

EAU CLAIRE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Wisconsin

ENERGY COOPERATIVE

MONTHLY SINCE 1940

JANUARY 2012

News



**THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY
POWDER KEG**



**Silver Mine Hill
World Class
Ski Jumping**



**Family Friendly
Winter Fun!**

(see inside)

EAU CLAIRE BIKE & SPORT
AND THE CHIPPEWA OFF ROAD BIKE ASSOCIATION
PRESENT A FUN-FILLED DAY OF

SNOWSHOEING AND SNOW BIKING



THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY POWDER KEG

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH
EAU CLAIRE COUNTY EXPO CENTER
& LOWES CREEK COUNTY PARK

CHOOSE FROM A 5-MILE SNOWSHOE RACE,
2-MILE SNOWSHOE RUN/WALK,
OR 1-HOUR MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE

THERE WILL ALSO BE A SHORT, FUN
AND FREE KIDS & MASCOTS RACE

SMORES AROUND THE BONFIRE
RAGER FOOD & REFRESHMENTS
DOOR PRIZES FOR PARTICIPANTS
| SNOWSHOE DEMOS
FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

For all the info, visit www.chippewaoffroad.org/events/powderkeg



Fantastic Sams
HAIR SALONS



SCHEELS



Xcel Energy
RESPONSIBLE BY NATURE™



Walmart
Save money. Live better.

INSTY-PRINTS
DESIGN / PRINT / MAIL



Eau Claire Energy
Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Silver Mine Invitational

World Class Ski Jumping Competition

Friday, January 20, 2012

7-10 p.m.

Silver Mine Ski Hill, southwest of Eau Claire

- *Trash80's Band from Chicago*
- *Bon fires!*
- *NEW! - Pond Hockey Classic*
- *Concessions*

New! Pond Hockey Classic!

A new outdoor winter sporting event is coming to the Chippewa Valley this winter — the Silver Mine Cup Pond Hockey Classic. It is being sponsored by Eau Claire Youth Hockey in conjunction with the Silver Mine Ski Jumping Invitational, the signature event of the Eau Claire Ski Club. The pond hockey tournament will be held on the grounds of the Silver Mine Ski Jump from January 20–22, 2012, to coincide with the annual ski jumping event.

Hockey traces its roots back to playing outdoors on frozen ponds and rivers. Paintings from the early 1800s show “shinney” (a game of hockey with no formal rules) being played in Nova Scotia. Much of that rugged, natural flavor has been lost over the years with the rigorous rules and schedules of youth hockey, and the near-complete transition to indoor ice. As somewhat of a throwback to days past, pond hockey has become a popular winter event across the northern United States, with some tournaments drawing hundreds of teams. Even the NHL now plays an annual outdoor “Winter Classic” game.

Rich Ski Jumping Traditions

The Silver Mine Ski Jump Invitational has a rich tradition of its own dating back to 1886, and it draws competitors from across North America and Europe. We are fortunate to have this world-class event right here

in our own backyard as there is only a handful of 90-meter ski jumps remaining in the United States. The Silver Mine Ski Jump is known for the quality of the snow on the jump and out-run, laboriously prepared by the dedicated volunteers of the Eau Claire Ski Club. Similarly, the Eau Claire Youth Hockey board hopes that the Silver Mine Pond Hockey Classic will become known for the quality of its rinks.

The Silver Mine Ski Jump itself sits on a scenic bluff overlooking the Chippewa River Valley and Eau Claire. There is a large, flat field at the base of the jump where the pond hockey rinks are located. The six 50-by-100-foot rinks were built this fall and will provide an excellent foundation to last for many years. Because of this close proximity to the jump itself, pond hockey spectators will also be able to view the ski jumping competition.

The on-site facilities, which include heated tents, concessions, and toilets, will be expanded to accommodate the anticipated increase in numbers of people attending the ski jumping event.

The pond hockey tournament will have both youth and adult divisions, currently with room for 24 teams in each division. The divisions will be broken down into brackets based on ages for the youth and experience levels for the adults. The youth games will be on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, while the adult games will be on Friday and Saturday nights. The games will consist of two 15 minute halves of 3-on-3 hockey. Team sizes of four to six players are recommended. Each team will be guaranteed three games, and there will be an additional game for the teams in the championship rounds.

The Silver Mine Pond Hockey Classic has been created to be an enjoyable event for participants and spectators alike. The Eau Claire Youth Hockey board and the Eau Claire Ski Club board hope that you will come to celebrate two classic winter sporting events in the beautiful Chippewa Valley. ■



Embrace winter at the **Powder Keg Race Walk!**

Saturday, January 28, 2012

Snowshoeing & Snow Bike Racing!

**Eau Claire County Expo Center
& Lowes Creek County Park**

www.chippewaoffroad.org/events/powderkeg

It's another year of Powder Keg fun, as you explore the scenic trails of Lowes Creek County Park. CORBA (Chippewa Off Road Bike Association) offers a 5-mile snowshoe race, 2-mile snowshoe run/walk. New this year is a challenging one-hour snow bike race.

FREE Kids & Mascots Sprint—It's back! The fun-filled Kids & Mascots Sprint is for children 12 and under (FREE this year)!

FREE s'mores at the fire... mmm—And when you're not on the trails, warm up with free s'mores and a crackling fire. Whether you're a veteran racer, a complete beginner or just a spectator, there's something for everyone to enjoy at the Chippewa Valley Powder Keg, brought to you by CORBA, Eau Claire Bike & Sport and many other sponsors, including Eau Claire Energy Cooperative.

Snowshoers pack the track for bikers—Snowshoers can expect a mix of groomed and ungroomed singletrack and doubletrack, with a handful of short-but-steep hills thrown in for good measure. Medals will be awarded to overall male and female winners and top male and female racers in each age group of the 5- and 2-mile snowshoe races.

Need snowshoes?—Don't have your own snowshoes? Don't let that stop you. Snowshoes

are on hand for those who want to try the sport or just join in the fun with their snowshoeing friends. Snowshoes are first-come-first-served, though, so don't dawdle.

New! One hour Snow Bike Race—The Snow Bike race will last approximately one hour. Race format may change depending on conditions, but expect short laps mainly on the trails packed down by the snowshoers who proceed you. There will be two race categories: one for fat bikes (with tires 3 inches wide or bigger) and one for nonfat bikes (tires less than 3 inches wide). Medals will be awarded to the top three finishers in each category.

Schedule of Events

- 8:00 a.m. – Registration for Snowshoe Race OPENS
- 9:30 a.m. – Registration for Snowshoe Race CLOSSES
- 10:00 a.m. – 5-Mile Snowshoe Race
- 10:05 a.m. – 2-Mile Snowshoe Race
- 11:00 a.m. – Registration for Snow Bike Race OPENS
- 11:30 a.m. – Kids & Mascots Snowshoe Sprint
- 12:00 noon – Snowshoe Race Awards & Prize Drawing
- 12:30 p.m. – Registration for Snow Bike Race CLOSSES
- 1:00 p.m. – Snow Bike Race
- 2:30 p.m. – Snow Bike Race Awards & Prize Drawing

Registration Information

Pre-register by January 22 online at Active.com.

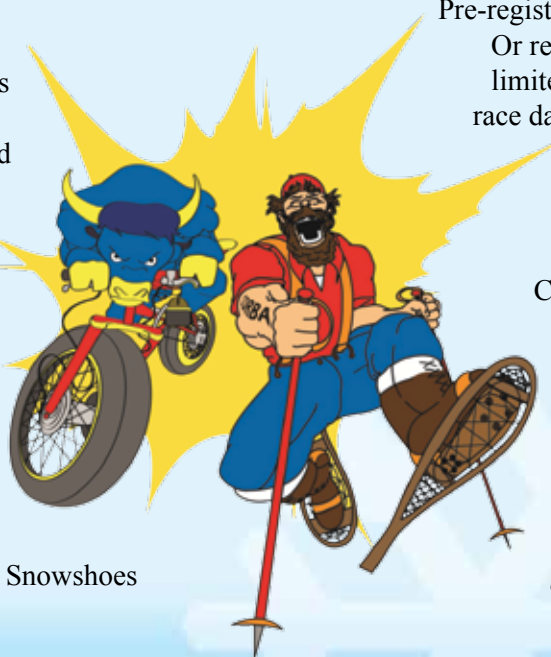
Or register onsite the day of the event (a very limited number of T-shirts may be available on race day, first-come-first-served).

Event Location

Registration, race start and race finish will all take place at the Eau Claire County Expo Center. ■

Want to volunteer?

Typical duties include registration and course marshals. Anyone volunteering outside is encouraged to dress warm! Outside volunteers are offered a rotation schedule in order to warm up. You can sign up to volunteer online at www.chippewaoffroad.org/events/powderkeg.



Make life easier with Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's Toolkit of Value-Added Services



Build your own personal energy cost control savings with Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's "Toolkit of Value-Added Services." Choose from a variety of tools to find specific products and services to help you control your energy bill and live better. Many of these tools are FREE to ECEC members.

What's using all that energy in your home?

This is one of our newest value-added tools, and it's FREE! With the installation of automated meters, the Meter Monitor tool allows you to easily track your energy usage online and identify when your household uses the most energy.

Plus, you can overlay daily weather information to see how that may have affected your energy usage.

Remember, your household energy use is different from your neighbor's, even though your homes may be very similar in size, so your energy bills will differ. Track



your own usage with Meter Monitor. All you need is access to a computer, your own e-mail address, and your Eau Claire Energy Cooperative account number.

Want to get started right away? It's easy! Join the hundreds of other members who are already using the Meter Monitor tool. Go to www.ecec.com and click on the Meter Monitor icon. Then take a virtual tour before signing up. Meter Monitor is just one of many value-added tools available to Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's members.

How much is that old fridge really using?

And, how much "phantom electricity" do all of those electronics (like TVs, phone chargers, DVDs) use by being plugged in even when you're not enjoying them?

More and more members are taking advantage of the Kill-A-Watt Meter, which is another FREE tool for you to use, compliments of Eau



Claire Energy Cooperative. Just plug it into the wall outlet and then plug in your appliance or electronic device to find out how much electricity is used when your item is in use and when it's not in use. Readings on the display will help you calculate your electrical expenses by the day, week, month or year.

Members are encouraged to call our office to reserve the Kill-A-Watt meter. Make a \$10 security deposit which is returned to you after you bring the meter back a couple weeks later. Or, check it out for FREE at a local library in the Chippewa Valley. (If your favorite library in our area does not have one in stock let us know.)

Internet tools offer more help

www.ecec.com • www.togetherwesave.com
www.focusonenergy.com
www.ENERGYSTAR.gov/taxcredits
www.OurEnergy.com • [Questline online newsletter](#)

Find all of the tools and links on our web site at www.ecec.com. Where are the energy hogs? Find them online at any of these web sites or through the Questline newsletter. Sign up for that FREE newsletter at www.ecec.com.

FREE HELP right at your fingertips!

[WEC News magazine](#) • [Home Energy Savings Guide](#)
[Use Energy Wisely guide](#) • [Questline online newsletter](#)
[101 Low Cost/No Cost Energy Savings Measures](#)

Get tips on how to use those energy saving tools every month in the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* magazine mailed right to your home (that's what you're reading right now). Or, access it on our web site as you can the many other print items listed above. Many of you friends and neighbors have used these items to make their homes more comfortable and helped them control energy costs. No computer access? We'll be glad to mail these items to you.

Go Green – Go Paperless – Go Sustainable

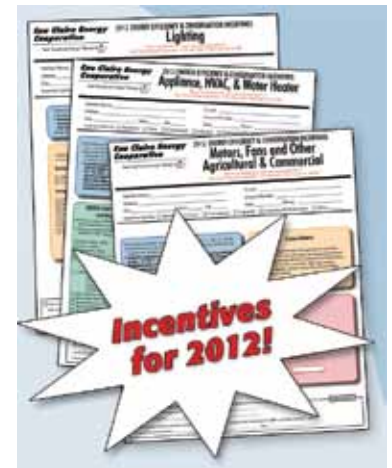
**Bill4U • Budget Payment • Direct Bill
VIP • Evergreen Program**

More value-added tools in the tool kit include paperless options for bill payments, such as Bill4U. And, it's easy to enroll online so you can make your energy bill payment every month or go automatic so you don't need to worry about it. Check out the other payment options available to co-op members. There's bound to be one to fit your lifestyle.

Explore other opportunities to "Go Green – Go Paperless – Go Sustainable" with the VIP and Evergreen programs to help support sustainability through Eau Claire Energy Cooperative. It's easy to sign up online.

Watch our web site for upcoming incentives

Check out these tools on our web site at www.ecec.com. You'll find information regarding the dollar amounts of available incentives for installing energy-efficient windows, doors, lighting, dairy equipment, and more. You'll also find the list of incentives available for home performance evaluations, and energy efficient appliance purchases. Check it out to make life better with a more comfortable home and to control your energy bills. Be sure to review the incentive requirements before you spend your money.



Home Performance Tests target energy-wasting culprits

Home Performance Tests make energy-efficiency improvements that save you money and increase the comfort, safety, durability and value of your home.

The consultants partnering with Home Performance with ENERGY STAR are trained to identify the cause of



problems or potential problems in your home and provide you with solutions.

The first step is to schedule an in-home evaluation. A qualified consultant will conduct a thorough inspection of all the systems in your home and identify problems such as air leaks and drafts, moisture, cold spots and more. You'll receive a written re-

port of the findings and a list of recommended solutions.

Plus, when you use the services of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR, you get the added benefit of knowing you're helping preserve Wisconsin's environment. Less energy used means fewer environmental effects on our air, water and land.

Personal Service at ECEC

Still can't decide which tools are right for your household, farm or business? Can't find what you need online? Then, contact one of our Member Services representatives. Spend some one-on-one quality time with our employees exploring the added value energy saving tools, whether it's in the office or over the phone. We specialize in taking the time to help our members find the right energy saving tools for the right situation.

Call us at 715-832-1603 or toll free at 888-832-1604. Or visit us in person during office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. ■



Need Help Controlling Your Energy Bill? Contact Beth West

Are you looking for ways to control your energy bill? Want to find out which energy-saving programs will work for your home? Need more information about the incentives and how they can benefit you? Ask Beth West. She's Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's member service associate, and she's ready to help you choose the energy-saving programs that will benefit you the most. Dedicated to the mission of the cooperative, she's helping our members control energy costs.

Beth works with new members to get them signed up for electric service and provides assistance with member incentives including lighting, appliance,

central air conditioning, heating, and water heating. She also helps current members understand how programs such as dual fuel, water heater, and air conditioning can make their home more energy efficient. If you have questions about your electric usage, she can demonstrate one of our popular value-added services, Meter Monitor, which will help you examine your usage on a daily basis. ■





Scholarships Available

Deadline January 12, 2012

Higher education costs keep going up. And, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative can help members with \$500 scholarships through the Federated Youth Foundation Scholarships. But, you need to act by January January 13, 2012. Members with students looking for help with higher education costs can apply for these scholarships through our web site at www.ecec.com (click on the Youth tab). Or, contact your school for the scholarship application.

Energy Assistance Available

If you need assistance paying for your heating this winter, help may be available through your county energy assistance program. Don't miss the chance to receive financial help on your energy costs, including propane gas and electricity. If you feel you qualify for energy assistance, call the county agency where you live. Applications are being taken October 1–May 15. Additional crisis services are available all year.

Eau Claire County.....	715-839-6905
Chippewa County.....	715-726-7840
Clark County.....	715-743-5233
Jackson County.....	715-284-4301
Dunn County.....	715-232-1116
Buffalo County.....	608-685-4412
Pepin County.....	715-672-8941
Trempealeau County.....	715-538-2311
Starting Points (Chippewa Co.).....	715-726-7937
Western Dairyland.....	715-836-7511



Extreme cold winter months can cause stress to the electric system, and your cooperatives want your help. During the next few months, WAXX 104.5FM, WECL 92.9FM, WIAL I-94FM, and WAYY 790 AM radio will broadcast peak alert messages from local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, including Eau Claire Energy Cooperative. When you hear a peak alert message it means that your energy cooperatives are controlling their peak electrical demand and ask for your assistance in shifting your electric usage to other hours. Controlling energy usage helps your cooperative keep your costs down. Messages will be brought to you on high-demand days only. Beginning at 3 p.m., any voluntary controlling will be greatly appreciated. We thank you for your help. Following is a sample of a Peak Alert message you may hear on one of the radio stations listed above:

“Your local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are declaring a peak energy alert today. Your local cooperatives are asking for your help. Cooperative members with dual fuel systems will be required to use their back-up systems. You can help by setting your thermostat no higher than 68 degrees. Please turn off all appliances and lights that are not needed and postpone chores requiring electricity until after 9 p.m. Critical peak alert hours are between 5 and 9 p.m. Your cooperatives appreciate your help.”

Member Advisory Council Seeking New Members

Few companies allow their consumers to have a direct influence on the way they do business. Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is one company that does. Our Member Advisory Council involves our member-owners as liaisons among other members, board members, and staff. This is your chance to meet on a quarterly basis with our chairman of the board.

ECEC members serving on the Member Advisory Council will want to be informed and educated about the cooperative as well as its future. These members will also want to make a difference in their community and pledge to give feedback and support the goals and objectives of ECEC by participating in quarterly meetings and program activities.

At the Member Advisory Council meetings members learn about all aspects of the cooperative and, in turn, they share with us any concerns they or other members may have. We feel the Member Advisory Council will help make our cooperative stronger and more efficient.

Participant Application Process:

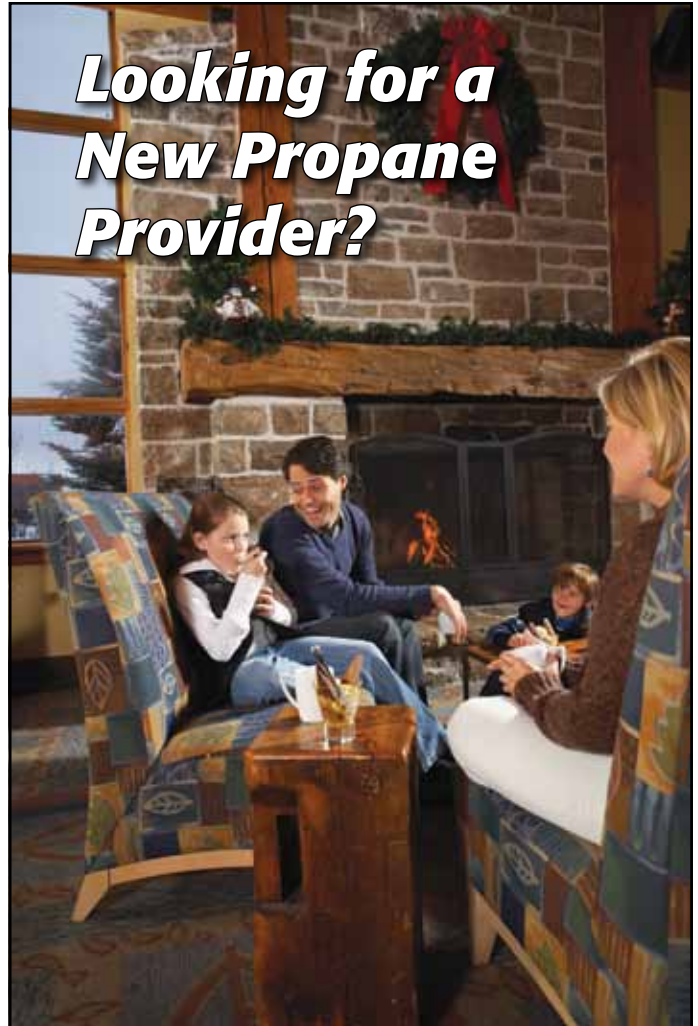
- Co-op members may apply to participate in the council at anytime throughout the year, but must:
 - Be a current ECEC member in good standing or a high school student member.
 - Commit to participate in at least three out of the four quarterly scheduled meetings for two years.
- Staff will screen applications with Board Executive Committee to make final decision.
- Goal is to work with a group of 12-30 ECEC members.

Meetings:

- Meetings will be held quarterly in the evening during the months of January, March (Annual Meeting), July, and October.
- Each meeting will be led by the ECEC board chair.
- There is no monetary reimbursement; however, meals will be provided by ECEC.
- Agendas for each meeting will be mailed, or emailed, to the Member Advisory Council one week prior to each scheduled meeting.

Get involved. Sign up at www.ecec.com and click on the About Us tab. ■

Looking for a New Propane Provider?



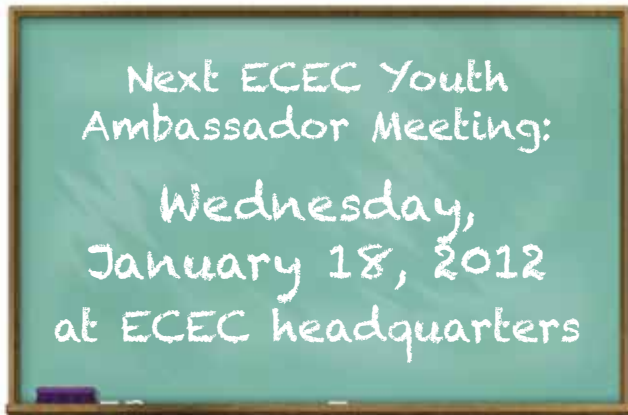
Customer service is a top priority at Energy Connections. As a part of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative for over ten years, we believe quality local service and local ownership is important to us and to our customers.

Make the switch to a quality propane provider offering top quality service for your heating system. To switch to Energy Connections contact us at 715-832-1603 or toll free 888-832-1604.



Need a Speaker?

Do you need a speaker for your local community service group? Looking for someone who can sort out energy issues, energy-saving tips, products and services? Eau Claire Energy Cooperative and Energy Connections have people available to speak to energy issues such as special energy-saving programs, Kill A Watt Meter, Meter Monitor, Bill4U or conservation measures. Contact us at 715-832-1603 or 888-832-1604 toll free. ■



**No Checks!
No Stamps!
No Fuss!**

Want to save time and money? You can with Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's Bill4U payment program. Your energy bill payment will be automatically deducted from your savings or checking account each month on the due date. Ask your member services representative for more information, or go to www.ecec.com to sign up.



Updating Your Heating System?

First, ask the right questions:

1. What type of system do I need for the size of my home?
2. Is the existing duct work adequate?
3. Will the old thermostat work with the new system?

FREE Estimates

For answers to these and other questions you may have about installing a new system, or repairing your current one, look to the folks at Energy Connections.

They have the answers, plus, 24/7 service!



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Toll FREE 888-832-1604

Emergencies & outages: Toll FREE 800-927-5090

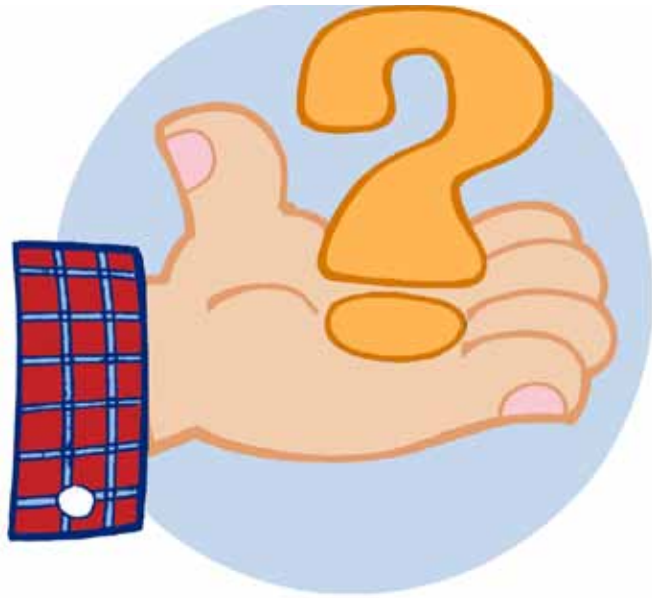
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Diggers Hotline: 811 or 1-800-242-8511

Call 3 working days before you dig.

**Eau Claire Energy
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



Updating Your Heating System?

First, ask the right questions:


1. What type of system do I need for the size of my home?
2. Is the existing duct work adequate?
3. Will the old thermostat work with the new system?
4. FREE Estimates

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**Need propane? Contact Energy Connections today!
They have the answers, plus, 24/7 service!**



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www.ecec.com



**Eau Claire Energy Cooperative
&
Touchstone Energy Cooperative**

present the
Friday Evening Ski Jumping Competition

**Friday, January 20, 2012
7-10 p.m.**

Join Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, Touchstone Energy Cooperative and the Eau Claire Ski Club when they kick off the Annual Silver Mine Invitational at Silver Mine Ski Hill just southwest of Eau Claire.



World Class Ski Jumping Competition



Music by Trash80's from Chicago



Two Bon Fires




Concessions

**New
Pond Hockey
Classic**

Admission buttons are available at Eau Claire Energy Cooperative.
Advance admission is \$10 and \$15 at the gate.

***Eau Claire Energy
Cooperative***

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

P.O. Box 368 Fall Creek, WI 54742-0368

715-832-1603 • 888-832-1604

www.ecec.com

