



# IT'S YOUR COOPERATIVE

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

Many times, in our presentations or publications, our staff and board members will mention Dunn Energy Cooperative (DEC) being your cooperative. As a member-owned cooperative the word 'your' reminds us every day of the core reason we exist. Your Cooperative was started because no other company wanted to electrify rural America. So rural America worked together, with the help of the federal Rural Electrification Act, to establish a cooperative to do what others wouldn't.

Today we are nearly 90 years removed from when that occurred, but the purpose of the cooperative remains the same: to serve our members. There are probably other companies that would welcome the chance to take over our rural territory now that it has grown, but I believe the cooperative difference still matters to your Cooperative.

At your Cooperative, any profits are returned over time to the members that used the energy, not to outside investors.

At your Cooperative, members who use the cooperative's services are elected to represent the broader membership on our board of directors. (8813006)

At your Cooperative, donations are made to local community organizations that support the growth and development of our area.

At your Cooperative, you can attend the annual meeting, vote in elections, and help set the future path of this organization.

Members, on behalf of our Board of Directors and employees, I invite you to attend your Cooperative's annual meeting on Thursday, May 15, at our headquarters. A light buffet-style dinner will be served from 5—5:45 p.m. and the business meeting will start around 6 p.m. You can also tune into our Facebook page to watch a live broadcast. Please also take time to vote in the election of directors. Ballots were mailed in late April along with our condensed annual report.

At this annual meeting we will elect two new directors, as both Brian Johnson and Ed Hartung have reached their term limits. We thank both Brian and Ed for their contributions to DEC. Both have been tremendous leaders and a powerful voice in representing the members of your Cooperative. We appreciate their time, talent, and dedication to the Cooperative movement.

The annual meeting will be our final look back on 2024. It was both a challenging and successful year for your Cooperative. I'm happy to report we continue to be strong financially and well positioned to continue to safely deliver energy that is reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible for YOUR Cooperative! I hope to see you at our annual meeting on May 15th.

*Working for You*

## 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 Wesley Bauer and Faylene Howe.

## DUNN ENERGY COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING

**Thursday, May 15**

**Dunn Energy Cooperative Headquarters**

**Light buffet-style dinner:  
5–5:45 p.m.**

**Meeting starting at 6 p.m.**



# A Blooming DESTINATION IN CHIPPEWA FALLS



**Stephanie and Bob Sworski, owners of Pondview Lavender Farm**

**P**ondview Lavender Farm opened to the public in June 2024. Owned by the Sworski family of Chippewa Falls, WI, the farm has approximately 10,000 lavender plants—currently growing five (5) different varieties of English Lavender.

Lavender originated in the European mountainous areas near the Mediterranean Sea. There are over 45 different species of lavender that cover over 450 varieties. The Romans used it in various ways for aroma “therapy”; they also used it for its antiseptic/medicinal qualities given its healing properties. Certain varieties can be used in culinary applications, including those grown at Pondview Lavender Farm. The two main lavenders grown at Pondview Lavender Farm are “northern climate” varieties called *Lavandula Angustifolia* (Folgate and Mellissa) and *Lavander X intermedia*. Additional lines include Hidcote, Munstead, Phenomenal, Royal Velvet, Ellagance Snow, Superblue, Paster’s Pride, Mitcha Gray, Blue Cushion, and Vera. While lavender is mainly thought of as a plant with long stems and large purple buds, the English varieties are typically shorter in stature and come in many different colors. The plants need to be in full sun, and soils are best when the pH is near 6.8. Lavender can be susceptible to root rot and fungus if not planted in well-drained soils. Roots can travel as deep as 4’-0” below grade! The lavender should be pruned in the spring and fall time frames—this helps the plant develop the largest blooms possible.

The Sworski family originally intended the farm to become their retirement “gig”, with the idea of keeping active, being outdoors, and providing a bit of retirement income. However, that idea was soon replaced with a big dose of reality: In the

first 20 days of operation, nearly 14,000 people visited the farm to experience all that lavender offers. The Sworski’s wanted their farm to be unique, where a visit to the farm is an experience rather than just a place to go purchase lavender products. This is an operating farm where visitors can experience the plants, the fragrance, the wildlife, the farm equipment, and be educated in what lavender offers to us as humans, both physically and mentally. It’s a chance to enjoy some relaxation and soak in what lavender can offer. The Sworski’s want visitors and guests to have fun, ask questions, enjoy some conversation, and leave with some memories.

While the farm does offer lavender products to purchase, there is so much more to take in—including, but not limited to:

- U-Pick bundles during the three (3) week bloom
- Farm tours
- Evening Yoga classes in the fields
- Indoor/outdoor relaxing areas
- Strolls through the lavender fields
- Photo sessions
- Mocktail classes
- Tea mixing classes





In 2025, new offerings will include a lavender-infused coffee bar, a first annual lavender festival during the three (3) week bloom period, food trucks, wreath-making classes, and watercolor painting classes.

And as originally planned, Pondview Lavender Farm teams with other local businesses to highlight a number of collaborative efforts. These include Riverbend Winery & Distillery mixing a mean Lavender Collins, Chippewa Distillery making a lavender-infused Gin, The Nostalgic Bean (bakery)—who whips up the best brownies and macaroons, and Kaiserson Honey, LLC. We also highlight a few local artisans that make lavender-inspired products such as ceramics, decorative boxes, cutting boards and potpourri bowls. Dunn Energy Co-op, our electricity provider, helped facilitate new electrical services to the property and continually supports its membership.

The Pondview Lavender Farm also incorporates sustainable principles. The site has been witness to many different farming activities over the years—from growing hemp during WWII, then tobacco and row crops, to now serving in an agri-tourism capacity. The farm has two repurposed and remodeled buildings that serve as the maintenance building and employee areas. Much of the lumber used in the remodeling was salvaged from other projects. The exist-



*“Before the blue of night meets the pink of sunrise, there is a transition of lavender. It’s a gradient of color that stretches its fade through time, and that gives each moment a unique and exquisite existence.”*  
— Jarod Kintz, *The Lewis and Clark of The Ozarks*

ing concrete silo serves as the backdrop for the large mural identifying the site.

The retail shop building, though newly constructed, incorporates salvaged barn timbers and rafters as a large part of its superstructure. Other sustainable features include polished concrete floors, repurposed soap stone and concrete sinks, and best management practices in managing on-site storm water. Locally sourced rough sawn lumber and timber framing from Timber Technologies in Colfax, WI also help the farm display its vernacular architecture.

—Bob Sworski, Owner

The farm is located just off Exit 72 on Highway 29, west of Chippewa Falls. The address is 3735 Business State Highway 29, Chippewa Falls, WI. The farm is open from the beginning of June through the Saturday of Labor Day weekend in September. Interested visitors should watch the farm’s website to best identify specific days and times the farm will be open and when the three (3) week bloom period is expected to occur.

[www.pondviewlavenderfarm.com](http://www.pondviewlavenderfarm.com)



## DUNN ENERGY SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED



Dunn Energy Cooperative is proud to announce the 2025 High School scholarship recipients. As a member-owned cooperative, we believe firmly in engaging and lifting up the next generation of cooperative members and leaders. (12013001) Our scholarship program is just one of many ways we make a difference, one member at a time. Congratulations on your \$1,000 scholarships and good luck to the following individuals:

- ★ **Ryker Benitz** from Boyceville (Ryan & Amber Benitz)
- ★ **Emily Fetzer** from Boyceville (Frank & Stacy Fetzer)
- ★ **Jake Bialzik** from Boyceville (Tina & Aaron Bialzik)
- ★ **Jamie Lehmann** from Boyceville (Glen & Kim Lehmann)
- ★ **Isaiah Henrichs** from Chippewa Falls (Rick & Valerie Henrichs)
- ★ **Kaysen Goodell** from Colfax (Mat & Renee Goodell)
- ★ **Chelsea Rose** from Colfax (John Rose & Diane Rose Witt)
- ★ **Brenna Berg** from Colfax (Adam Berg & Melissa Berg)
- ★ **Amanda Lemler** from Colfax (Ron & Erin Lemler)
- ★ **Chloe Auth** from Durand (Ericka & Dustin Auth)
- ★ **Steven Loff Peterson** from Durand (John & Linda Loff-Peterson)
- ★ **Kamron Diermeier** from Elk Mound (Doug & Darla Diermeier)
- ★ **Aiden Schindler** from Elk Mound (Cory & Wendy Schindler)
- ★ **Alexis Joachim** from Elk Mound (Susan & Dominique Joachim)
- ★ **Ellie Schiszik** from Elk Mound (Mike & Heidi Schiszik)
- ★ **Josh Lortscher** from Memorial (Loren & Amy Lortscher)
- ★ **Anika Schoenberger** from Menomonie (Dave & Tina Schoenberger)
- ★ **Jonathon Foslid** from Menomonie (William & Kimberly Foslid)
- ★ **Rebekah Bignell** from Menomonie (Chris & Sue Bignell)
- ★ **Hayden Weir** from Menomonie (Heidi & Bob Weir)

*Scholarships are funded by unclaimed capital credits.*

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### Jolene Fisher, Editor



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