



DOES BEING A COOPERATIVE MEMBER MATTER?

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

As an electric cooperative that has been in business for 85 years, we've seen many changes to our industry. Take how our equipment has changed, for example; instead of digging power poles in by hand we now have a machine that can dig the hole and help set the pole. Technology has changed as well. Meters are now sending readings and data back in an instant versus members having to read their own meter each month. Information on our nearly 11,000 accounts is stored electronically versus handwritten on paper. Electricity is now produced by wind and solar farms, nuclear plants, biomass facilities, and natural gas generators versus strictly from coal and other fossil fuels. But through all the changes in the last 85 years the one thing that hasn't changed is our commitment to serving people and our communities.

When we ask the people we serve if they are members, customers, or both of Dunn Energy Cooperative, most typically say customer. That answer makes perfect sense. When I purchase goods or services from a business I think of myself as a customer as well. If you ask people what they are members of you might get responses like a church, community service club, gym, golf course, or some industry trade association. Being a member in a group organization means there are certain benefits that you receive that someone who is not a member does not. If you are reading this article you are most likely a member of Dunn Energy Cooperative (DEC) because you receive electric service from the cooperative.

So, does being a cooperative member matter? The answer is undoubtedly yes! Why that matters requires a look back in history as well as what is happening today. DEC was formed as a cooperative because a group of local people saw a need that wasn't being met in their area. In the mid 1930s, nine out of 10 homes in the rural areas didn't have electricity. President Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act (REA) in 1936 and electric cooperatives began to form across the country. Friends and neighbors worked together to bring electricity to their rural communities. The first members of DEC invested their time, energy, and finances to improve their rural

community. Being a member meant you had a commitment to the success of the cooperative. I have a strong appreciation for what those first members did for DEC and the areas we serve.

Being a member is just as important today as it was in 1937. We still elect members to serve on our board of directors. The board governs the cooperative and sets the overall direction for the organization. Members have a voice in cooperative governance by voting in director elections and on other vital cooperative issues. Members can attend the annual meeting of the cooperative to learn more about the year's operations.

You also see the benefit of being a cooperative member when you receive your capital credit patronage checks. Because we serve members, and not outside investors,

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profits are returned to the members who used the electricity. Being a member of DEC means that you are part of an organization that works not only to bring electricity to our members, but also to improve the communities we serve through programs like Operation

Round Up, SunDEC Community Solar, Energy Sense (our rebate and incentive program), and youth scholarships. By working together as members, we can make a difference.

The cooperative exists to serve you, our members. We are committed to safely delivering our members reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy. October is Cooperative Month, which is our chance to celebrate this unique business model. This model has been in place for over 85 years and it's a model that still works today because of the focus on our members.

We invite you to celebrate Co-op Month with us from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, October 29 at Dunn Energy Cooperative as we host a member appreciation cookout with several other area cooperatives.

Side Note: Please note the change in time for the celebration. We will be serving lunch this year, instead of a breakfast. We hope to see you there!

Working for You



Dunn County Sculpture Tour

PUBLIC ART IN YOUR BACKYARD

Did you know that newly installed public art throughout the City of Menomonie is part of the largest sculpture tour in the United States? Wait. Did you even know there's a new public art sculpture tour in Menomonie? Through a partnership between the Sculpture Tour Eau Claire and Explore Menomonie (a program of the Greater Menomonie Area Chamber of Commerce), six welded metal art sculptures were installed around the city in late August.



The art installation is part of Sculpture Tour Eau Claire. Sculpture Tour Eau Claire is the largest tour in the United States, with over 80 public art installations this year. It was through the partnership that Sculpture Tour Eau Claire was able to help Menomonie get its first six art installations.

“The sculpture tour is a great reflection of a regional partnership at work. By collaborating with Sculpture Tour Eau Claire, we literally put ourselves on the map for the public art scene,” said Ashley DeMuth, Menomonie Area Chamber of Commerce CEO. “We could not be happier with the result, and we look forward to seeing this project expand over the next few years.”

The map that DeMuth is talking about can be found at the Visitors Center on north Broadway in Menomonie, or by visiting exploremenomonie.com.

exploremenomonie.com/sculpture-tour. You can find the sculptures at:

- Russell J Rassbach Heritage Museum
- Wakanda Park
- Sanna Park
- Mabel Tainter Center for the Arts
- Wilson Park
- University of Wisconsin-Stout (Applied Arts)

Once you’ve visited all the sculptures, you can vote for your favorite! Voting is on the Sculpture Tour page of the Explore Menomonie website.

The sculptures are typically on display from May through April, but as the Menomonie sculptures were installed late in the summer, they may be on display for a bit longer. Once their time is up, they will be shipped to South Dakota where, much like the NFL draft, other cities will get their chance to claim them. It is through this process that

the installations will change, keeping the art scene fresh in our area. This is also where there is the potential for the Chamber, through Explore Menomonie, to get more than just six sculptures for the city.

“Public art inspires, it brings people together, and it is available 24/7, regardless of socioeconomic status,” said Tammy Simon, MACC tourism manager. “The installation of these sculptures is not only a benefit to the city, but to community members and tourists as well.”

If you are a local artist, you can find more information about participating in the U.S. Sculpture Tour by reaching out to Simon. She can be reached at 715-235-9087. Simon is also the contact for business owners who may be interested in having a sculpture displayed on their property. (11616001)



Visit the sculptures that have been installed as part of Sculpture Tour Eau Claire, including six in Menomonie, and vote for your favorite by going to exploremenomonie.com and clicking Explore, Arts & Culture, and finally Sculpture Tour.



THE EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF THE ENERGY INDUSTRY: ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

In late summer, the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) held an Energy Issues Summit, bringing together leadership from cooperatives around the state to hear about topics ranging from nuclear and natural gas energy to the current political landscape and how things could change after the upcoming elections. Attendees also heard more about the federal government's all-electric school bus program. On hand was an electric school bus as well as the first all-electric bucket truck.

The day was about innovation and the future of energy and the takeaway was that anything is possible. (140019345)

The first session of the day focused on how liquid natural gas (LNG) has the potential to be the bridge between baseload coal generation and more reliable renewable energy, when it becomes available. As a non-dispatchable resource (meaning you can't call on it at any minute and know it's there) traditional renewable energy has a way to go before it can be a reliable baseload generation. Natural gas, on the other hand, is dispatchable and historically, relatively inexpensive. So, increasing the use of LNG and reducing the use of coal could be a win for the environment.

However, the third speaker of the day, a nuclear engineer, talked about how nuclear energy could be the bridge to reliable renewables if carbon reduction is the goal. He pointed out, though, that policymakers would need to care about more than just costs—they'd have to care a whole lot about carbon reduction because nuclear energy is expensive to build for. To change that, we'd have to change the way the United States builds reactors and adopt a more cookie-cutter, factory-built reactor than building on site.

Also discussed was the trouble with getting new trans-

mission lines approved and built. How do you get renewable energy from a great place for production, like west Texas where barren land and sun are plentiful, to a place that needs that energy, like the Midwest? You have to build new transmission lines. This can be an expensive and time-consuming endeavor, but one that needs to happen.

Anthony Maietta, from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), spoke about the federal electric school bus

initiative. The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act included \$5 billion in funding for school districts and other organizations to purchase electric school buses and related charging infrastructure over a five-year period. Administered by the U.S. EPA, the program allows for local school districts to apply for grants to purchase the buses and what's needed to charge them. Schools can apply for up to 25 buses. The caveat is that they must scrap or sell (depending on age) a diesel bus in its place.

An anecdote from an Alaskan school district brought home just how beneficial these buses could be in the right settings. Attendees were told that on the coldest school days this Alaskan district experienced, the school district found that the electric buses were more reliable than their diesel counterparts, starting and running regardless of the temperature.

The day ended with a wrap up regarding the potential for rolling blackouts that Wisconsin faced this past summer. By being able to implement load controls at necessary times, we were able to avoid any potential energy deficit we may have seen. All in all, systems already in place worked exactly as they were designed to work.

All of this was good news for the electric industry. Bright people are working on new technologies to help lead the way to a cleaner energy future. Anything is possible.



Electric co-op leaders from across the state got a close-up look at an electric school bus at the recent WECA Energy Issues Summit in Eau Claire.

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 Terry Melgaard and Jamie & Angela Larson.

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