



REBATE REMINDER!

For the last several years, through our Energy Sense program, we have offered rebates on Energy Star-rated appliances, LED lighting, and many other energy efficient items. With the end of the year nearing, we wanted to remind members that all rebates for 2023 are due in our office NO LATER THAN Sunday, December 31, 2023.

Did you build a house this year? Maybe had to unexpectedly replace a failing appliance? If, in the past several months, you have purchased a new clothes washer or dryer, dishwasher, refrigerator, freezer, or dehumidifier you may qualify for a \$25 rebate. You can visit our website at www.dunnenergy.com (Energy Incentive tab) for information on all of our rebates as well as to find the appropriate rebate form for your purchase.

To qualify for a rebate, you must have made the purchase in 2023. You must have a copy of the receipt or invoice. You must also have a copy of the Energy Star usage tag for the appliance to verify it was Energy Star rated. If you have any questions, you can give us a call at the office at 715-232-6240.

Check out our website at www.dunnenergy.com to find out more about our rebates! And remember, you need to have everything turned in NO LATER THAN Sunday, December 31, 2023, to be assured that you will receive your credit.



GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

As we reach the last month of the year it is always a great opportunity to reflect on all we experienced in 2023. At Dunn Energy Cooperative 2023 was another busy year. Our crews worked hard to restore power during several challenging storms. We also completed many projects to improve your power quality and build new lines to serve the energy needs of new members. The office staff kept everything in order and delivered exceptional member service as they answered thousands of phone calls, processed bills, developed renewable energy projects, and helped our members with energy efficiency improvements. Day in and day out it was another demanding, but successful year. Most importantly we did all that work safely, and we operated like a true cooperative, returning our profits to our members.

While the day-to-day business of keeping the lights on is always our main focus, your member-owned cooperative serves another purpose as well. We work diligently to improve the quality of life in our community. That might be through our Operation Round Up program, donations to local groups, packaging meals for Project SAM, or through the investments we make in youth with our scholarship program. We also work with members and local community leaders on economic development projects that benefit our local area. Over the past year we have met with leaders from Menomonie, Dunn County, Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Chippewa Falls and Chippewa County to talk about how the cooperative can help grow those communities. This year we worked on projects such as the Eau Claire Event District/Country Jam, a dairy farm expansion, utility-scale solar projects, renewable natural gas projects, maple syrup processing, and housing developments, all with the goal of helping our members achieve success and create a stronger community. Your cooperative serves a diverse and growing membership in parts of several counties and cities in western Wisconsin, and we look forward to putting the cooperative purpose into action as we work to improve the quality of life for our members and the communities we serve.

On behalf of the employees and board members of Dunn Energy Cooperative I thank each of you for your business this past year. It is our honor to be your energy cooperative and safely deliver you reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy. We wish you and your family a blessed holiday season and a fantastic New Year!

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Hidden Account Numbers

If you find your account number hidden in the pages of this magazine and you call and tell us before the next issue is mailed, we'll put a **\$50 credit** on your electric bill. Happy hunting!

Last month's winners were Leonard Cox and Gregory & Amy Tietz

GUARD AGAINST UTILITY SERVICE SCAMS, OTHER FORMS OF FRAUD AND IDENTITY THEFT

It is the world we live in today—the necessity to pause and consider before we click, answer, or respond to someone seeking information. No industry, person, or business is off limits to scammers, who even try to con their way into the utility industry.

The Better Business Scam Tracker reports that victims usually lose \$274 in all types of scams and \$500 in a utility scam. (4013002)

When it comes to power bills, scammers make threatening phone calls to consumers to demand immediate payment, or else! (Or else their service will be shut off, they threaten.) This deceiving claim is often made during the height of summer or winter, when people want to stay comfortable during the extreme heat or cold. However, we will send initial disconnection notices in writing before disconnection.

How they get you Scammers request that immediate payment be wired, loaded on a reloadable gift card or debit card, or sent using cryptocurrency (a digital money system that does not rely on banks for verification). Only scammers request this type of payment and threaten immediate service disconnection. Do not provide any information (including your utility account number) or agree to immediate payment; instead, hang up and check with your utility by using the phone number listed on your power bill. Fake numbers and links can appear in emails and texts.

Consumers should trust their gut reaction; if it seems like a fraud, it probably is.

Protect personal information

When supplying your utility (or any business or person) with sensitive information such as a Social Security number, proof of address, or other important information, do not use email. Additionally, do not give out sensitive

information to anyone who calls you, if you don't know them or aren't expecting their call. Verify the phone number and call the utility directly to discuss any matter that would involve providing personal information. In general, some companies do have password-protected, secure methods to obtain personal information via an app or portal, but always verify this before using.



At your door The famous song by Paul McCartney, titled "Let 'Em In," features the artist's welcoming plea, "Someone's knockin' at the door; Someone's ringin' the bell...Do me a favor; Open the door and let 'em in," but that is not always great advice these days.

Door-to-door scammers may involve impersonators of utility workers saying the meter is broken or offering to perform other repairs or an energy audit—all at the consumer's cost. Do not let someone in the house without a pre-approved appointment.

In some areas, door-to-door scammers often promise better energy rates; however, switching can often result in higher rates and hard-to-break, long-term contracts. If you live in an area where there is more than one utility option, double check credibility with the state's utility regulatory agency before switching services.

Scams in general The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

warns that phishing emails and texts attempt to convince individuals to make payments or provide personal information. Thieves use stolen information to open accounts and pass charges on to the victim.

Caller ID can fib Over the phone, calls appearing to be local are not always an accurate assessment of who is calling. AARP has a fraud watch network that provides alerts of new frauds; do an internet search for the fraud watch network to learn more.

Scams are everywhere Non-utility-related scams may include the announcement of an inheritance or pop-ups on a computer warning that technical support is needed. There are even puppy purchase cons when cute and often sought-after breeds are offered in all their puppy cuteness, but scammers take your money and run. There are student loan forgiveness scams and one-time password bot scams.

Hackers even prey on the many smartphone users who have cracked screens. It is called the "chip in the middle attack," and scammers get ahold of a screen replacement and install it on your phone with a spyware chip. Always verify a screen-fix-it phone number or take your phone to a store/servicer you trust. If the company cannot be verified by a search engine, do not trust it.

No matter the scam, the goal of the scammer is to gather personal information. Stay safe: Do not share Social Security numbers, account details, credit card numbers, bank information, death certificates or birth dates. Thieves can use this information to steal their victim's identity.

If you become a victim of a scam, report it to the local police and your bank. Consumers can protect themselves by blocking unknown callers and keeping software updated on phones and computers.



HELP PREVENT COPPER THEFT

Thieves sometimes think of it as a crime that won't hurt anybody. The truth is that tampering with electrical equipment or attempting to steal copper can harm many people. Those who steal copper (or power) are not only risking their own lives but also the safety and well-being of others.

Common targets for copper theft include farm equipment, air conditioners, vacant buildings, construction sites and electric utility properties, including substations and power poles.

How homeowners can help

- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, hanging wire and so on, contact your electric utility immediately.
- For empty homes, install lighting systems that operate using a timer to make the property a less likely target. For all homes, install motion-sensor lights on the outside of the house to deter possible thieves.
- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while away.

How businesses can help

- Report suspicious activity.
- Eliminate or secure all external access to buildings and roofs. (6518001)
- Remove items that allow for easy access to buildings, such as ladders, scaffolds, trees, dumpsters, and accumulated materials, such as pallet piles.
- Install security cameras and alarm systems. The location and the type of object will determine what kind of surveillance is needed. For example, for heating and cooling units, there are alarms that are triggered if the unit stops working.
- In areas that contain valuable objects such as air conditioners, install fences and lighting fixtures around them. The amount of copper in most commercial air conditioners is never worth a great amount, but the real cost is paid by the owner of the unit.
- Most copper theft takes place during nights or weekends. Hiring staff or security personnel to monitor your facility during these periods can greatly reduce the chances of a serious loss.

Copper theft can affect more than the person stealing; in fact, it can cost a life. Detecting and reporting illegal activity could help save a life. For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY



STEALING COPPER HAS A HUGE COST

Thieves like to steal and sell the soft, reddish orange metal to make some quick cash. However, they may sacrifice more than they gain, since stealing copper can cause serious injuries or death. Copper thieves could also face hefty fines and prison time.

The FBI attributes copper theft to disruptions in the flow of the following: electricity, telecommunications, transportation, water supply, heating, security and emergency services. It presents a risk to both public safety and national security.

Common targets for copper theft include farm equipment, air conditioners, abandoned buildings, construction sites and electric utility equipment, including substations and power poles.

The majority of copper theft occurs at night or on the weekends. Detecting and reporting suspicious and illegal activity could help save a life.

Learn more:



The holiday season is the time when we cherish old traditions and enjoy creating new ones. All of us here at Dunn Energy want to wish you a merry and bright holiday season, and we look forward to serving you and our community in 2024!

Jesse Singerhouse
Tyrel Blanchfield
Pete Brantner
Brian Jiskra
Josh Millar
Loren Luzinski
Pat Rhude
Chris Marlett

John Hestekin
Lee Longmire
Dan Heit
Mike Frinack
Landan Romsos
Logan Scheel
David Livingston
Jordan Hessler
Colin Riley

Brett Pauly
Diane Harschlip
Heather Boesl
Becky Weber
Jolene Fisher
Becky Gehring
Dee Fox
Corrine Fiege
Allison Zielsdorf

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Jesse Singerhouse, Manager

N5725 600th St., P.O. Box 220, Menomonie, WI 54751
715-232-6240
www.dunnenergy.com

Jolene Fisher, Editor



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