

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* July 2025 NEWS

***Eau Claire Energy
Cooperative***

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

WECN CELEBRATES 85 YEARS!

**EFFICIENCY TIPS
FOR OLDER HOMES**

COOPERATIVE YOUTH

**RED, WHITE, AND COOL TIPS
FOR A SMART SUMMER!**





RESTORING POWER

from a lineworker's point of view

By Josh Vaningan, Line Superintendent

When an outage happens, the first question our members ask is, “When will power be restored?” Electricity is essential to our daily lives, and any disruption can be frustrating. But what goes into restoring power? Why does it sometimes take longer than expected?

The process is complex, and our highly-skilled line crews work tirelessly—often in tough conditions—to get the lights back on. Here’s a behind-the-scenes look at what happens when the call comes in.

The First Steps

With our power lines stretching across hundreds of miles, outages can happen for a variety of factors—fallen trees, equipment malfunctions, or vehicle accidents. When an outage notification comes in, the first question we ask is, “Is this an individual outage or a line outage?” A line outage affects a larger area, while an individual outage may be caused by an issue with a single pole or transformer. This helps guide our next steps.

If the outage happens after hours, the line worker responds from home. Depending on the outage location, the drive alone can take 30 minutes or more. Once on-site, the first task is identifying the cause of the outage. This often involves multiple drive-bys to visually inspect lines and equipment. Safety is the top priority—before any power is restored, line workers must be sure there are no downed lines or equipment failures that could pose a danger to the public.

In rural areas, reaching the problem can be a challenge as well. While most poles are along roads, some are in remote locations, requiring crews to go off-road or inspect the area on foot.

Locating and Fixing the Issue

Once the issue is identified, safety procedures come first. Line workers assess the situation, isolate affected areas, and clear any obstructions such as fallen trees before repairs begin.

Here’s a timeline of a real outage our amazing line workers worked on recently:

6:45 p.m.—The outage call comes in. The crew heads to the shop, gathers equipment (based on their best guess of what the issue could be), and rolls out.

7:45 p.m.—Arrival at the outage site. A safety briefing is held, and the crew inspects the line.

9:00 p.m.—Safety measures are in place. Work begins.

A tall oak tree has fallen on the line. The pole is still intact, but the crossarm is broken. The wire isn’t down, but it’s pinned under the tree. First, the crew carefully cuts the tree away—an especially hazardous task given the tension on the lines. Meanwhile, another crew member gathers the necessary materials: a new crossarm, braces, insulators, bolts, and ties.

10:30 p.m.—The tree is cleared, and materials have arrived. Since the pole is off the road, a bucket truck can’t be used. A line worker climbs the pole using a belt and hooks, carrying essential tools and a handline—a rope and pulley system used to lift heavier materials.

At the top of the pole, the line worker removes broken equipment and checks for further damage. Once the pole is prepped, the new crossarm is lifted into place, secured, and reinforced. The wire is then lifted, secured to the new crossarm, and tied in.



11:45 p.m.—Repairs are complete. The crew heads to the breaker.

12:05 a.m.—The breaker is closed. Power is restored.

1:00 a.m.—The line worker returns home, safe and sound.

Committed to Our Members

This scenario took about five and a half hours—but not all outages are the same. A broken pole could have added even more time. Every outage is different, but one thing remains constant: our line crews’ dedication to restoring power as quickly and safely as possible.

We know outages can be stressful. But as your local cooperative, we’re not just employees—we’re your neighbors. We live in the same communities, shop at the same stores, and send our kids to the same schools. When your lights go out, chances are, ours do too. That’s why we’re committed to providing safe, reliable electricity—24/7, 365 days a year.

ECEC *AT A GLANCE*



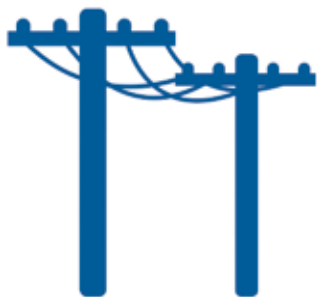
12,772
MEMBER
OWNERS

NINE
DIRECTOR-
ELECTED
DISTRICTS

7
MEMBERS
PER MILE
OF LINE

FIRST
ENERGIZED
FRIDAY,
MARCH 2,
1939

17,483
POLES IN SERVICE



THIRTY-SEVEN
DEDICATED EMPLOYEES



1,770 TOTAL MILES OF LINE
774 MILES OF OVERHEAD LINE
996 MILES OF UNDERGROUND LINE



SEVENTEEN
TOTAL SUBSTATIONS

CAPITAL CREDITS
RETURNED TO
MEMBERS IN 2024
\$1,205,160



DOLLARS GIVEN
BACK IN REBATES TO
MEMBERS IN 2024

\$131,223



CAPITAL CREDITS
RETURNED TO
MEMBERS IN 2024
\$1,205,160



CONTROLLED
WATER HEATERS
4,181

TOTAL KWH SOLD IN 2024
204,498,635

TOTAL KWH PURCHASED IN 2024
212,427,902



KEEP IT RED, WHITE & COOL

ENERGY-SAVING TIPS FOR A SMARTER SUMMER

July is a time for fireworks, flags, and family cookouts—but it's also a peak season for energy use. Between air conditioning keeping the house cool and backyard parties keeping things hot with everything from speakers to coolers, summer can put a strain on your electric bill. But don't sweat it! There are smart ways to stay cool and celebrate with energy savings in mind!

Here are some Red, White & Cool tips to help you cut costs, stay comfortable and enjoy Independence Day the energy-savings way.

Red—Reduce your use

Smart Thermostats—Take control of your cooling with a smart thermostat. These devices learn your schedule and will adjust temperatures to save energy when you're away. Some models can even be controlled from your phone—perfect for when you're out watching fireworks!

LED Lighting up the fun—Adding red, white & blue lighting to the back yard will bring a festive glow to the party. Choosing LED options will not only shine brighter but also be more energy-efficient than non-LED counterparts. As an added bonus, they stay cooler to the touch, making them safe around kids & decorations.

White—Wise ways to stay cool

Grill, don't bake—This is an easy one, but cooking indoors will undoubtedly add heat to your home, keeping your A/C working to cool the space. By using your grill, or roasting hot dogs over a bonfire, you can keep the heat outside. It's a delicious and energy-smart way to feed your Fourth of July crowd.

Flip the fan—Summer is the right time to ensure your ceiling fan is rotating counterclockwise. Doing so helps push cool air down, and can make a room feel cooler without changing the thermostat. Don't forget to turn the fan off when you're not in the room, though!

Use shades to your advantage—Sometimes, keeping heat out is the best way to keep cool inside. Closing your home's curtains or shades during the heat of the day is a natural (and FREE) way to keep your home cool.

Cool—Beat the heat, not the bank

Choose Energy Star Appliances—Refrigerators, washers, dryers, and many other home appliances are rated by the Department of Energy. Those appliances meeting the ever-stringent efficiency standards earn the Energy Star rating. Look for the blue logo when you're shopping!

Smart Power Strips—Smart power strips automatically shut off power to unused devices, helping you save money and avoid vampire loads such as chargers and other non-essential electronics.

As you enjoy this month's star-spangled festivities, remember the power of small choices can lead to big energy savings. From your thermostat to your fans and everything in between, energy efficiency is worth celebrating this Independence Day.



In May, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's Youth Ambassadors gathered for their final meeting of the school year to celebrate the 14—yes FOURTEEN—graduating Seniors. Throughout the past several months, the Youth Ambassadors were able to explore a variety of relevant energy topics while having the opportunity to tour local businesses and learn from area leaders, all while gaining a stronger understanding of the impact of the Cooperative business model.

While the 2024-25 Youth Ambassador session is wrapped up, the planning is well underway for an exciting 2025-26 season. If you are or know of an area High School student interested in being a part of this incredible program, scan the QR code to fill out an application! Space is limited, and priority is given to students living in a home served by Eau Claire Energy Cooperative.



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

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Call 3 working days before you dig.

ECEC will be closed on July 4 for Independence Day