


Since 1940

# WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* May 2026 NEWS

***Eau Claire Energy  
Cooperative***

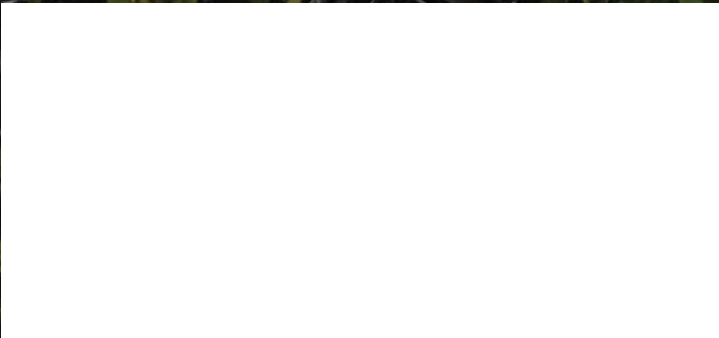
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## POWER PLAYERS OF THE GRID

**FEMA FOLLOW UP**

**COOPERATIVE LEADERS  
MAKE THEIR CASE IN WASHINGTON**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2026  
ECEC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!**





## Eau Claire Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



# SAFETY IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

By Monica Obrycki, President and CEO

May is Electrical Safety Month! It is a month that we focus on how to stay safe around electricity, both in our daily work and in how we help educate our communities to stay safe. But, at Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, safety isn't something we think about just once a year; it's a responsibility we carry every day. Lineworkers are often the first people who come to mind when we talk about electrical safety. The truth is, safety begins at home with the simple, everyday steps our members can take to remain safe around electricity.

At the cooperative, safety isn't just a policy; it is part of who we are. It's something we talk about, train on, and reinforce every single day. Our employees look out for one another, speak up when something doesn't seem right, and take the extra time to do the job safely. That mindset has helped us build a strong foundation, but we're not stopping there. One of the key priorities in our strategic plan is taking our safety program from good to great, meaning we are continuing to strengthen our internal culture while also expanding how we share that commitment even further. Because at the end of the day, safety doesn't stop at our substations or along our power lines; it extends to you.

As we move into spring, many of you are heading into the fields, starting outdoor projects, or simply enjoying time outside after a long Wisconsin winter. These seasonal activities can bring new risks when it comes to electricity.

For those in agriculture, planting season is one of the busiest and most hazardous times of year. Large equipment, such as planters, sprayers, and grain augers, can come

dangerously close to overhead power lines. It's critical to stay aware of your surroundings, keep equipment at a safe distance, and have a plan in place if contact is made. If equipment does

Never attempt to remove debris, tree branches, kites, or balloons. Even if it looks safe, always assume the line is energized and contact the utility for assistance.

contact a power line, remain inside the cab if it's safe to do so and call for help immediately.

The same principle applies on the road. If you're ever involved in an accident that brings down a power pole or line, assume the line is energized. Stay inside your vehicle, call 911, and wait for emergency responders. The only time you should exit the vehicle is if there is an immediate danger (like a fire). If you must exit, it's important to jump clear of the vehicle with your feet together to avoid contact with both the vehicle and the ground at the same time.

Spring is also the start of digging and project season. Whether you're planting

trees, installing a fence, or tackling a landscaping project, always remember to call 811 at least three business days before you dig. It's a simple, free step that helps locate underground utilities and prevents dangerous and costly accidents. The same goes for projects around your home. Make sure tools, cords, and equipment are in good condition and rated for outdoor use.

And if you ever come across a downed power line, treat it as energized and stay far away. Not all downed lines arc and spark. They may appear harmless, but that doesn't mean they aren't energized. Keep others back and report it to the utility right away. It's one of the most dangerous situations you can encounter, and awareness can make all the difference. The same goes for anything caught in a power line. Never attempt to remove debris, tree branches, kites, or balloons. Even if it looks safe, always assume the line is energized and contact the utility for assistance.

At Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, safety is a shared responsibility. As you head into the warmer months, keep these reminders in mind. Just remember that a little awareness can go a long way in keeping you, your family, and your community safe.





# 89TH ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN MARCH: CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE BEHIND YOUR POWER

**E**au Claire Energy Cooperative (ECEC) celebrated its 89th Annual Meeting on March 17 at the Florian Gardens Conference Center, bringing together members, staff, and guests. The meeting was a chance to honor achievements and highlight the people who make reliable electricity possible for ECEC.

Board Chair Andrew Bourget opened the evening by welcoming members and recognizing the people behind your power—the employees of ECEC. “Behind every reliable light switch is the dedicated team who makes it possible,” Bourget said. He introduced the board of directors and thanked staff for their ongoing work to keep power flowing and support members, emphasizing that it’s the people who truly make the difference.

Continuing the evening’s recognition of those who make a difference, Bourget also recognized Patty George as this year’s Concern for Community Award recipient. Driven by member nominations, the award honors individuals who go above and beyond to serve others and make a meaningful difference in the communities ECEC serves. George, a member of the Mondovi community, was selected for her dedication to local youth through her involvement with the Hilltop Climbers 4 H Club, reflecting the commitment to the community that the award represents.

While board elections this year were uncontested, the candidates still had a moment to address the membership. Incumbents Thomas Schwartz (District 1), Joseph Becker (District 5), and Jeffrey Frieburg (District 8) were re-elected by acclamation.



Thomas Schwartz



Joseph Becker



Jeffrey Frieburg

Bourget also thanked the Member Advisory Council and the nominating committee for their valuable contributions, noting that their insights and oversight help ensure that member voices are always part of the cooperative’s decisions.

This year’s theme, “The People Behind Your Power,” was brought to life with an employee panel moderated by President and CEO Monica Obyrcki. Panelists Adam Westaby, Josh Vaningan, Arik Arnevik, and Beth West



Left: Patty George (left) accepts the Concern for Community Award from Board Chair Andrew Bourget. Right: President and CEO Monica Obyrcki (far left) moderates a panel featuring employees Beth West, Adam Westaby, Arik Arnevik, and Josh Vaningan, who shared insights into their daily work maintaining infrastructure, responding to outages, and serving members during the co-op’s “People Behind Your Power” presentation.



Left: Adam Westaby, Kyle Rasmussen, Ben Krambeer, and Josh Vaningan stand ready to greet members and guests. Right: President and CEO Monica Obyrcki visits with members before the meeting.

shared stories from their daily work - troubleshooting power issues, maintaining infrastructure, and assisting members. Their discussions highlighted not only the technical expertise required to operate a cooperative, but also the care and commitment that go into every decision and every job.

From preparing for storms to performing routine maintenance, the panelists provided a behind-the-scenes look at how ECEC keeps electricity flowing reliably. They shared insights into their day-to-day work, giving members a better understanding of the coordination and effort that goes into delivering dependable service.

The program also recognized fifteen students who received \$1,000 scholarships through the Eau Claire Energy Cooperative Federated Youth Foundation (see pages 16b and 16c for more details). In addition, youth ambassadors in attendance were acknowledged, reflecting the cooperative's ongoing commitment to supporting local youth through scholarships, leadership programs, and hands-on learning opportunities. The night concluded with ten lucky members in attendance winning \$100!

Following the 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, ready to lead the cooperative through the year ahead.

The 2026 Annual Meeting was a celebration of the people behind your power. From employees keeping electricity flowing to students, volunteers, and members contributing to their communities, the evening highlighted the human connections that make Eau Claire Energy Cooperative more than just wires and infrastructure. Members are encouraged to save the date for next year's Annual Meeting and join in the celebration.

ECEC's 90th Annual Meeting will be held on March 16, 2027, at Florian Gardens in Eau Claire. We hope to see you there!

## Congratulations to our \$100 bill winners!

- Michele Komp
- Paul Nelsestuen
- Janet Westphal
- Hal Swanstrom
- Sadie Remington
- Patty George
- Carlotte King
- Allen Strey
- Rhonda Kelly
- Scott Sye



Andrew Bourget,  
Chair



Thomas Schwartz,  
Vice Chair



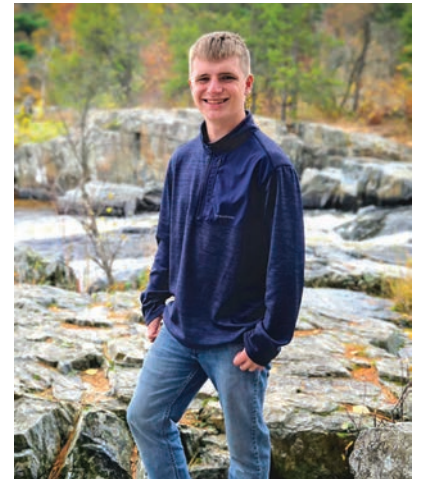
Frank Neibauer,  
Secretary

# CONGRATULATIONS

## 2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Each year, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative awards scholarships to member-students through the Federated Youth Foundation scholarship program. This year, ECEC awarded fifteen \$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 Stanley-Boyd High School, Chippewa Falls McDonell High School, or Eau Claire Immanuel Lutheran High School.*



**Shawn Pederson**  
Altoona High School



**Victoria Olson**  
Augusta High School



**Anthony Glenz**  
Cadott High School



**Ashlynn Sye**  
Chippewa Falls High School



**Claire Janiak**  
Eau Claire Memorial High School



**Kendall Vance**  
Eau Claire North High School



**Therese Kern**  
Eau Claire Regis High School



**Alexander Awe**  
Eleva-Strum High School



**Brody Niven**  
Elk Mound High School



**Paige Aldrich**  
Fall Creek High School



**Ava Radtke**  
Home School



**Evan Bauer**  
Mondovi High School



**Stephanie Swain**  
Osseo-Fairchild High School



**Mariska Remington**  
Chippewa Valley Technical College



**Noah Felix**  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire



# YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

## July 14-16, 2026 | 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](http://www.ecec.com). All registrations must be submitted by June 19, 2026.**



**JUNE 13, 2026**  
 Join us for a day of fun, agricultural education, and great food!

**BREAKFAST ON THE FARM**



HOSTED AT:  
**Karow Farms**



**ABOUT BREAKFAST ON THE FARM**

The Eau Claire County Breakfast on the Farm is a family-friendly event celebrating local agriculture. Enjoy a delicious breakfast, explore educational booths, and tour the host farm. Proceeds support local agriculture partners and an agricultural scholarship for area students. We hope you'll join us for a morning of food and fun on the farm!



**DETAILS**

- KAROW FARMS**  
E21535 KAROW RD  
AUGUSTA, WI 54722
- BREAKFAST SERVED FROM 7AM-11AM**
- SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2026**
- ADULTS: \$10 | KIDS 5-11: \$5 | KIDS UNDER 4: FREE**



*Calling all Third-Graders*

**YOU'RE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTRICAL SAFETY POSTER CONTEST**

Submit an original poster supporting electrical safety to Eau Claire Energy Cooperative by **May 31, 2026**, for a chance to win a \$25 gift card!

Posters should be at least 8.5x11 inches, but no larger than 11x14 inches.

Entries must include a the students name, teacher, and school on the back of the poster and submitted with an entry form (scan QR code below for form).

**SCAN ME!**





**CHIPPEWA VALLEY  
HOME BUILDERS  
ASSOCIATION**

# PARADE OF HOMES

**JUNE  
6-13**

TOUR THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOMES

*in the Chippewa Valley*

## 13 New Homes to Tour

### Parade Home Hours

June 6 - 7	10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
June 8 - 12	5:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
June 13	10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

### Tickets

\$8 through June 5  
\$10 after June 5

**Tickets are available at**  
1st Parade Home You Visit  
[www.ParadeOfHomesCV.com](http://www.ParadeOfHomesCV.com)  
Royal Credit Union Branches in  
Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls &  
Menomonie through June 5

**GREAT AMERICAN  
FIREPLACE**

**Eau Claire Energy  
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

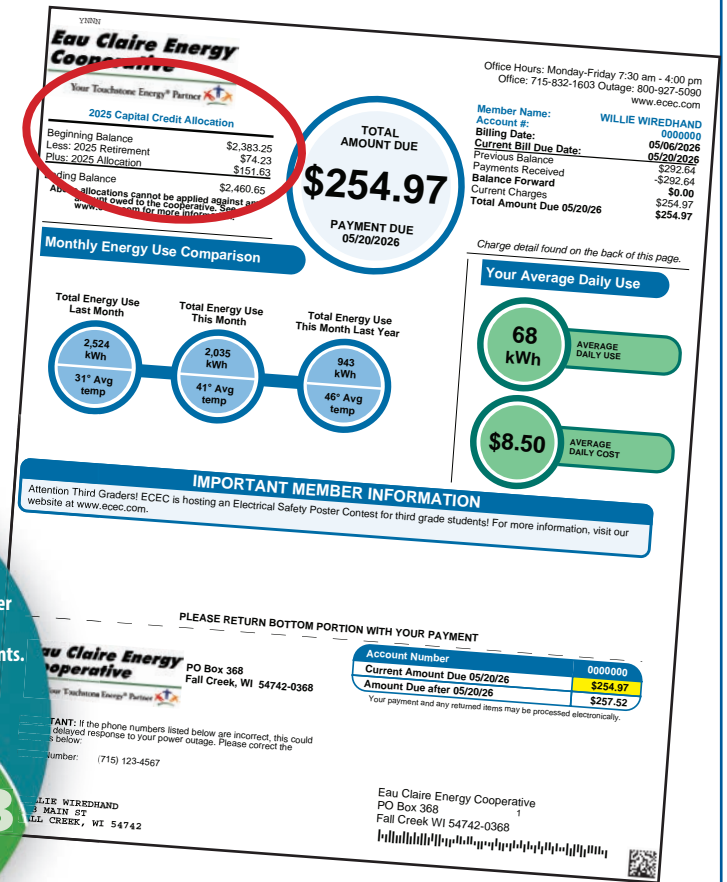
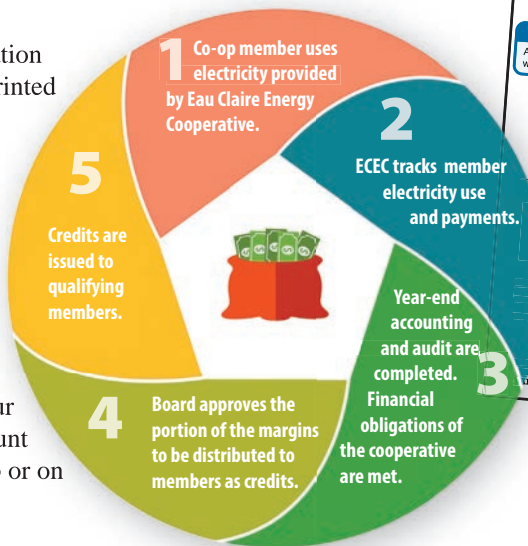
Denny's Appliance • Fireside Hearth & Home • HomeTech by Mosaic  
Kristy Tauger, Your Real Estate Guide • Lyman Lumber Company • Northwestern Bank  
Ashley Construction • Cesspool Cleaner Company & Portable Toilet Rentals, LLC  
Eau Claire Insulation & Exteriors • Gerhard's Kitchen & Bath Store • Hixwood • JM Builders LLC  
Johnson Roll-Off Service • Lencaa Digital Marketing & EvieBell Productions  
Mower Sperry Insurance Agency • NorthStar Seamless Gutters • Pillar Bank • Royal Credit Union  
Security Financial Bank • iHeart Media • WEAU 13 News

**[www.ParadeOfHomesCV.com](http://www.ParadeOfHomesCV.com)**

# 2025 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 2025 allocation notice will be printed on the May 2026 bill. The notice details each member-owner's total capital credit balance including 2025's retirement applied to the October 2025 bill and 2025's allocation.

The 2025 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.



## YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative will be conducting a **Member Satisfaction Survey** in the weeks ahead. Your feedback helps us improve service and plan for the future. We appreciate your feedback! The information you provide will be confidential.

Member surveys will be conducted via email beginning on **May 11, 2026**. The survey will be emailed to members at random and states that it is from Eau Claire Energy Cooperative. This is **not** a scam email.

The survey **will not ask** for any bank or credit card information. If you are suspicious of any potential survey email, please be sure to contact our office at **715-832-1603**.

## 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 is closed on May 25 for Memorial Day.**