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February 2026 NEWS

**Eau Claire Energy
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THE FEMA EMERGENCY

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COME HAVE A PIECE OF CAKE

**SEE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT FOR
A DISCOUNT ON PASSES AT
METROPOLIS RESORT!**





MAKING SENSE OF WINTER ENERGY USE

By Monica Obrycki, President and CEO

Winter is a season when we spend more time indoors, relying on electricity to keep our homes warm, comfortable, and running smoothly. That's why winter energy bills can sometimes come as a surprise, even when it feels like nothing has changed. When that happens, the first question is often why, and the second is what can I do about it?

One important thing to remember is that a higher winter bill doesn't automatically mean your electric rate increased.

In fact, for many Eau Claire Energy Cooperative members, winter rates don't change much at all and may even be slightly lower. Most higher winter bills are driven by

one simple factor: using more electricity. Colder temperatures mean heating systems run longer, lights are on more hours each day, and electric equipment works harder to keep homes comfortable.

What often catches members off guard are the "extras" that show up in winter. Our Member Services team hears stories regularly about space heaters running in spare rooms, vehicle block heaters plugged in longer than needed, heating tape or heat lamps quietly running day and night, or humidifiers added when the air turns dry. In some cases, a malfunctioning pump, heater, or piece of equipment can be the culprit. Even short-term changes, like hosting extra family over

the holidays or using temporary heating in a workshop or garage, can make a noticeable difference on a monthly bill.

If your bill looks higher than expected, a good first step is a quick walk-through of your home, garage, or outbuildings. Think about what's been plugged in since colder weather arrived and whether it still needs to be running. Identifying those seasonal additions is often the fastest way to understand where usage increased.

There are also simple ways to manage winter energy use without sacrificing comfort. Sealing drafts, keeping vents clear, lowering the thermostat slightly, and being mindful of how long winter equipment runs can

all help make your home more efficient. Another helpful tool is utilizing your SmartHub account. ECEC members can log in to SmartHub to check their usage during the month. By checking during the month, instead of waiting for the bill to arrive, you may be able to spot changes early and make adjustments before that electricity shows up on your statement.

Winter bills can be frustrating, but a little awareness goes a long way. And if you ever have questions about your bill or want help understanding your energy use, our Member Services team is always happy to help. At Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, we're here to help you stay informed, comfortable, and in control, no matter the season.



Eau Claire Energy Cooperative

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A WINTER ENERGY USE CHECK-IN

1 WHAT'S CHANGED?

Think about anything that's different since winter started: colder weather, more time indoors, guests, or new equipment can all increase use.

2

LOOK FOR WINTER ADD-ONS

Space heaters, block heaters, heating tape, heat lamps, or humidifiers may only run seasonally but can have a big impact.

3

DO A WALK THROUGH

Walk through your home, garage, and outbuildings and note what's been added, plugged in, or used differently since cold weather arrived.

4

INVESTIGATE WITH SMARTHUB

Log in to SmartHub to view daily or hourly usage. Seeing how it changes through the month helps you understand seasonal patterns and what's affecting your bill.

5

REACH OUT TO ECEC MEMBER SERVICES

Still have questions? ECEC's Member Services team can help review your usage. Call us or email memberservices@ecec.com.



SmartHub Login





Metropolis Resort: BIG FUN, SMART ENERGY ' CHOICES

Metropolis Resort is a well-known destination located on Eau Claire Energy Cooperative lines, offering year-round entertainment, lodging, and meeting space for families, businesses, and groups. Metropolis is more than a destination—it's one of the region's largest attractions.

Metropolis Resort is best known for its attractions and hotel, but the property offers far more than slides and splash pads. Guests can enjoy Action City attractions like go-karts, trampolines, laser tag, arcade games, and more. The resort also features on-site dining, extensive meeting and event space, and accommodations designed for families, groups, and business travelers alike.

Between heating and pumping water in Chaos Water Park, charging go-karts at Action City, and keeping hotel guests comfortable, Metropolis Resort needs to use energy wisely. With large energy use comes thoughtful energy management. Over the years, the resort has made significant investments in energy-saving technologies that reduce waste without compromising the guest experience.

One of the most impactful upgrades can be found in the hotel itself. Each of the resort's 111 guest rooms is equipped with infrared occupancy sensors tied to the thermostat system. These sensors detect when a room is occupied and



automatically adjust temperatures when guests are away, saving thousands of dollars in energy costs while maintaining comfort when it matters most.

In the water park, efficiency is built into the system. Metropolis uses regenerative filtration technology that reduces the amount of water, heat, and chemicals needed to keep pools clean and safe. Even more impressively,

pool water is heated using waste heat recovered from the adjoining hotel through an advanced heat-recycling system. Instead of letting that heat go unused, it's captured and repurposed, cutting energy demand while keeping the water warm.

Metropolis Resort isn't slowing down. Construction is underway on a new building that will expand the resort's entertainment offerings even further. The addition will include an indoor roller coaster, ropes course, indoor mini golf, and new go-kart facilities. The current go-kart space will be transformed into a bowling alley, adding yet another attraction for guests. As the resort grows, energy planning remains part of the conversation, ensuring new spaces are designed with efficiency and fun in mind.

Large commercial members like Metropolis Resort play an important role in the cooperative system. Their energy needs help shape infrastructure planning, and their efficiency efforts help manage demand across the grid. It's a partnership that benefits all members' homes and businesses alike.

Whether you're planning a weekend getaway, a birthday celebration, or just a fun day trip, Metropolis offers something for everyone.

Activities for Every Season

Visitors to Metropolis can fill their days (and nights) with a wide range of activities:

- **Chaos Water Park** — Indoor slides, lazy river, hot tub, and aquatic play zones, perfect for rainy days or winter breaks.
- **Action City** — A massive indoor fun center with go-karts, trampoline park, laser tag, mini golf, and arcade games.
- **On-site Dining** — City Eats restaurant, City Pizza Company, Caribou Coffee, and even Dairy Queen treats keep energy up between adventures.
- **Group Events & Retreats** — Flexible meeting and event spaces make the resort an ideal location for corporate retreats, school groups, or family reunions.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 89TH ANNUAL MEETING

**Tuesday, March 17
Florian Gardens**

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's 89th Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at the Florian Gardens in Eau Claire at 5:30 p.m. We love interacting and engaging with our members! There will be dinner, cash prizes, and so much more. This year, we will feature the people behind your power. Join us to learn more about what ECEC staff does every day to support, engage, and connect with you, our member-owners. We can't wait to see you there!



Member Coupon

Exclusive offer for Eau Claire Energy Cooperative members
30% off park passes valid in February 2026

- Valid at Chaos Water Park or Action City
- Must present coupon at purchase
- Valid on full-priced passes only
- Not valid with any other offers or coupons
- No cash value



ECEC26





HOME SHOW

February 20 - 22
Chippewa Valley Expo Center
5150 Old Mill Plaza, Eau Claire

Join Eau Claire Energy Cooperative for

Family Day
Sunday, February 22
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

- Build a Tool Box, Oriole Feeder OR Bird House
- Kevin's Juggling & Balloons 10am - 2 pm
- Activities by 4-H including LEGO Building Challenge, Rock Painting and more!

Pre-sale Tickets: \$8

At the Door: \$10

Children 12 & under are free

Pre-sale tickets available at Festival Foods,
Menards & Green Oasis through Feb 19

**Eau Claire Energy
Cooperative**

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Over 120 Vendors • Educational & DIY Seminars Friday & Saturday
Cheese Board Charcuterie Make & Take Friday Evening • Family Day on Sunday
Scavenger Hunt BINGO with \$300 Grand Prize • Dream Backyard Grand Giveaway



For more information: www.cvhomebuilders.com (715) 835-2526

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative

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Monica Obrycki, President and CEO
**Taylor Skibba, Marketing and
Communications Coordinator**

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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 is closed on February 26 for Employee Training