

Since 1940

# WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

May 2024

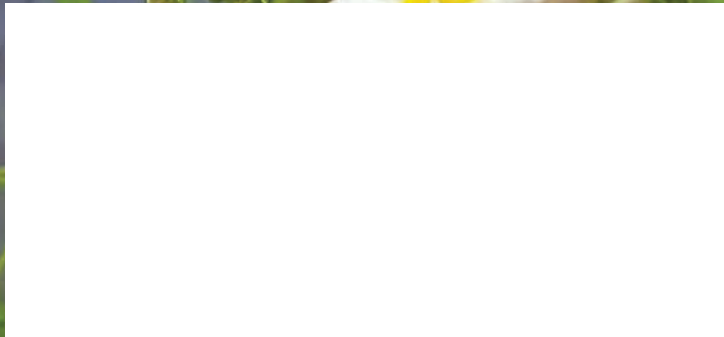


## PARK IT HERE, PART 2 ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS AT THESE COUNTY-PARK GEMS

**INVESTING IN ENERGY**

**WHY SOLAR IS NOT FREE**

**BEEF RECIPES**





# SAME GREAT CO-OP, NEW LOOK!

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

Every so often, businesses step back and evaluate their brand. Over the past couple of years, we have been busy trying to find the right balance of updating our look and feel, or what marketing professionals refer to as your “brand.” When we introduced SwiftCurrent Connect, the board of directors approved a new name for the broadband company and a new company logo. That logo has served us well and is the face of our broadband company. The style and colors between SwiftCurrent and PPCS today are different, as well as the fonts and the bug or logo you see in front of the name. Having these differences allowed us to create separation between the two brands, but it has also become increasingly difficult to unify our brands together as we look to promote SwiftCurrent and PPCS.

Last month, prior to our annual meeting, we launched the new Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services logo you see on this page. It’s a fresh look, incorporating modern colors and efficient lettering, and is visually appealing. Over the years, we have evolved from Pierce-Pepin Electric Cooperative to Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services. We aren’t changing the name of the cooperative, as our current name reflects our broader interest in delivering services that allow our members to Live Better®. Speaking of which, we will continue to use our trademarked “Live Better” slogan to help be a guide to our cooperative and what we do.

You will notice that we have carried forward the logo that precedes the lettering. This circle with the three slashed lines represents several things. It pays homage to the three large rivers that make up our service area boundaries—the

Mississippi, the Chippewa, and the St. Croix Rivers. The three lines also represent our members, the board of directors, and our staff. It represents our delivery of electricity, broadband, and energy solutions. Within our electric service, it represents delivering power to homes, farms, and businesses.

We realize that change is hard, and brands, like art, will meet a variety of opinions. The change to our new brand will not happen overnight. We are mindful that we have a stock of paper, envelopes, and equipment with our existing logo on it. We will begin transitioning over the next few months and complete the transition over the next 12–18 months to our new brand.

We hope that you, our members, are proud of the work we do and can be proud of the co-op that you have helped build over the past 87+ years. We are excited about this transformation, and we look forward to serving you as our members for the next 87+ years. At the end of the day, a brand is the symbol of a company or, in this case, the cooperative. However, the most important piece of our cooperative is our members, directors, and employees. Regardless of our colors, font, logo, or brand, we are here to serve you and make our cooperative an organization you can be proud of, allowing us to help you, our members, Live Better and enrich our communities.



Last month, prior to our annual meeting, we launched the new Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services logo you see on this page.

## WIFF RETIRES FROM BOARD



The new Roger Wiff Board Room was dedicated in honor of Roger Wiff’s (left) 24 years of service to the cooperative.

PPCS said goodbye to retiring director and board chair Roger Wiff during the annual meeting on April 18, his last official duty as a board member. Wiff served two 12-year terms representing District 7; his first term ran from 1989 to 2003, serving as board chair from 1990 to 2003, and his second from 2012 to 2024, serving as chairman from 2014 to 2024. He was ineligible to run for re-election. His final report stated, “The last 12 years have been quite a ride. There have been so

many changes I can’t begin to list them all...From the board members to employees, I count myself lucky to have worked with so many competent, resourceful, and caring people.”

Wiff received a plaque in recognition of his service on the board. In August 2023, the new board room was named the Roger Wiff Board Room in recognition of all the work Wiff has done on behalf of the cooperative. Thank you, Roger, for your dedication and leadership.

# APRIL SNOWSTORM ACTIVATES ROPE

## PPCS linemen Joe Marcks and Isaiah Moesch answer the call to assist

Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our core cooperative principles. Usually, it means sharing ideas and information with employees from other co-ops. On Tuesday, April 2, it meant activating ROPE (restoration of power in an emergency) for two cooperatives affected by the spring snowstorm. Oconto Electric Cooperative and Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association each requested assistance through ROPE. Nine crews deployed to Oconto, and ten crews deployed to Alger Delta.

Alger Delta, located in Michigan's central Upper Peninsula, serves about 10,000 members in six counties. When they declared the emergency, approximately 3,600

members were out of power, peaking at 4,900. PPCS sent one crew of two linemen, Joe Marcks and Isaiah Moesch. They received the call at 11:30 p.m. and were packed and at the shop by 1:15 a.m. After packing their gear, prepping their truck, and filling out the necessary paperwork, they were on the road around 2:30 a.m.

The trip to Alger Delta took about six and a half hours; road conditions began degrading around Curtiss, Wisconsin, and got worse the farther east and north they traveled. "Many lines were down over the highway," said Moesch. "This happened because snow loading brought the wire sag low to the ground. This was the case all the way up to Gladstone, Michigan, where their shop is."

Marcks and Moesch worked 18-hour days and experienced a variety of conditions. They had lake-effect snow and 40 mph winds, spotty sleet, and rain. Some areas had over two feet of snow, while others had less than six inches. As temperatures warmed and snow melted, they had water levels in swamps over their knees. The damage to the power lines was caused by a combination of snow loading, wind, and trees coming down on lines, resulting in broken insulators, cross arms, poles, and wires breaking and coming down.

"These events are what many linemen consider to be the best part of our jobs," said Marcks. "We experience other systems and learn new ways to do the job we do every day. This tends to be the most rewarding/fulfilling part of our job. It's always fun



Joe Marcks, left, and Isaiah Moesch

meeting up with other linemen across the state that we have worked with before or making new connections."

"We also consider that storms like this can happen anywhere," added Moesch. "We may find ourselves in need one day, and it's reassuring knowing other co-ops will return the favor when that request is made."

Marcks and Moesch described the area as very rural; much of the time, they were 30-60 minutes from restaurants and gas stations, which caused them to load up on snacks to tide them over until they were done for the night. It also made them very vigilant about fuel consumption. At times, they had difficulty communicating because there was minimal cell reception.

Despite the difficult working conditions, the two felt it was a positive experience and will gladly answer the call again. *(Photos courtesy of Joe Marcks and Isaiah Moesch)*



# IMPORTANT NOTICE:

## Watch your energy bill for capital credit allocation information

The 2023 capital credit allocations notice will be inserted with your energy bill in May and June. The allocation notice will also be available with your energy statement in SmartHub for members enrolled in paperless billing.

Allocations determine each member's share of the cooperative's margin for a given year. Margins are allocated or assigned to members who purchased electricity from the cooperative during the year in which the margin was generated in proportion to the electrical sales for the year. Each member's allocation is determined by his/her kilowatt-hour consumption for the year. The co-op keeps a permanent record of each member's capital credit account, where the allocated amount remains until it is paid or "retired."

**Notice of Capital Credits Allocation**

**THIS IS NOT A BILL**

CAPITAL CREDITS STATEMENT	
Member Number	XXXXX
Allocation Year	2023
Total Electric Patronage for Year	\$1,609.19
Total Electric Capital Credit Allocation For Year	\$88.13
Remaining Electric Capital Credit Allocation	\$316.45

**Capital Credits**

What are capital credits? Capital credits are a major benefit of belonging to a cooperative. As a cooperative, we're owned by our members. Unlike other electric utilities, your cooperative is a not-for-profit organization. Any revenues (margins) remaining after expenses have been paid are allocated to our members as capital credits that are determined based on each member's share of electrical costs and purchases for the year. Capital credits, that are determined based on each member's share of electrical costs and purchases for the year. Capital credits, that are determined based on each member's share of electrical costs and purchases for the year. Capital credits, that are determined based on each member's share of electrical costs and purchases for the year.

# 2024 Youth Leadership Conference

## JULY 16-18

High school juniors and seniors develop their leadership skills, explore the cooperative business model and careers at this fun, fast-paced conference planned by the youth board from last year's event.

This conference is FREE for students - PPCS pays all registration fees.

Details and registration:  
[www.piercepepin.coop/youth-programs](http://www.piercepepin.coop/youth-programs)

MAKE SURE YOUR STEAKS ARE MEDIUM RARE AND YOUR WI-FI well done

**SWIFTCURRENT®**  
CONNECT  
BROADBAND POWERED BY PPCS

## UNDERGROUND INSPECTIONS BEGIN IN JUNE

With warmer weather, PPCS takes the opportunity to do many projects to maintain our system. We have contracted with Karcz Utility Services to perform underground cabinet inspections, which include clearing, cleaning, and testing. Inspections will be completed in Isabelle, Maiden Rock, Stockholm, Pepin, Frankfort, Waubeek, Waterville, Maxville, Union, and Rock Elm townships. If you have questions about this work, please get in touch with our operations department at 715-273-4355 or 800-924-2133.



## BROADBAND BYTES

*Quick Updates from Fiber Freddie*

**Internet accounts: 3,221**  
**Phone accounts: 376**

Phase I: Complete  
Phase II: Complete  
Phase III: Complete

Phase IV: Includes Pleasant Valley, Spring Lake, Elmwood, Salem, Union, Maiden Rock, Frankfort, Pepin, Stockholm, and portions of Rush River, Martell, Rock Elm, and Salem townships. Mainline work has begun with pole change-outs and fiber mapping, and construction will begin in the next few weeks.



## PPCS SPONSORS YOUTH TO KAMP KENWOOD SUMMER CAMPS

PPCS will sponsor six campers, ages 8 to 14, to the Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood on Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls. All camp and membership fees are paid by PPCS.

Children of PPCS electric members not sponsored in 2023 are eligible. For more information, visit [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/youth-camp](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/youth-camp) or call 800-272-5531. To register, contact the cooperative at 715-273-4355 (ext. 135) or [bcupp@piercepepin.coop](mailto:bcupp@piercepepin.coop).

## MEMORIAL DAY *Remember and Honor*

**Office closed: Monday, May 27**  
Report electric outages through SmartHub  
or call 800-927-5705.  
Report internet issues by calling 866-307-5326.



**Nate Boettcher, President & CEO**  
**Liz Gunderson, Editor**

W7725 U.S. Highway 10, P.O. Box 420  
Ellsworth, WI 54011-0420  
715-273-4355 • 800-924-2133  
[info@piercepepin.coop](mailto:info@piercepepin.coop) • [www.piercepepin.coop](http://www.piercepepin.coop)

Follow us on Facebook, X, and Instagram  
**Office Hours:** Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
**Power Outages and Emergencies: 800-927-5705**