Meeting. Bottom, left to right: A CWEC bucket truck greeted CWEC members arriving at the Annual Meeting. CWEC President & CEO Lila Shower (far right) and Lou Oppor (center), vice chairman of the CWEC Board of Directors, visit with co-op members prior to the Annual Meeting. CWEC members took time to socialize prior to the start of the CWEC Annual Meeting.



# 2026 ANNUAL MEETING DOOR PRIZE WINNERS



**CWEC lineman Chris Tuszke greets co-op members who grabbed a cookie prior to the annual meeting April 9.**

in 2025. Also in 2025, CWEC retired \$489,328 in capital credits.

During the Chairman’s Report, Zander talked about a new substation that the co-op will be installing at its headquarters. The new substation is necessary to handle the higher voltage line ATC is bringing to the area and will be able to back feed two other co-op substations in the event of outages.

Zander also recognized CWEC lineman Chris Tuszke, the 2025 recipient of the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association’s Cooperative Hero Award. Tuszke was responding to an outage and was the first person on the scene and performed life saving measures for an individual who was involved in an accident and was unresponsive.

CWEC President & CEO Lila Shower commented on the \$5 million investment in Alliant Energy’s West Riverside project in 2019. The co-op recaptured its investment in less than five years and has received \$6.4 million through 2025. The co-op returns 75% of its investment earnings to members through their monthly electric bill as a Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) offset. No member has had an increase on their bill as a result of the PCA and often have received credits over the last 16 months. The remaining 25% is used for offsetting operations costs.

District 1 Director Tom Smith, District 3 Director Sue Rombalski, and At-Large Director Michael Schultz each won reelection unopposed.

A total of 26 door prizes were given to members during the Annual Meeting.

Members also donated 318 non-perishable food items to be donated to area food pantries.



**Timothy Prutz (right) won the 55” Smart TV given away by CWEC.**

- Dianne Smith** – \$50 Electric bill credit, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative
- Gene Groshek** – \$50 Amazon gift card, Altec Industries
- Rainold Mlodik** – \$25 Electric bill credit, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative
- James Schumacher** – Smart Watch, The Benefit Works
- Glenn Mancel** – \$50 Nueske’s Meats gift card, Irby Utilities
- Dennis Mlodik** – Milwaukee Compact Hammer Drill/Driver, Zielie’s Tree Services
- Harold Petersen** – \$50 Culligan Sterling Waters gift certificate, Culligan
- Jeremy Syring** – \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, Recloser Services LLC
- Keith Reagles** – \$25 VISA gift card, Alliant Energy
- Tim O’Connor** – \$50 Nueke’s Meats gift card, Irby Utilities
- John Hoffmann** – \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, Recloser Services LLC
- Jim Czaja** – \$100 Kwik Trip gift card, Weld Riley, S.C.
- Julie Martin** – 40 can Every Day Wheeled Cooler, Power Service Engineering, Inc.
- Steve Toboyek** – \$25 VISA gift card, Alliant Energy
- Louis Suchon** – \$100 Amazon gift card, Cooperative Response Center (CRC)
- Donna Matz** – \$50 VISA gift card, National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC)
- Jason Pliska** – Grilling Tools, Border States
- Doug Lytle** – \$25 Electric bill credit, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative
- Leah Wierzba** – \$50 VISA gift card, Alliant Energy
- Margaret Jordan** – Cooler bag with goodies & \$50 Kwik Trip gift card, Complete Office of Wisconsin
- Richard Pierzchalski** – \$50 VISA gift card, National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC)
- Jeffrey Lang** – Swag bag of goodies, Bank First
- Ronald Chojnacki** – \$50 VISA gift card, Altec Industries
- Shirley Filtz** – \$50 Service & Repair Gift Certificate, Gordy’s 66 Service & Towing
- Casey Geier** – \$100 VISA gift card, Alliant Energy
- Carol Knaup** – Keurig K-Express, RESCO
- Timothy Prutz** – 55” Smart TV, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative

*We would like to thank all the vendors for their generous door prize donations to the 2026 CWEC Annual Meeting. We also congratulate the winners of those door prizes.*

# GENERATOR SAFETY: *Our Lives are on the Line*



Central Wisconsin  
Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

The safety of you, our members, and our employees is a top priority at Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC), especially during dangerous times. When storms impact our area, we rush to your aid as soon as weather conditions allow our lineworkers to travel and make repairs safely.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines. First, they verify a circuit has been de-energized, and that proper switches are opened and tagged to isolate the circuit from the system. We place ground chains on the circuit—on both sides of workers—to make sure the line cannot be energized while work is being done.

But even after these measures, our workers' lives remain in your hands. CWEC is proud of our outstanding safety record, but sometimes, no matter how many steps we take to keep everyone safe, the very people we are there to help unknowingly put our lives—and their own—in danger.

Portable generators, widely used when power lines are down, can prove fatal to lineworkers and your neighbors when used improperly.

Of course, no one would ever purposely cause the death of a lineworker. Nevertheless, a generator connected to a home's wiring or plugged into a regular household outlet can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with them—even if the line seems to be de-energized.

And CWEC employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is used improperly. Generator owners themselves may be at risk of electrocution, fire injury, property damage or carbon monoxide poisoning if they do not follow the necessary safety rules.

Portable generators can be very helpful during outages. But we urge you to follow these safety guidelines when using one:

- **Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use.** This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs. Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators to your home.
- **Always plug appliances directly into generators.** Connecting the generator to your home's circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed electrician who will install a transfer switch to prevent backfeeding.
- **Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.** Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.
- **Ensure your generator is properly grounded.**
- **Never overload a generator.** A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- **Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.**
- **Keep the generator dry.** Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.
- **Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.**
- **Never refuel a generator while it is operating.**
- **Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.** Never cut corners when it comes to generator safety.

We encourage you to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages, and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations. When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit.

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**Bert Lehman, Editor**

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## Our Mission

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

## INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative will be closed on Friday, July 3, 2026, in recognition of the Independence Day holiday. From everyone at CWEC, we wish you a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July holiday.