

WHEN LINES CROSS THE INTERSTATE

When you think of cooperative powerlines, you may often think of the rhythmic side-window passing of wooden poles and swooping lines along a rolling country road. And while many of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's lines are indeed this very picture, sometimes lines cross over (or go under) a buzzing, four-lane freeway.

Approximately half of ECEC's 1,700 miles of line are overhead and half are buried underground. And each year, ECEC selects several miles of lines—some over 80 years old—to be replaced.

This summer two lines were due for an upgrade that happened to pass over Interstate 94: one near Foster and one south of Osseo.

The operations team analyzed the best options for the upgrade while considering safety, reliability, and maintenance efficiency. It was decided that the overhead crossing in these two areas would be converted to underground. Line Superintendent Josh Vaningan explains, "It takes months of coordination with the Department of Transportation, the hole-boring contractor, and other stakeholders to complete a project like this. Even when the bore hole is drilled and the new line is installed, the work is far from over."

The final step to remove the old overhead lines is often the trickiest part. ECEC coordinated with several

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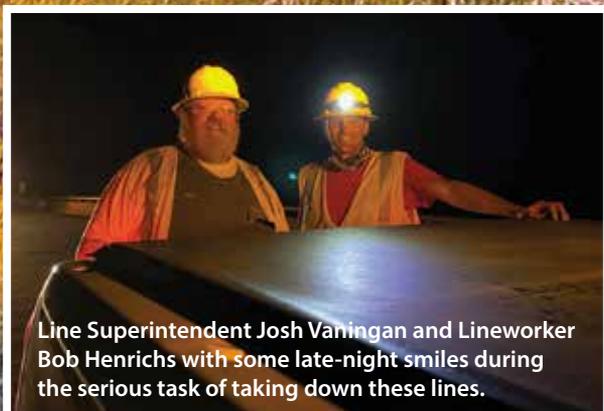


Wisconsin State Patrol officers to schedule rolling traffic stops in the middle of the night. It is critical that lineworkers and large equipment can occupy the freeway without semis and vehicles passing beneath them. Safety is always a top priority, and it took four lineworkers and two large bucket trucks to bring down these lines. Vaningan stated, "It was a stressful project to do, but with good planning and a great team of lineworkers, the lines were safely removed."

So next time you're cruising rural roads or zipping down the freeway, watch where the power lines run and know that your cooperative is working hard to maintain a safe and reliable system—sometimes while you sleep.

**"It takes months
of coordination... to
complete a project
like this."**

**— Josh Vaningan,
Line Superintendent**



Line Superintendent Josh Vaningan and Lineworker Bob Henrichs with some late-night smiles during the serious task of taking down these lines.

MY CO-OP

**Eau Claire Energy Cooperative
has 1,711 miles of power lines.**

YOUTH AMBASSADORS KICK-OFF VIRTUALLY

The 15th year of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative’s Youth Ambassador program is officially underway! Due to COVID-19, students are connecting online in a virtual meeting format. Adam Westaby, ECEC’s member services associate and coordinator of the Youth Ambassador program, mailed out virtual starter kits which included a white board, markers, candy, and some

ECEC swag. The students played virtual co-op trivia and Pictionary. The October meeting included a virtual pumpkin decorating contest with a “Go Green”

theme. Youth Ambassadors will likely continue to meet virtually for the next few months and hope to meet in person as soon as it is safe to do so.



Left: Youth Ambassador coordinator Adam Westaby prepping the welcome kits.
Right: The September kick-off meeting took place over Zoom.

NTERA BROADBAND GRANT WILL BENEFIT ECEC MEMBERS

Our neighboring cooperatives Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative and Citizens Connected formed a joint venture called Ntera to provide rural homes and businesses with high-speed internet. In October, the United States Department of Agriculture awarded a \$3 million grant to Ntera to provide broadband connectivity to rural areas in Chippewa, Rusk, and Taylor counties. See article on page 10 for details. This will include the ability to bring high-speed internet service to our Cadott substation and to approximately 200 ECEC members south and east of that substation. ECEC benefits from high-speed internet connectivity at our substations to improve the two-way communication technology which results in better system monitoring and overall reliability.

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is continually looking for ways to support broadband access to unserved and underserved members on our system. We are meeting regularly with area stakeholders including telephone cooperatives, Eau Claire County Broadband Committee, and individual towns boards.



USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey (center) visited Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative October 8 to announce a \$3 million grant for Ntera, a cooperative partnership providing high-speed internet to rural homes. At right is Congressman Tom Tiffany.



\$1,000

FEDERATED YOUTH FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

2021

We are excited to announce that the scholarship amount has increased from \$750 to \$1,000 per scholarship for the 2020-2021 year! Scholarships are awarded to area high school seniors and current students at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College. The student's parent or guardian must be a member of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative and currently receive ECEC energy service at their residence. Visit our website for more details!

JANUARY 11, 2021 - APPLICATION DEADLINE

A scholarship application form must be completed and returned to the high school, college, technical college or other post-secondary school student office (whichever applies)

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MY CO-OP



Home for the holidays?

Here are some tips for saving energy and money

It's November and that means the holiday season is just around the corner. It's the time of year for family gatherings, indoor and outdoor decorations, and tasty food. With fewer people traveling due to the pandemic, it may mean more people will be celebrating the holidays from their homes. At Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, we're often asked for tips on how to save money on energy costs during this time of year. Here are some practical ideas for helping you use less energy and save money this holiday season:

- Switch your home lighting and decorative lighting to LEDs. They are roughly 80% more efficient than traditional lighting.
- Use a timer to control and limit the amount of time that your lights and decorative displays are on.
- Use the smallest appliance to get the job done. Use the



microwave or toaster oven for smaller tasks and save the oven for larger cooking tasks.

- No peeking! When possible, check on food through the oven window. Opening the oven door for even a few seconds reduces the temperature inside as much as 25 degrees.
- Invest in a programmable thermostat and program it to lower the temperature during certain times of day. If you do have a houseful, remember the cooking and extra bodies will increase the temperature, so you can turn the thermostat down a bit.
- Use ceiling fans in occupied rooms. Switch them to spin in the clockwise direction during the heating season, which pushes the warm air down.
- If you are leaving the house for an extended period, unplug electronics including the television, computers, printers, radios, and coffee makers. Take time to disconnect these phantom energy users.
- Knowledge is the key. Monitor your daily energy use on the SmartHub app. This will help you see your energy usage patterns and identify high use times.

These are just a few things to keep in mind. We have a lot more information on our website — www.ecec.com — and you are welcome to call and chat with us anytime! — *Eric Muller, ECEC Energy Advisor*

HOLIDAY LIGHTING COMPARISON

Holiday lighting options have come a long way over the last few decades. The chart below shows three types of lighting options, including wattage and operating cost comparisons.

TYPE OF LAMP	WATTAGE PER LAMP	WATTAGE PER 50 LAMPS	SEASONAL OPERATING COST*
C9 INCANDESCENT	7	350	\$13.33
MINI INCANDESCENT	.425	21.25	\$0.81
LED	.069	3.45	\$0.13

*Using 40 days of operation, 8 hours per day, \$.119 per kWh (DOE average)
In addition, the LED will last as much as 40 times longer than the incandescent lamps.

Your Trusted Energy Advisor  Source: energy.gov

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