


EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY:

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative Returns over \$897,000 to Members During Co-op Month!

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is more than just an electric utility—it is a cooperative. We are focused on our members and prioritize the needs and interests of our membership above all else. One way we demonstrate this commitment is by returning capital credits to members each year during cooperative month.

October is Co-op Month! We are here to celebrate you! This year, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative will return over \$897,000 to more than 17,000 members. In fact, ECEC has returned over \$21 million to our members since our inception in 1938. Capital credits are a unique benefit of your cooperative membership. Keep an eye out on your October bill for your bill credit!

Frequently Asked Questions:

What Are Capital Credits?

Capital credits are a unique financial benefit of being a member of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative. As you pay your monthly electric bills, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative uses funds to grow, operate, and maintain a safe and reliable electrical system. Any money received over and above the cost of doing business is called margins. Your portion of the margins is then returned to you in the form of capital credits. They represent your ownership stake in the cooperative. When you become a member and pay your electric bill, you are essentially investing in the cooperative. These investments, or capital credits, are allocated to members annually based on their usage of electricity and the cooperative's financial performance. Being a member of ECEC means these credits go back to you, our members, instead of to a group of shareholders. That is the cooperative difference!

Why Are Capital Credits Important?

Community Ownership: Unlike investor-owned utilities, cooperatives are owned and operated by the people they serve—the members. Capital credits reflect this ownership, giving members a say in how the board of directors is elected. This democratic structure ensures that decisions made by the cooperative align with the community's needs and values.

Stability and Affordability: By retaining and reinvesting

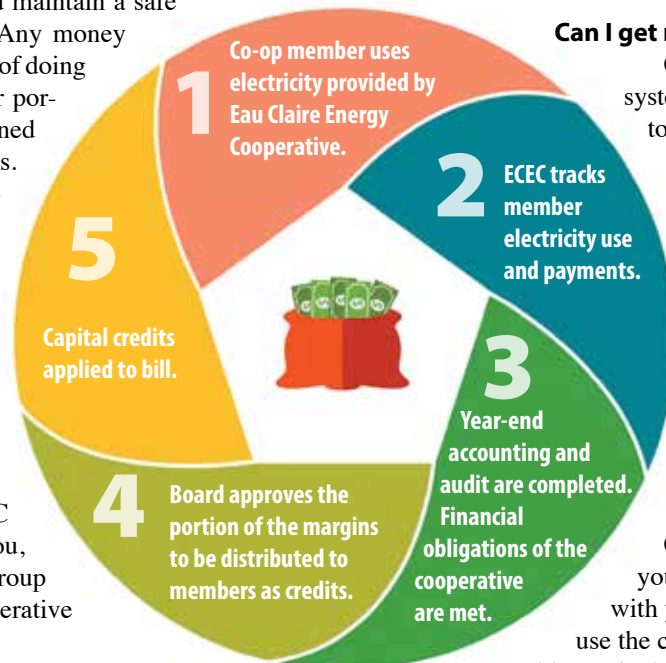
capital credits, cooperatives can maintain and upgrade their infrastructure, which, in turn, helps keep electricity rates stable and affordable for members. This also allows for more maintenance, meaning less outage time as well as more technology and communication for members.

How do I earn capital credits?

You earn capital credits by being a member of an electric cooperative and paying your electric bills. The amount you earn is typically based on the amount of electricity you use and the cooperative's financial performance for that year.

When will I receive my capital credits?

Each year, capital credits are applied annually as a credit to your billing due in October. To view how much you got back in capital credits, view the upper right corner of your October bill. You can view your bill in your SmartHub account by visiting https://www.ecec.com/my_account/smarthub#smarthub_login.



Can I get my capital credits paid out?

Capital credits use a revolving system where the money is returned to you over time. This helps the cooperative maintain financial stability, which allows for reliability and affordability for all members. Members will receive an annual capital credit retirement applied as a bill credit in October of each year.

What happens to my capital credits if I move or no longer use the cooperative's electrical services?

Capital credits are associated with you and your membership and stay with you even if you move or no longer use the cooperative's electrical services.

Alternatively, you will receive your capital credits as checks until your funds are all retired. This is why it is important to keep your forwarding address up to date with ECEC, even after you move out of ECEC service territory.

Are capital credits taxable?

It's advisable to consult a tax professional for guidance on reporting capital credit refunds on your income tax returns.

CO-OPS POWER COMMUNITIES WITH PURPOSE

HAPPY CO-OP MONTH!

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging. Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is deeply committed to our consumer-members, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This month, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the communities they serve. For Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, our mission has always been to provide you with safe and reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Why? Because we live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including ECEC, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative. These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose:

1. **Open and Voluntary Membership:** Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.
2. **Democratic Member Control:** Members make decisions that shape the cooperative. Why? Because co-ops are created by the members, for the members.
3. **Members' Economic Participation:** Members contribute money to the co-op to make sure it runs smoothly now and in the future. At Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, this happens through paying your energy bills.
4. **Autonomy and Independence:** Co-ops are independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.
5. **Education, Training and Information:** Co-ops continuously focus on education to ensure employees have the training and information they need to make the co-op successful.
6. **Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other out in times of need because we want other co-ops to thrive.
7. **Concern for Community:** All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them thrive and grow.

This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is reliable power. Our purpose is people—the local communities we're proud to serve.



CO-OP MONTH SCAVENGER HUNT

Searching for some fun during National Co-op Month? Sign up for member benefit services for your chance to win one of THREE \$100 Visa gift cards! Each program entered will have one additional chance for the grand prize. For example, if you have a SmartHub account and signed up for autopay, you will receive two entries. You must have at least one of the member benefit services below **AND** fill out the form attached to be entered to win.



Chance 1: Register for SmartHub



Sign up at ecec.com/my_account/smarthub or download the app and register your account there. You will need your account number and access to your email to successfully register. SmartHub allows you to report outages, view electricity usage, and so much more.

Chance 3: Sign up for Auto Pay



Have your bill automatically paid by credit card, debit card, or bank account each month. Set it up online through SmartHub by logging in and selecting Bill & Pay then Auto Pay Program.

Chance 2: Update your contact methods in SmartHub

Verify your contact methods on SmartHub by logging in and selecting Settings, then Contact Methods. This will also allow you to enroll in text and email notifications about outages, billing, and more.



Chance 4: Choose paperless billing

Opt out of receiving a paper bill each month and have your bill emailed to you instead. Change your account settings in SmartHub by logging in and selecting Settings then Paperless Billing.



Winners will be drawn on Friday, November 1 at 3 p.m. All entries submitted prior to that time will be entered. Each member can receive credit for any of the above services that they are enrolled in at that time. Enrollment prior to the contest **does not** disqualify a member from an entry, as long as you are enrolled at the time of the drawing.

Co-op Month Scavenger Hunt Sign-up Form

Member Name: _____

Member Account Number: _____

Please check the boxes of any member benefits that you are currently receiving:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SmartHub Registration Completed | <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled in Auto Pay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Methods Updated | <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled in Paperless Billing |

Once completed please fill out the form online by scanning the QR code or by mailing it to:

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative
 Attn: Marketing and Communications
 PO Box 368
 Fall Creek, WI 54742



MEMBER APPRECIATION CELEBRATION

In celebration of Cooperative Month, Join us for a sweet treat at ECEC Headquarters! We are celebrating YOU, our amazing members with pie, ice cream, bounce house, face painting, and so much more!

SATURDAY

OCTOBER 5, 2024 | 1:00PM-4:00PM

ECEC HEADQUARTERS

8214 US HWY 12, FALL CREEK, WI

FREE pizza cutter to the first 200 members in attendance!



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
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Diggers Hotline: 811 or 1-800-242-8511
Call 3 working days before you dig.