



YOUTH AMBASSADORS

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Since 2005, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative’s Youth Ambassadors have been a cornerstone for member-students seeking to explore the cooperative difference, learn from local leaders, and develop leadership skills. The program has graduated numerous member-students over the years, leaving an enduring imprint on their personal and professional journeys.

Iris Adams, a 2020-2021 Youth Ambassador graduate, found a passion for sustainable energy solutions while part of the program. This transformative experience steered her toward a dual major in environmental science and conservation biology at UW-Madison. As she navigated the challenges of pursuing two majors, the skills acquired during her time as a Youth Ambassador proved instrumental, enabling effective networking with professors, peers, and external resources.

Post-Youth Ambassadors, Iris reflects on the cooperative’s ongoing support in shaping her professional trajectory. Grateful for this foundation, Iris stated, “Even now, three years after leaving the program I appreciate the generosity and involvement of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative in my professional development!”

In the 2024 spring semester, Iris will be taking her learning further by studying in Ecuador, where she will be attending a tropical conservation experience through Ceiba. She will spend her time learning outside of the classroom and practicing skills in conservation, all while having the opportunity to explore the



Iris Adams at work as a Youth Ambassador (right side in the photo at left) and as an environmental science and conservation biology student at UW-Madison (above).

Amazon Rainforest, Galapagos Islands, and Andes Mountains. As she ventures into this new chapter, Youth Ambassadors remains an influence; it sparked Iris’ passion and provided the tools to turn that passion into purpose.

Know a member-student who is interested in joining Youth Ambassadors? Sign up today by visiting our website or scanning the QR code at right!



UPGRADE UNLOCKED

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Manage your Eau Claire Energy account like never before with the new, improved SmartHub. A simplified yet enhanced design is coming your way on January 2, 2024. This new version of SmartHub puts your usage and payment details front and center for fast, easy access and the simplified menu structure makes navigating the site a breeze.

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PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE

SUPPORT RELIABLE POWER DELIVERY 24/7

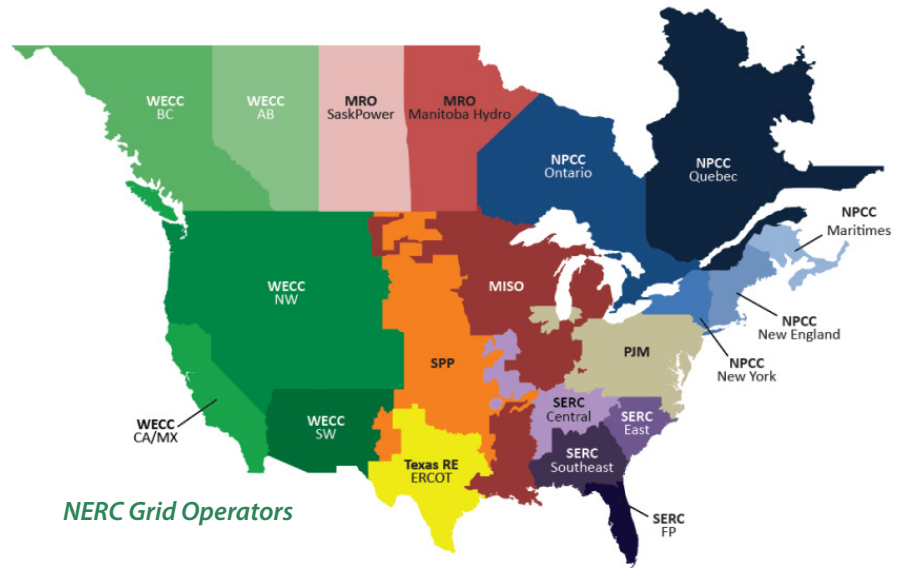
Members often hear and read about how Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is focused on providing safe, reliable, and affordable energy. Our wholesale power provider—Dairyland Power Cooperative—is guided by the same mission. While we are in alignment, outside factors can impact our efforts.

In November, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), an international regulatory authority, issued a report warning that prolonged, widespread cold snaps across the United States could threaten the reliable performance of the nation’s power grid. The winter assessment identified the eastern two-thirds of the United States at an elevated risk of having insufficient energy supplies to meet demand in extreme operating conditions (the risk scale is three-tiered: low, elevated, high).

While NERC’s report offers a high-level view of North America’s grid operators, the regional grid operator—Midcontinent Independent System

Operator (MISO)—offered a more tempered prediction for winter reliability in their own assessment. MISO expects above-normal temperatures in its North and Central regions (where we live), and to have enough electricity supply to meet demand under typical winter conditions (more than 9 gigawatts—or 9,000 megawatts—above 2022). While

that statement brings some peace of mind, MISO still cautions that there is always the potential for “high risk, low probability events” occurring, such as extreme weather across most of the U.S. (i.e., the December 2022 holiday storm and cold snap), intense winter storms, and/or fuel supply issues. Forty-five million people depend on MISO to



generate and transmit the right amount of electricity every minute of every day—reliably, dependably and cost-effectively.

“We take the NERC winter reliability assessment and winter weather very seriously,” Chief Executive Officer Monica Obrycki said. “The measures taken by MISO to improve their forecasting methods and available generation resources, as well as the work by Dairyland to winterize their power plants and maintain their transmission lines to our system, are crucial to reliability. We have taken our own measures to do everything we can to keep the power on this winter. We know there may be power outages, but we do our best to minimize the duration of any outages and appreciate our members’ understanding and cooperation during those scenarios.”

This past year, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative has conducted routine maintenance such as pole testing, overhead line hardening, underground cable inspections, and vegetation management all in the name of safe and reliable power for ECEC members.

Similarly, Dairyland does annual maintenance to ensure the same. Last spring, Dairyland’s John P. Madgett power plant in Alma conducted a

scheduled outage to overhaul the turbine and generator, and upgraded the precipitator equipment. Power plant maintenance is planned during the spring and fall when energy loads are typically lower due to moderate seasonal temperatures that require less demand on the power grid from heating and air conditioning.

“Dairyland has always taken our duty to providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity seriously, so when seasonal weather assessments suggest there is a risk to grid reliability, we pay attention,” said Ben Porath, Dairyland’s executive vice president and chief operating officer. “Annual maintenance plans help keep our generation resources available for peak performance in all weather conditions and our 3,200 miles of transmission lines in top condition.”

Going into the winter season, JPM has built up its coal reserves. The Elk Mound Combustion Turbines and RockGen Energy Center in Cambridge are also ready to be called upon during extreme weather. These units are not designed to run all the time, but to fill gaps in demand when needed. They can also run on fuel oil if natural gas supplies are low or diverted to home heating during a winter storm.

What Can Members Do?

Members are encouraged to follow Eau Claire Energy Cooperative on social media for news whether there are calls to conserve energy throughout the winter. Aside from reducing electricity use for grid reliability, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative and Dairyland Power Cooperative may also declare a load management event, which asks cooperative members to help reduce electricity at times when grid reliability is still okay, but prices are high. These times will also be shared on social media pages. By shifting electricity use away from these times of high demand, we are all working together to support a reliable grid and contain costs.

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative and Dairyland Power Cooperative remain committed to ensuring a reliable power supply for our members. Despite potential challenges highlighted by NERC, our ongoing maintenance efforts aim to minimize the impact of extreme weather on the power grid. We appreciate our members’ cooperation and encourage them to stay informed through our social media channels as we collectively work towards a dependable and cost-effective energy future.



SAVE THE DATE

FOR THE 87TH ANNUAL MEETING

Annual meeting is a special time of year for Eau Claire Energy Cooperative! It is our chance to show our members all of the wonderful things we have been doing throughout the year, and to allow our members to exercise the second cooperative principle of democratic member control. Every member plays an integral role in making decisions for the cooperative as well as in electing the ECEC Board of Directors. We're all about giving members the opportunity to have a hand at their cooperative.

We've made it a breeze for you to jump in. Stop by the annual meeting to listen in and cast your ballot. Can't make it? No worries. You can now cast your vote directly from your SmartHub account. You can alternatively snag an absentee ballot by filling out the form below or calling our office at 715-836-6461. There is a way for every member to cast their ballot and make a difference at their cooperative.

But hold on, there's more to the annual meeting than just voting. It's your

backstage pass to learn the ins and outs of your cooperative. This is your opportunity to hear all about what has happened at ECEC over the prior year as well as ask employees questions. From financial updates to recognition for the Concern for Community Award, members will learn more about their electric cooperative and contribute to the cooperative's success, sustainability, and community well-being. Plus, here's a little extra incentive. Members in attendance are entered to win one of ten \$100 bills. So, mark your calendars and join us at the annual meeting!

The 87th Annual Meeting of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at the Florian Gardens. Doors open at 5 p.m. with the meeting beginning at 6 p.m. and dinner to follow. We hope to see you there!

Absentee ballots available after February 5, 2024

Absentee ballots can be requested by calling our office at 715-836-6461, submitting a request online, scanning the QR code, or by filling out the form below and returning it to the cooperative by no later than March 4, 2024 by 3:00 p.m. to:



Eau Claire Energy Cooperative
Attn: Corporate Secretary
P.O. Box 368
Fall Creek, WI 54742-0368

Absentee Ballot Request (please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone # _____

NOW TAKING NOMINATIONS



Do you know an Eau Claire Energy Cooperative member who has gone above and beyond to help others? Have they made a difference in the community through local service projects, non-profit organizations, or other local events? Nominate a cooperative member for the annual Concern for Community Award by February 15, 2024. The nomination form is available on our website at www.ecec.com under the "Community" tab. The award recipient will be honored at our 87th Annual Meeting on March 19, 2024.



Eau Claire Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Monica Obrycki, President and CEO

Taylor Skibba, Marketing and Communications Coordinator

8214 Hwy 12, P.O. Box 368, Fall Creek, WI 54742-0368
www.ecec.com

Lobby Hours: 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Monday–Thursday;
7:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m. Friday

Non-emergencies: 715-832-1603

Emergencies & outages: Toll FREE 800-927-5090
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