



By Mike Wade, President & CEO

DRAMATIC INCREASES SEEN IN THE COST TO SUPPLY ELECTRICITY

As you have noticed on your recent electric bills, the power cost adjustment (PCA) is positive, which has increased your electric bill in the summer months. The PCA can be negative or positive and is designed to adjust to the fluctuating monthly changes in wholesale energy. Natural gas prices have been on the rise since last fall and we have seen dramatic increases in wholesale power costs as a result. Liquefied natural gas is being exported to other parts of the globe at record levels, which has caused a limited supply during a high-demand period. As a result, we may see volatility for some time. Our investment in the West Riverside Energy Center has helped offset the impact of rising power costs, but we may see a positive PCA for some time.

This summer, we completed a cost-of-service study with the help of an outside consultant. This study is a fundamental tool used by utilities for evaluating and setting electric rates. The study looks at the revenue required to operate the cooperative, it allocates the costs of

the cooperative equitably between the rate classes, and it creates a rate structure for each rate class that adequately covers the cost to serve each rate class. The board has reviewed the results and will be examining rate options this fall.

We have some new faces at the cooperative as several new employees have been hired since the beginning of the year. John LaValley is our new energy specialist and will be working on energy conservation projects and rebates, assisting commercial accounts with energy efficiency needs, and helping members with distributed generation projects. Alex Cronk and Alex Lutz are our newest apprentice linemen. Their four-year apprenticeship begins this year and I look forward to them becoming journeymen linemen in the near future. Congratulations John, Alex, and Alex, and welcome aboard!

Summer vacation is over for the kids and we will begin seeing school buses traveling on our rural roads to take them to their first day of school. If you are a parent or guardian, educate your children on staying away from traffic while waiting for the bus. If you are a driver,

be on the lookout for children and do not pass buses that have stopped. It is illegal to pass a school bus that is stopped to load and unload children. Let's work together to ensure our children stay safe this school year.

Looking ahead to October, please plan to join us for our annual Member Appreciation Breakfast at our office outside of Rosholt on Saturday, October 29. I look forward to seeing you then.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

An easy way to save energy is to seal air leaks and holes where plumbing pipes run through walls in your home. You can also check wall-mounted cabinets for plumbing holes or air gaps in the back.

Fill any holes or gaps with spray foam. Wear protective gloves and use a damp rag for cleanup.

Source: Dept. of Energy



BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

The June regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held in-person on June 30, 2022 at 7:56 a.m. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the May 26, 2022 meeting, new and terminated memberships, monthly safety and compliance report, and estate capital credit retirements were approved.

Action Items

- a. Monthly Financial Statements and Reports were approved. Finance Committee reviewed checks written and the board and CEO expenses.
- b. The Governance Committee did not meet this month.
- c. The board reviewed Board Policy 406 - Corporate Contributions and Sponsorships and made no recommended changes.
- d. Lila Shower gave an informational presentation to the board on Equity Management as part of our Strategic Goals and Action Plan.
- e. The board approved American Transmission Company (ATC)'s third capital call for 2022.
- f. The board reviewed and discussed an inflationary adjustment for wages and took no action.

g. The board approved all directors to attend the Badger Power Cooperative Annual Meeting on August 30, 2022 in Wisconsin Dells, with Directors Lehrer and Zander as the Badger board representatives and Director Oppor as the alternate.

Operations and Engineering – Kevin Kurtzweil reported the Iola Substation backfeed project is scheduled for Tuesday, July 5. Crews should be finishing up tomorrow on the Dewey Substation re-graveling project. An update on the recent storm damage/outage restoration was also given to the board.

Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were reviewed. Lila Shower has been selected to the NISC Advisory Committee which meets twice annually.

Member Services – Brenda Mazemke reported we currently have received 21 entries for the photo contest. John LaValley was introduced to the board as the new energy specialist.

Administrative Services – Lori Patoka reported on the new hires for June and July. Our corporate law firm is working on reviewing and updating employee policies. Also reviewed were the Phishing and KnowBe4 training results from Marco.

President and CEO – Mike Wade, CEO, reported on his submitted report.

Meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

ALEX LUTZ JOINS CWEC AFTER RECEIVING UTILITY WORKER SCHOLARSHIP

When Alex Lutz received the CWEC Electric Utility Worker Scholarship in 2020, it was his goal to eventually secure employment at Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC).



“That’s mainly the reason I applied for it (scholarship),” Lutz said. “I looked at going to line school and I looked to see what was local where I could possibly work someday. The co-op here in Rosholt is one of the closest places I could get to be close to home.”

Lutz, who graduated from Amherst High School, attended Moraine Park Technical College in Beaver Dam. After he graduated from Moraine Park, he became a locator with Wisconsin Public Service, working out of Wausau.

“That was kind of my foot in the door to the industry,” Lutz said. “From there I always wanted to move up to the lineman position. It was just a matter of time where that opening would be. Luckily it was here.”

As one would expect, Lutz said he was “pretty excited” when he saw the opening for an apprentice lineman at CWEC.

“It’s not very often they hire, and even when they do hire, there are so many applicants that it’s a very competitive position,” Lutz said. “Just to see an opening opened my eyes. I got my hopes up a lot and it worked out really good for me.”

Lutz said in high school he considered a career as an electrician, but didn’t want to always be working indoors. That’s when his focus turned to the utility industry.

“I saw how essential electricity was to our everyday lives and from there I knew the job security would be there,” Lutz said. “There would always be work. It was outside and I love being outside. And the whole brotherhood aspect of it. The fact that everybody is very tight-knit and it’s a lifestyle more than it is a job. That’s exactly what I was looking for.”

Gaining experience, meeting CWEC

members, and working in the rural CWEC service territory are some of the things Lutz is looking forward to.

“I’m pretty new, so there’s a whole lot I haven’t done,” Lutz said. “The experiences that are going to come with this job is what I’m looking forward to.”

During his spare time, Lutz enjoys trout fishing and hunting, as well as snowmobiling in the winter.

ALEX CRONK COMES TO CWEC FROM WESTERN WISCONSIN

Alex Cronk started as an apprentice lineman at Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) in late June. Previously he worked for Tjader & Highstrom Utility Services, LLC, which is located in New Richmond in western Wisconsin.

While working at Tjader & Highstrom Utility Services, Cronk had the unique opportunity to work with a variety of electric co-ops, including CWEC. While working with CWEC, he said he noticed the co-op had an open mind, good communication, and all the employees worked well together.

“From that standpoint it was the best by a longshot,” Cronk said.

In addition, Cronk said he was attracted to the rural CWEC service area, and the size of it. Because it is a fairly large service area, Cronk said it provides a variety of locations that linemen could be working in.

Ever since high school Cronk said he knew he wanted to become a lineman. His dad was a lineman at the time and still is a lineman.

“I just kind of worked into it I guess,” he said. “I knew what it required and what it was.”

The fact that the work isn’t repetitive also attracted him to pursue becoming a lineman, as well as the challenge of restoring power for members.

Cronk attended Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire. Since joining CWEC, Cronk said he has been learning a lot, and has started meeting CWEC members.

“It’s cool to see and talk to them,” Cronk said.

Cronk said he is looking forward to going through the lineman apprenticeship program.

“To learn as much as I possibly can, to be able to know everything that everybody else does,” Cronk said about his goals.

During his spare time, Cronk enjoys being outdoors, especially hunting and fishing.



JOHN LAVALLEY JOINS CWEC AS ENERGY SPECIALIST

In early June, John LaValley joined Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) as an energy specialist.

LaValley, originally from Merrill, previously worked for the Trek Bicycle Corporation.

“I worked with their distribution team coordinating logistics,” LaValley said. “I would be in constant contact with trucking companies trying to figure out when, and how many, or the capacity of what they should bring and how it should go. Logistics coordination along with working with the team there in order to accomplish its goals.”

Growing up in an “environmentally

conscious” family, LaValley said he was drawn to the energy specialist position.

“I do have family in the energy industry,” he said. “In this position, that seems to fit pretty well. Basically, I’m helping with energy conservation efforts and working with newer technologies that are going to lower the impact on our immediate environment. It just seemed pretty exciting.”

As the energy specialist, LaValley said he will work with CWEC members to help with their energy needs and conservation concerns. This includes dealing with distributed generation, solar installation, and electric vehicles, just to name a few areas.

“I look forward to working with mem-

bers,” LaValley said.

“I enjoy talking with people and seeing their concerns. It’s always interesting. Everyone has a different story.”

During his short time with CWEC so far, LaValley said he has been in communication with many members.

“The members I’ve talked to, they seem to be very receptive and seem to enjoy the communication from the cooperative,” LaValley said.

Outside of work, LaValley said he enjoys fishing, hunting, and spending time with family and friends.





STRASSBURG CREEK DAIRY ADDS ROBOT MILKING SYSTEM



Above: A cow being milked in one of the robot milking units at Strassburg Creek Dairy.

While the cow is being milked it is fed pellets of food, while other cows wait their turn to be milked. Left: A close-up view of the milking unit on the robot.

With their kids, Jake and Alyssa, expressing an interest to stay involved with the family farm, Jeff and Jeni Strassburg made the decision to add nine robot milking units to Strassburg Creek Dairy.

“We started the conversation with needing more barn space for cows and we’re still going to use our other parlor. When we were in the planning phase, our builder said to us, ‘If you want to set the kids up right, because they want to be on the farm, and labor struggles are never going to be better than they are today, I think you should think about looking at robots,’” Jeff Strassburg said.

Strassburg said he knew numerous people in the dairy industry who have robot milking units.

“I was intrigued after some touring of different facilities, but never knew if it was quite right for us,” Strassburg said. “The more things that we looked at, it made sense. We’re glad we made the step.”

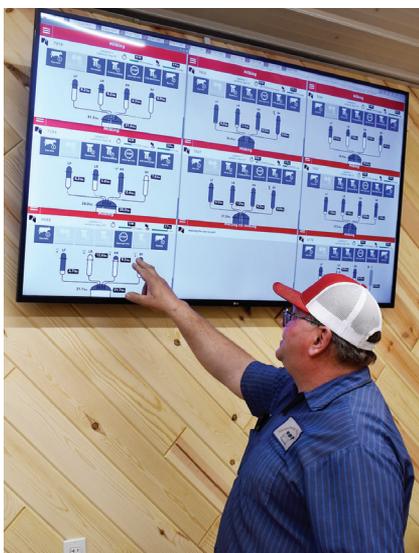
It’s a move that Strassburg believes will help create a foundation to keep the family farm moving into the future.

“I believe it is kind of the future of the industry,” Strassburg said. “You hear a lot of different speakers, and they say in any business, you need to be looking out 5, 10, 15 years, what are your biggest challenges? I guess probably in the last three or four, I guess our biggest challenge is probably labor.”

After the nine robot milking units were added, Strassburg increased the number of cows they milked. A total of 540 are now being milked by the robots, and 650 cows are being milked in a parlor.

The building where the robot units are located is divided into different areas, with three robot units for each pen. Each pen has about 180 cows, which equates

In the control room, Jeff Strassburg points out information on a large TV monitor about cows being milked in the robot milking units.



to 60 cows per robot. Each area that includes three robots includes a common area where cows can congregate.

“We don’t put any feed in the common areas because we don’t want that to get congested,” he said. “We want cows to come up here, and that way the cows are looking to get milked when a box opens up. They actually go in on their own.”

After the robots were installed, the cows needed to be trained to use the robots on their own.

“We usually have 10 or 12 cows twice a day that we have to go get,” Strassburg said. “Otherwise everyone else goes in by themselves.”

To help entice the cows into the robot milking units, a small amount of food pellets is placed in a bowl in the robot unit. While a cow is being milked, it is given more food pellets based on information specific to that cow. If enough time hasn’t elapsed since the last time the cow was milked, the robot will refuse to milk the cow.

On average, each cow is milked 2.9 times per day, Strassburg said.

Each cow has a tag on its neck that is their ID. The tag is scanned when the cow walks into the robot milking unit, letting the robot know which cow is in the unit and how much feed it should get.

The milking process can be monitored in a control room which includes a TV monitor that allows information to be viewed about each cow currently being milked. Reports are also generated.

Strassburg was able to obtain conservation rewards from Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative for the robot milking units project.

“The conservation rewards are sure appreciated. Anytime you’re designing a facility like this, to bring the conservation fees into it, a farmer is always looking to do things better than we’ve done before,” Strassburg said.

Strassburg Creek Dairy is currently adding three more robot milking units.

ELECTRIC BILLS ON THE RISE

Even though Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative has been successful for almost two years in keeping your Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) to a zero or a negative number, it has recently been a positive number on your electric bill. The positive number reflects higher than expected wholesale power costs from Alliant Energy.

The summer demand for natural gas has caused the portion of our wholesale power bill designed to recover fuel costs to increase higher than we have seen in years. Recently there was a slight decrease in natural gas costs, but we are still expecting the PCA to be higher than expected for the remainder of the summer and into the fall.

If you have questions about the PCA, please contact our office at 800-377-2932.



Central Wisconsin
Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Our Mission

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

STEAM GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR AREA SCHOOLS

Valuing education and training, while also understanding that classrooms may have limited funding to pursue the projects needed to educate the young minds in our local communities, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) has introduced a new grant program to help schools in the CWEC service area.

The grant funding is available for public, public charter, private, and home schools in the CWEC service area for classrooms with students K-12. The classroom project must be academically focused in the areas of science, technology, engineering, art, or math. The grant may be used to purchase equipment or curriculum materials and should be part of a well-planned and integrated project or activity. Instructors may apply for a STEAM grant up to \$1,000 per school, per academic year.



Home schools are allowed to receive up to \$100 per home school, per academic year.

Public schools that are eligible to receive the CWEC STEAM grants include Bowler, Iola-Scandinavia, Rosholt, Tigerton, and Wittenberg-Birnamwood. Public charter,

private, and home schools must be within the townships CWEC serves. For a listing of the eligible townships, go to CWEC's website at www.cwecoop.com and click on the STEAM Grant Program tab under Member Services, or call the CWEC office at 800-377-2932.

Applications will be reviewed by the CWEC Operation Round Up Board at its quarterly meetings to be sure they meet the qualifications. Applications should be submitted 4-6 weeks prior to the date of anticipated need. The next deadline for applications is Oct. 1.

YLC PROVIDED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

My name is Malea Tessen and I had the privilege to attend the Youth Leadership Congress at UW-Stout through my electric provider, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative.

Throughout the three-day event we had the opportunity to learn about what a cooperative business model is and how it not only benefits my family but our community as well. We had many speakers come throughout our time there. They taught us all how to become better leaders and to work cooperatively amongst one another.

During my time at YLC I was able to also make many friends from all different co-ops throughout Wisconsin. I will be a senior in high school this school year and I hope to use these new leadership skills I learned to help make the civil organizations I'm a part of better in many ways.

I had great time at YLC. I truly recommend that every high school student who is interested in becoming a better leader within their community to contact their co-op about attending. You won't regret it.

I thank my co-op for allowing me to attend.

