


Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* May 2025 NEWS

**Eau Claire Energy
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**FORAGE FOR FUN AT THE
MUSCODA MOREL
MUSHROOM FESTIVAL**

COOPERATIVE FAMILY FUND

TIPS TO BEAT THE ENERGY PEAK

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**



PRIORITIZING ELECTRICAL SAFETY— AT HOME, ON THE ROAD, AND IN OUR COMMUNITY

By Monica Obrycki, President and CEO

The start of May brings with it a season of change. We have flowers blooming, birds singing, and temperatures are on the rise! One area we remain unchanged at Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is how we view safety. We understand electricity powers our lives. We also understand electricity must always be used with caution.

May is recognized as National Electrical Safety Month and provides an excellent opportunity to focus on not only promoting safe practices when working with or near electricity, but it also provides an opportunity to remind ourselves prevention is the best practice for avoiding electrical hazards.

Each year, preventable electrical fires destroy homes and businesses due to overloaded circuits and damaged cords. Inspect appliances and electronics regularly. If an appliance feels hotter than usual or if its cord is bent, frayed, or exposed, stop using it until it's repaired or replaced. Additionally, avoid running extension cords under rugs. This can create excessive heat, potentially igniting a fire. You should also keep electrical devices away from water and never overload outlets or power strips.

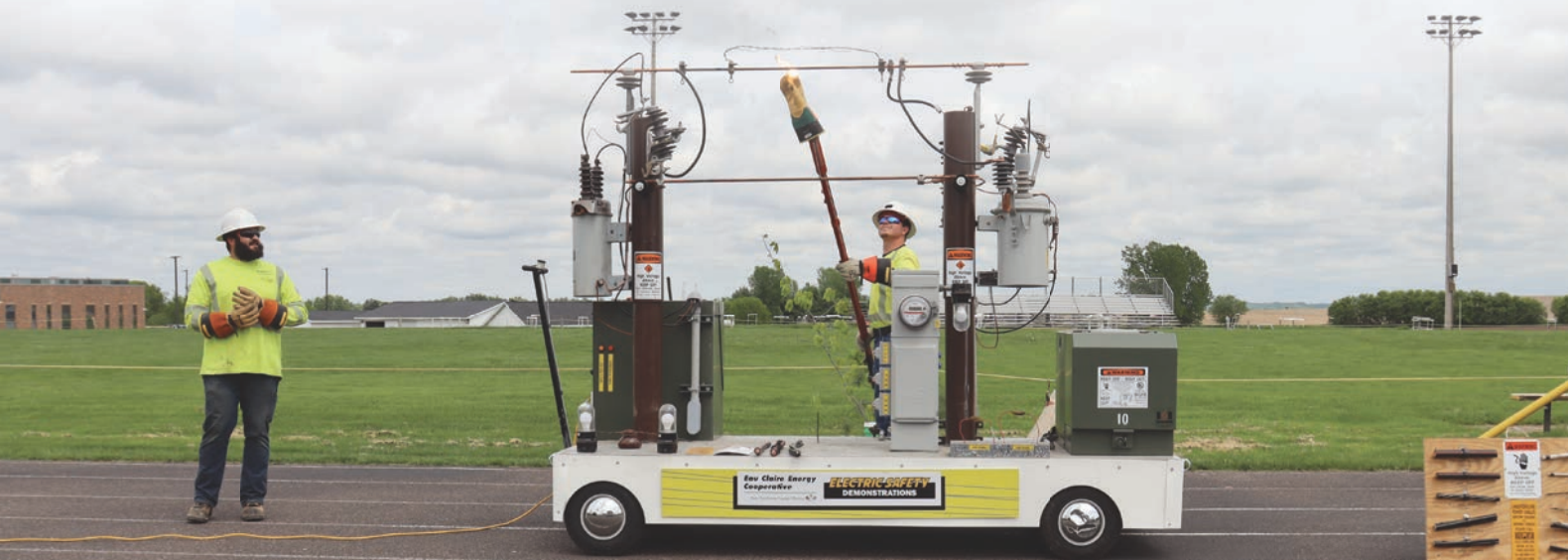
Outside the home, it is important to remember the danger posed by overhead and underground utilities. Never trim trees near powerlines or place ladders and tools within 10 feet of overhead wires. If you need to dig for any reason, be sure to call 811 to have the property marked for underground utilities.

Should you find yourself in a situation where your vehicle has made contact with a downed power line or a green transformer box, **STAY IN YOUR VEHICLE** and call 911 immediately. The ground around your vehicle may be energized, making it unsafe to exit. If the vehicle is on fire and you need to make an emergency exit, jump clear from the vehicle and land with both feet together. Shuffle away without lifting your feet or touching the vehicle.

If you witness an accident or come across a downed powerline, do not approach it. Call 911 to report your location and keep a safe distance. A downed powerline should always be assumed to be energized and treated as such.

While these points don't come close to covering all electrical safety areas, education remains a vital focal point for ECEC. We offer free electrical safety demonstrations for schools, community groups, businesses, and first responder groups. These demonstrations are catered to the audience to teach how electricity works and how you can stay safe. If you or your group would like to schedule a demonstration, contact our office!

We have a saying at ECEC: "Everyone Contributes, Everyone Cares." Every member of our team prioritizes safety every day. This Electrical Safety Month, take time to review safety practices with your family, coworkers, or employees. When everyone contributes to electrical safety, we all benefit from a safer community.





PARADE OF HOMES

**JUNE
7-14**

TOUR THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOMES
in the Chippewa Valley

19 New Homes • 1 Remodeled Home

Parade Home Hours

June 7 - 8	10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
June 9 - 13	5:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
June 14	10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

**Remodeled Home is open June 7, 8 & 9*

Tickets

\$8 through June 6
\$10 after June 6

Tickets are available at
1st Parade Home You Visit
www.ParadeOfHomesCV.com
Royal Credit Union Branches in
Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls &
Menomonie through June 6



**Eau Claire Energy
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Denny's Appliance • Fireside Hearth & Home • HomeTech by Mosaic • Xcel Energy
Kristy Thiess, Your Real Estate Guide • Northwestern Bank
Ashley Construction • Cesspool Cleaner Company & Portable Toilet Rentals, LLC
Eau Claire Insulation & Exteriors • Gerhard's Kitchen & Bath Store
Johnson Roll-Off Service • Mower Sperry Insurance Agency • Royal Credit Union
iHeart Media • WEAU 13 News

www.ParadeOfHomesCV.com

YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

July 15-17, 2025 | UW-Stout campus



CALLING ALL HIGH-SCHOOLERS:

Youth Leadership Conference is an annual event hosted by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) and Wisconsin electric cooperatives. The event engages high school students in activities that emphasize team building, grows cooperative business knowledge, practices life skills, and builds leadership qualities. YLC is an excellent opportunity for students to learn more about cooperatives while building strong leadership and interpersonal skills. Past attendees have found it motivating, educational, and, of course, fun! To attend, the applicant's parent(s)/legal guardian must be an active member of the Cooperative. The applicant must be a student at one of the following high schools in the Cooperative's service territory:

Altoona High School
 Augusta High School
 Cadott High School
 Chippewa Falls Area High School
 Chippewa Falls McDonell High School
 Eau Claire Immanuel Lutheran High School
 Eau Claire Memorial High School
 Eau Claire North High School

Eau Claire Regis High School
 Eleva-Strum High School
 Elk Mound High School
 Fall Creek High School
 Mondovi High School
 Osseo-Fairchild High School
 Stanley-Boyd High School
 Home School/Charter School

There's no cost for you to attend! For more information and registration materials, please contact our office at 715-832-1603 or visit www.ecec.com. All registrations must be submitted by June 20, 2025.



88th ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN MARCH

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative held its 88th Annual Meeting, drawing over 250 members to The Florian Gardens. The event was filled with insights and updates, highlighting ECEC's cooperative partnerships and their benefits to members.

The meeting began with a welcome from Board President Andrew Bourget and Eau Claire Energy President and CEO Monica Obrycki. The cooperative also celebrated the sixteen Eau Claire Energy Cooperative Federated Youth Foundation scholarship winners, each receiving \$1,000 to support their education—an investment in the community's future leaders. Particularly noteworthy was the recognition of Frank Neibauer, the 11th annual Concern for Community Award recipient, acknowledging his dedication to community service. Retiring director, Curt Williams, was also recognized and thanked for his service and dedication to ECEC's Board.

The keynote speaker, Doug Booher, Vice President of Sales and Manufacturer Relations at Rural Electric Supply

Cooperative (RESCO), addressed the importance of cooperative partnerships in today's energy landscape. Booher highlighted RESCO's role in supporting electric cooperatives, navigating supply chain challenges, and ensuring access to critical materials. He also discussed RESCO's new warehouse in Stanley, Wisconsin, explaining how its proximity will enhance efficiency and reliability for ECEC members.

In the board elections, candidate John Zmuda and incumbents Andrew Bourget and Clarence "Butch" Boettcher secured their terms by acclamation. The meeting also featured an engaging Q&A session where members had the opportunity to inquire about various topics.



John Zmuda



Andrew Bourget



Clarence "Butch" Boettcher

Each year, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative provides a few lucky members in attendance at the cooperative's annual meeting a chance to win \$100. This year, ten lucky members were selected by drawing to win. Congratulations to JT Berg, Alvin Peterson, Stephanie Duncan, Gregory Sieg, William Jaeke, Bobbi Barone, Sandy Mueller, Jerry Geske, Chuck Lund, Diane Oberbeck.

Following the annual meeting, the



board convened for its organizational meeting, electing officers to steer ECEC's strategic direction. Andrew Bourget continued in the role of Chair, supported by Thomas Schwartz as Vice Chair and Frank Neibauer as Secretary, reflecting a collective commitment to effective governance.



Andrew Bourget, Chair



Thomas Schwartz, Vice Chair



Frank Neibauer, Secretary-Treasurer



Mark your calendars for the 89th Annual Meeting, scheduled for March 17, 2026, at The Florian Gardens in Eau Claire.



SPRING INTO SAVINGS WITH HEAT PUMP TECHNOLOGY

May is known for the seasonal transition—the sun is shining, the days are getting longer, and before you know it, summer heat will be rolling in before you know it. Now is the perfect time to think about your home’s heating and cooling system. One of the best ways to keep your home comfortable year-round while saving on energy costs is with a heat pump.

Heat pump technology has advanced significantly in the past 10 to 20 years, making these systems an efficient and versatile option for both heating and cooling. Instead of generating heat like a traditional furnace, heat pumps work by transferring heat from one place to another. In winter, they pull warmth from the outside air or ground and bring it into your home. When summer arrives, they do the opposite, removing heat from inside and pushing it outdoors. Some newer models are even capable of operating efficiently in sub-zero temperatures, making them a great option for Wisconsin homeowners.



High Efficiency and Lower Energy Bills

One of the biggest benefits of heat pumps is their high energy efficiency. Unlike conventional heating systems that burn fuel or rely on electric resistance, heat pumps use electricity to move heat instead of creating it. So, they produce more energy than they consume. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, heat pumps can deliver up to three times more energy than they consume, helping homeowners save money on their utility bills.

While the initial cost of a heat pump system may be higher than a traditional furnace or air conditioner, the long-term savings can be substantial. Lower monthly energy bills and increased efficiency help homeowners recoup the investment over time, making it a cost-effective solution in the long run.

What to Consider Before Installation

Heat pumps offer plenty of benefits, but there are a few factors to think about before making the switch:

- **Climate** – Heat pumps are highly efficient, but in extreme cold, some homes may need a backup heat source.
- **Insulation** – Proper insulation and air sealing are key to getting the most out of a heat pump. A well-insulated home will retain heat in winter and keep cool air inside during summer.
- **Sizing** – Bigger isn’t always better. A heat pump that’s too large or too small can lead to inefficiencies, uneven

heating/cooling, and higher energy use.

- **Professional Installation** – Heat pumps should be installed by a certified technician who can assess your home’s layout, insulation, and heating/cooling needs to recommend the best system.

Finding the Right Heat Pump for Your Home

There are several types of heat pumps to choose from, depending on your home’s setup and needs:

- **Ducted Heat Pumps** – If your home already has a forced-air furnace and ductwork, a centralized air-source heat pump can be an easy upgrade. These systems connect to existing ducts and are controlled with a single thermostat, making them a great option if your home’s ductwork distributes air evenly.
- **Ductless Mini-Split Heat Pumps** – If your home doesn’t have ductwork or your ducts are leaky or inefficient, a ductless mini-split heat pump may be the best choice. These systems use individual air handlers mounted on walls, with each unit controlled separately. This allows for zoned heating and cooling, which can improve efficiency and comfort.
- **Geothermal (Ground-Source) Heat Pumps** – A few feet underground, the temperature stays at a steady 50 degrees year-round, making geothermal heat pumps one of the most energy-efficient heating and cooling options available. These systems use buried pipes to transfer heat to and from your home, reducing reliance on outdoor air temperatures. While the upfront cost is higher, the long-term energy savings can be substantial.

Maximize Your Savings with Incentives

Upgrading your home’s heating and cooling system doesn’t have to come with a hefty price tag. Eau Claire Energy Cooperative offers valuable incentives for heat pump installations, which can be combined with Wisconsin’s Focus on Energy program and the Federal Government’s 30% tax credit.

As May brings warmer weather, it’s a great time to consider how you’ll keep your home comfortable all year long. If you’re interested in learning more about heat pump options and available incentives, reach out to us—we’re happy to help you find the best solution for your home!

Incentives for Heat Pumps*		
	Air Source & Mini Splits	Geothermal
ECEC	\$200 per Ton	\$400 per Ton
Focus on Energy	\$400 to \$1,300	\$750 to \$1,000
Federal Tax Credit	30% up to \$2,000	30%
* Some conditions may apply. Check for details.		



Congratulations

2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Each year, Eau Claire Energy awards scholarships to member-students who live in our service territory. This year ECEC, awarded sixteen \$1,000 scholarships. To apply for a scholarship from Eau Claire Energy Cooperative in the future, watch this magazine, our website, and our social media posts for further information. Typically, the cooperative opens scholarship opportunities in the fall of each year.

No applications were received from Home School Association or Chippewa Falls Area High School.



Mary Fedie
Altoona High School



Preston Schafer
Augusta High School



Ewan Weir
Cadott High School



Alexander Fischer
McDonell Central Catholic High School



Natalie Gurgel
Immanuel Lutheran High School



Kylee Faupl
Eau Claire Memorial High School



Lindsey Haller
Eau Claire North High School



Carly Borst
Regis High School



MacKenzy King
Eleva-Strum High School



Tessa Smrecek
Elk Mound High School



Anissa Duncan
Fall Creek High School



Amber Lund
Mondovi High School



Mackenzie Scheller
Osseo-Fairchild High School



Sydney Gundlach
Stanley-Boyd High School



Megan Awe
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Not pictured:

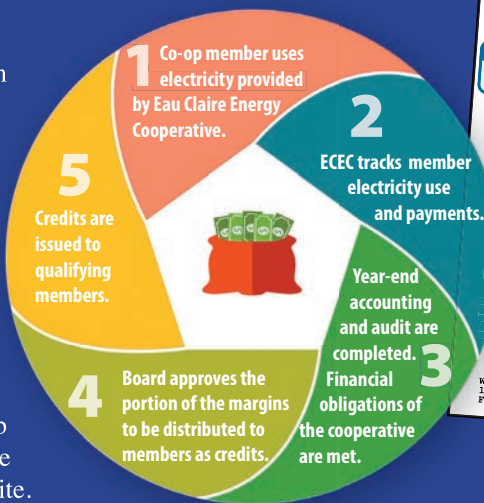
**Wyatt Nitchey–
CVTC Electric Power
Distribution Program**



2024 CAPITAL CREDIT ALLOCATION NOTICES ON MAY BILLS

Each year, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative allocates capital credits to its member-owners based on usage the prior year. The 2024 allocation notice will be printed on the May 2025 bill. The notice details each member-owner's total capital credit balance including 2024's retirement applied to the October 2024 bill and 2024's allocation.

The 2024 allocation notice will be printed in the top left corner of page 1 of your billing statement. If you receive paperless statements, you can view your bill by logging into your SmartHub account either in the app or on our website.



2022 Capital Credit Allocation

Beginning Balance	\$2,383.25
Less: 2022 Retirement	\$74.23
Plus: 2022 Allocation	\$151.63
Ending Balance	\$2,460.65

Allocations cannot be applied against amounts owed to the cooperative. For more information, visit www.ecec.com.

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: \$254.97

PAYMENT DUE: 05/20/2022

Monthly Energy Use Comparison

Total Energy Use Last Month	Total Energy Use This Month	Total Energy Use This Month Last Year
2,524 kWh 31° Avg temp	2,035 kWh 41° Avg temp	943 kWh 46° Avg temp

Your Average Daily Use

- 68 kWh AVERAGE DAILY USE
- \$8.50 AVERAGE DAILY COST

IMPORTANT MEMBER INFORMATION

Attention Third Graders! ECEC along with Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association are hosting an Electrical Safety Poster Contest for third grade students! For more information, visit our website at www.ecec.com.

PLEASE RETURN BOTTOM PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative
PO Box 368
Fall Creek, WI 54742-0368

Account Number 0000000
Current Amount Due 05/20/22 \$254.97
Amount Due after 05/20/22 \$257.52

WILLIE WIREDHAND
123 MAIN ST
FALL CREEK, WI 54742

JOIN US FOR A FUN-FILLED MORNING ON THE FARM!

17 Saturday, June 7, 2025
Breakfast Served: 7 AM – 11 AM
Off-site Parking: Fall Creek High School (Shuttle Available)

Admission:
 ♦ Adults: \$10
 ♦ Kids (5-11): \$5
 ♦ Kids Under 4: FREE

Enjoy a delicious breakfast and a day packed with fun! Explore farm tours, educational booths, face painting, and much more. Bring the whole family for a memorable experience!



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.

ECEC will be closed on May 26 for Memorial Day