


Since 1940

# WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* January 2025 NEWS

**Eau Claire Energy  
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



DASHING THROUGH  
THE SNOW

**A NEW YEAR FOR NUCLEAR**

**EVER-CHANGING, FAST-GROWING  
DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY**

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT –  
HIDDEN TIMBER SOUL SANCTUARY**

**Eau Claire Energy Cooperative**Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## WHAT'S AHEAD IN 2025: PROGRESS, PROJECTS, AND POSSIBILITIES

By Monica Obrycki, President and CEO

**A**s we look to 2025, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is preparing for a year aimed at enhancing reliability, supporting member needs, and planning for the future. While it's impossible to cover everything in a single article, here's a glimpse of some of the exciting projects and efforts we're undertaking to continue providing value and reliability to our members. From infrastructure improvements to innovative energy solutions, the projects ahead reflect our mission to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable power while investing in the future.

One major project in 2025 includes upgrades to our load management program. This program, which helps reduce energy demand during peak times, benefits members who participate by offering special rates or bill credits. This year, we'll be replacing a portion of the outdated receivers with advanced models that allow for better communication and even more effective energy management. This ongoing project ensures we can continue providing savings and efficiency for years to come.

Maintaining reliability through infrastructure rebuilds is also on the calendar. Each year, we replace miles of aging overhead and underground power lines identified through system reliability studies. Some scheduled projects for 2025 include upgrades along Highway 12 and single phase projects in the townships of Bridge Creek, Fairchild, and Ludington. These improvements ensure our system meets modern standards and minimizes outage risks, keeping power flowing safely and reliably to your homes and businesses.

Grant funding will allow us to take on additional projects in 2025. Through \$1.1 million in funding from the Department of Energy, we'll rebuild 10 miles of overhead line near Augusta and install smart reclosers in the same area. These upgrades will strengthen reliability and provide long-

term benefits to members in those communities.

In addition to these system improvements, we're planning for a renewable energy initiative. Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is part of a statewide partnership with nine other Wisconsin cooperatives to develop 37 megawatts of solar energy. Our service area includes a 2.5-megawatt solar array, with construction set to begin in 2025. This collaboration ensures a cost benefit to our members and increases our local renewable energy generation.

Members may also notice some changes to their electric bills in 2025. One potential enhancement is the inclusion of demand information, which reflects the highest amount of energy peak used at once during the billing period. This is something we are exploring to provide members with more insight into their energy usage patterns. By offering greater visibility into energy usage patterns, we hope to give members more tools to understand and manage their energy costs effectively.

Beyond these projects, 2025 also marks the beginning of a new strategic planning cycle. Every three years, our board and staff set goals that guide the cooperative's direction. Previous plans have brought advancements in system technology, workforce development, and community engagement, all while maintaining our focus on reliability and affordability. The next cycle promises even more progress as we continue to shape a strong and sustainable future.

While this is just a glimpse of what's ahead, each effort reflects our commitment to serving members with innovation, care, and a dedication to reliable and affordable energy. 2025 promises to be a year of progress, and I'm excited for the opportunities it holds for all of us. By working together, we're building a brighter future—one project, plan, and possibility at a time.



A wooden sign for Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary. It features a logo of three concentric circles at the top, followed by the text "HIDDEN TIMBER" in a bold, sans-serif font, and "soul sanctuary" in a cursive script below it.

## HIDDEN TIMBER *soul sanctuary*

Nestled in the scenic countryside of Wisconsin, Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary offers a unique blend of playful goats, serene alpacas, and rejuvenating yoga. Kristina and Tiffany turned a dream into reality, creating a space where joy, healing, and connection take center stage—an ideal destination for those looking to start the new year with a fresh perspective.

The idea for Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary sprouted during a life-changing goat yoga experience Kristina and Tiffany shared in Galena, Illinois, in 2019. The pandemic, combined with personal loss, inspired the couple to reevaluate their lives and pursue their vision of a sanctuary. “I’ve always dreamed of having a hobby farm with goats and alpacas,” Kristina shares. “Coupling that with creating a space for others to heal through yoga made it all come together.” After relocating to Wisconsin in 2022, Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary was born.



### Finding Joy at Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary: Goat Yoga and New Beginnings

Hidden Timber’s goat and alpaca yoga classes offer participants two distinct experiences. Goat yoga is lively and lighthearted. The playful goats trot into the studio, eagerly seeking animal crackers and affection. “The goats are so silly, you can’t help but laugh and find joy again,” Kristina says. “They keep you present and in the moment, which is what yoga is all about.”

Alpaca yoga, on the other hand, offers a calm and zen-like atmosphere. While alpacas are shy and less interactive than goats, their quiet presence adds a sense of peace and curiosity to outdoor sessions. “They’ll silently watch the class, occasionally approaching participants,” Kristina explains.

Whether attendees are stretching, giggling at the goats, or simply soaking in the tranquil vibes, every session is tailored to meet individual needs. “Some people come for the yoga, while others are content just petting a goat. Both are perfectly okay,” Kristina adds.

### Starting Fresh with Joy and Connection

Since opening, the local community has embraced Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary. Many participants bring friends or out-of-town guests to share the fun, and regular visitors are rewarded with a VIP punch card for free classes. The sanctuary has also partnered with local businesses for unique events and plans to expand collaborations during the offseason.

Hidden Timber isn’t just about yoga. The sanctuary offers private bookings for celebrations and team-building events, life coaching sessions led by Tiffany, and wellness retreats featuring holistic healing practices. Tiffany’s children’s book, *Beans and the Magic Sanctuary*, based on the real-life adventures of their farm cat, Beans, is also a hit with visitors.

As the new year begins, Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary provides the perfect setting for fresh starts and personal growth. “We hope participants leave lighter, happier, and more connected than when they arrived,” Kristina says. “The goats and alpacas remind us to find joy, laugh, and focus on the here and now” — something everyone should consider as we set our intentions for the year ahead.

### Why Try Goat Yoga?

Kristina has simple advice for those new to goat yoga: “Come with no expectations and be open to the experience.” Thanks to the goats’ unpredictable and curious nature, each class is unique. Participants should also dress in casual “play clothes,” as the goats are known for their hands-on enthusiasm!

Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary is all about connection—whether it’s finding joy through animal interaction, achieving inner peace, or building bonds with loved ones. As the calendar turns to a new year, this sanctuary is the perfect place to embrace positivity, mindfulness, and a fresh start.

For updates on classes, pop-up events, and merchandise, follow Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary on social media!

Know a business or individual that would be great for a member spotlight? Email Taylor at [tskibba@ecec.com](mailto:tskibba@ecec.com) or call 715-832-1603.





Nestled in the scenic countryside of Wisconsin, Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary offers a unique blend of playful goats, serene alpacas, and rejuvenating yoga. Kristina and Tiffany turned a dream into reality, creating a space where joy, healing, and connection take center stage—an ideal destination for those looking to start the new year with a fresh perspective.

The idea for Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary sprouted during a life-changing goat yoga experience Kristina and Tiffany shared in Galena, Illinois, in 2019. The pandemic, combined with personal loss, inspired the couple to reevaluate their lives and pursue their vision of a sanctuary. “I’ve always dreamed of having a hobby farm with goats and alpacas,” Kristina shares. “Coupling that with creating a space for others to heal through yoga made it all come together.” After relocating to Wisconsin in 2022, Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary was born.

## Finding Joy at Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary: Goat Yoga and New Beginnings

Hidden Timber’s goat and alpaca yoga classes offer participants two distinct experiences. Goat yoga is lively and lighthearted. The playful goats trot into the studio, eagerly seeking animal crackers and affection. “The goats are so silly, you can’t help but laugh and find joy again,” Kristina says. “They keep you present and in the moment, which is what yoga is all about.”

Alpaca yoga, on the other hand, offers a calm and zen-like atmosphere. While alpacas are shy and less interactive than goats, their quiet presence adds a sense of peace and curiosity to outdoor sessions. “They’ll silently watch the class, occasionally approaching participants,” Kristina explains.

Whether attendees are stretching, giggling at the goats, or simply soaking in the tranquil vibes, every session is tailored to meet individual needs. “Some people come for the yoga, while others are content just petting a goat. Both are perfectly okay,” Kristina adds.



## Starting Fresh with Joy and Connection

Since opening, the local community has embraced Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary. Many participants bring friends or out-of-town guests to share the fun, and regular visitors are rewarded with a VIP punch card for free classes. The sanctuary has also partnered with local businesses for unique events and plans to expand collaborations during the offseason.

Hidden Timber isn’t just about yoga. The sanctuary offers private bookings for celebrations and team-building events, life coaching sessions led by Tiffany, and wellness retreats featuring holistic healing practices. Tiffany’s children’s book, *Beans and the Magic Sanctuary*, based on the real-life adventures of their farm cat, Beans, is also a hit with visitors.

As the new year begins, Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary provides the perfect setting for fresh starts and personal growth. “We hope participants leave lighter, happier, and more connected than when they arrived,” Kristina says. “The goats and alpacas remind us to find joy, laugh, and focus on the here and now”—something everyone should consider as we set our intentions for the year ahead.

## Why Try Goat Yoga?

Kristina has simple advice for those new to goat yoga: “Come with no expectations and be open to the experience.” Thanks to the goats’ unpredictable and curious nature, each class is unique. Participants should also dress in casual “play clothes,” as the goats are known for their hands-on enthusiasm!

Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary is all about connection—whether it’s finding joy through animal interaction, achieving inner peace, or building bonds with loved ones. As the calendar turns to a new year, this sanctuary is the perfect place to embrace positivity, mindfulness, and a fresh start.

For updates on classes, pop-up events, and merchandise, follow Hidden Timber Soul Sanctuary on social media!

Know a business or individual that would be great for a member spotlight? Email Taylor at [tskibba@ecec.com](mailto:tskibba@ecec.com) or call 715-832-1603.

# SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 88TH ANNUAL MEETING



**T**he annual meeting is a special time of year for Eau Claire Energy Cooperative! Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the guiding principles we live by, and this year, we're showcasing how these partnerships help us maintain reliable service and keep costs affordable. It's our opportunity to highlight the power of cooperation and how working together with our partners strengthens our cooperative and benefits you, our members.

The annual meeting is your chance to learn more about the partnership ECEC has with Rural Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO). RESCO, a supply cooperative ECEC partners with, will share insights on how cooperative collaboration ensures reliable service and cost savings for member-owners. You'll also hear financial updates, recognize the Concern for Community Award recipient, and have the opportunity to interact with cooperative employees. Members who attend the meeting in person will also be entered to win one of ten \$100 bills!

As an ECEC member, you play a crucial role in guiding the cooperative's future and electing the Board of Directors. This year, we're making it easier than ever for you to participate. For the first time, you can cast your vote online through your SmartHub account! Voting online is fast, secure, and convenient—giving you the power to make a difference at your cooperative right from your home.

Mark your calendar and join us at the 88th Annual Meeting of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative on **Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at the Florian Gardens. Doors open at 4:30 p.m., the meeting begins at 5:30 p.m.,** and dinner will follow. Whether you vote online or attend in person, your voice makes a difference. We can't wait to see you there!



## Absentee ballots available after February 3, 2025

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, 2025 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 # \_\_\_\_\_



# START THE NEW YEAR WITH LESS HASSLE

Say goodbye to due dates and late fees. With autopay, your bill is one less thing to worry about in 2025.

With autopay, you'll never miss a due date again. It's one less thing to worry about, so you can focus on what matters most this year.

- **Fast and Secure:** Enroll in minutes through SmartHub
- **No More Late Fees:** Payments are always on time
- **Convenient:** No need to manage payments

Sign up for Autopay today!

Download the SmartHub app or  
visit [www.ecec.com/my\\_account/smarthub](http://www.ecec.com/my_account/smarthub)



## WHAT'S IT COST?

These costs can be used as a general guide. Specific products usage/costs may vary.



### ELECTRIC FIREPLACE

4 hours per day=\$.72  
\$21.60 per month



### 900-WATT HEAT TAPE

24 hours per day=\$2.59  
\$77.70 per month



### ELECTRIC BLANKET

8 hours per day=\$.19  
\$5.70 per month



### 1500-WATT SPACE HEATER

8 hours per day=\$1.44  
\$43.20 per month

## 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](http://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.

**ECEC will be closed on January 1 for New Years Day.**