

# SUMMER SHIFT:

## Small Steps to Save Big on Your Energy Bills

**W**hen members save energy, they save money. However, even the most efficient members still use electricity every day. There is always something in our homes using electricity. Whether it is air conditioning, lights, or appliances, the usage is inevitable. How a member uses the energy can impact their billing.

Lowering your monthly electric bill can be done by lessening your overall usage. Doing things like turning your air conditioning to a higher temperature, turning lights off when you leave a room, and drying clothes on a clothesline can all lower your energy bill.

The less electricity cooperative members use when prices are at their highest, the more stable Eau Claire Energy Cooperative electric retail rates will remain.

In addition to that, shifting your usage away from a peak time of day can impact the wholesale cost of power to Eau Claire Energy Cooperative and to our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative. By shifting your peak

usage to outside of 11 a.m.–7 p.m., during the summer months especially, members can lower demand from the wholesale power market and thus lower the amount they pay each month on their Eau Claire Energy bills.

When a member chooses to shift their electricity use away from peak times, it helps spread out electricity use throughout the day. The less electricity cooperative members use when prices are at their highest, the more stable Eau Claire Energy Cooperative electric retail rates will remain. The more members who choose to participate, the more impactful these savings become.



Save some of your energy-intensive chores like running the dishwasher or doing the laundry for later in the evening—or do them earlier in the morning. Here are some other simple ways you can help the cooperative manage its load and, ultimately, its wholesale costs:

- Wash your clothes in cold water, and take advantage of the solar energy right outside your window by hanging your laundry outside to dry.
- Open the dishwasher after the wash cycle to let the dishes air dry.
- Use the microwave or grill instead of the oven to cook dinner.
- Close curtains and shades on hot days to help the home feel cooler, longer.

# BE PREPARED

## Regional grid challenges cause reliability concerns; here's what you should know

**E**au Claire Energy Cooperative is committed to providing the most reliable and safe electricity to our members as possible. In recent news, MISO has made it evident that there is an increased possibility of rolling blackouts due to an unbalance in power generation at peak times and usage during those peak times. ECEC wants our members to be fully prepared for these possibilities. In this article you will find how to better understand the issue, what the unattractive reality of the situation may be, and what you should do to prepare and possibly prevent the potential of rolling blackouts going into the summer months.

### What is MISO?

Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) is a wholesale electricity market that encompasses all or parts of 15 states and Manitoba, Canada. Their purpose is to regulate the market for wholesale electricity. This creates safety standards and regulates the price of wholesale power. Dairyland Power Cooperative, ECEC's generation and transmission supplier, generates

electricity, sells it on the MISO market and then buys it back at a regulated price to distribute to its members, and bills members for their demand (the strain or draw on the power grid they service). During peak times, like a 90-degree day with air conditioning running, demand would be higher than usual.

### Why do we need to be vigilant now?

MISO's executive director stated, "MISO's northern and central region is at heightened risk for controlled 'load sheds,' or planned blackouts." With the record heat expected this summer, the influx of new homes and properties, and the irregularity of renewable energy sources that have replaced more on-demand fossil fuel power generation, the demand is predicted to outweigh current generation of power.

If the power grid is nearing capacity, members will be asked to begin to limit their consumption as much as possible. This may mean turning your air conditioning to a higher temperature, moving the use of dishwashers and clothes washers and dryers to lower demand hours, and lessening the nonessential use of electricity as much as possible. Doing so will hopefully take some pressure off the grid to help keep the lights on and help avoid blackouts. If these measures are still not enough to offset a power shortage, it is possible that Dairyland Power Cooperative will request an emergency load reduction plan to be implemented.

### What will happen if an Emergency Load Reduction Plan is implemented?

This plan is essentially a rolling blackout plan to decrease the load ECEC's members put on Dairyland Power Cooperative. If the plan is enacted, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative crews will cycle rolling blackouts throughout our service





territory in sections determined by substation. Each cycle will be approximately one half-hour off followed by one hour back on. This process will repeat as necessary until the emergency load reduction order by Dairyland Power Cooperative has been lifted.

Large businesses with high power consumption will be notified to shut down operations through the entirety of the emergency load reduction order. If your business is required to shut down, someone from our office will contact you to let you know that an emergency load reduction plan has been put in place and that you are required to shut off all electric service until the end of the notice.

### What do you need to know?

If peak alerts do not resolve the demand issue and/or Dairyland Power Cooperative issues an emergency load reduction plan, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative will make every effort to keep our members in the loop about what to expect and when to expect it. In the event of rolling blackouts being a necessity, it will be an emergency event to prevent system-wide power outages. We will do our best to make you aware of the situation as it unfolds.

Members or businesses who depend on electricity for oxygen or other life-sustaining medical equipment should have a plan in case of a power outage. Unfortunately, we are not able to exempt a member from this plan. Owning a backup generator can provide peace of mind in these situations.\*

*\*Before installing a backup generator, please contact our office at 715-832-1603 to ensure your backup generator is installed correctly to protect the safety of our line crew.*



### Why can't we use more renewable energy to meet the missing demand?

Typically, with increases in demand, generation facilities like Dairyland Power Cooperative have been able to deploy a coal or natural gas-fired plant to generate to offset the demand of power on the grid. With the increase in retirement of fossil fuel generation facilities and the increase in renewable energy, the MISO market does not have enough on-demand generation to make up the difference.

If there were no demand times and power were used at consistent increments, the switch to renewable energy to cover the lost fossil fuel generation would be more effective. However, because energy is used more frequently at peak times of day and certain times of year, generation needs to meet need. We cannot force the wind to blow or the sun to shine in times of need, and that is where the demand is not being met.



Josh (above) and Kris conduct a test of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's emergency load reduction plan.





# YOUTH AMBASSADORS TOUR CVTC ENERGY CAMPUS

ECEC's Youth Ambassadors wrapped up the 2021–22 year with a trip to CVTC's Energy Campus. The students heard from CVTC's Jon Egan about the different programs and opportunities available through the college. The presentation was followed by a tour of the campus led by Dean of Ag, Energy, Construction & Transportation Adam Wehling.

This year, we also celebrate as FIVE Youth Ambassadors have graduated and will begin their next adventures beginning this fall. Congratulations to Lydia, Ellie, Alison, Alexis, and Megan. Best of luck to you all.



Four of the five graduating Youth Ambassador seniors (from left to right): Lydia Fredrickson (Homeschool), Ellie Benson (Altoona), Alison Dubiel (Fall Creek), and Megan Awe (E.C. Memorial). At right is ECEC's Adam Westaby, member services advisor. Missing from the photo: Alexis Dubiel (Fall Creek)



**OFFICE CLOSED  
TO PUBLIC DUE TO  
CONSTRUCTION**

ECEC's lobby will be closed to the public beginning Monday, July 18, 2022, for construction on our front doors. Please call our office at 715-832-1603 for assistance.

## **Eau Claire Energy Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



**Monica Obrycki, President and CEO**

**Taylor Skibba, Marketing and  
Communications Coordinator**

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**Office Hours:** 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m. Mon–Fri

**Non-emergencies:** 715-832-1603

**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's office will be closed Monday, July 4, for Independence Day**