

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* November 2022 NEWS

PIERCE PEPIN
COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

HOW THE GRID KEEPS RELIABLE POWER FLOWING

IT'S THE PRINCIPLE

VETERANS DAY APPRECIATION

WILD FOR WILD RICE





Nate Boettcher,
President and CEO

THE DEMAND FOR ENERGY, PART 1



of our power bill that will mirror charges that we receive as part of our wholesale power bill. Over the next three months, I intend to provide an explanation of how your future energy rates will be structured. I will attempt to explain things in a way that draws comparisons to other services and products you might use. Feel free to contact the co-op if you have questions or want to discuss in more detail on these topics.

The basic rules of economic supply and demand exist in the energy industry. When the need for electricity goes up, the price goes up as well. Because utilities must plan for peak energy usage, wholesale power suppliers must purchase their estimated peak in what's called capacity. Excess energy capacity is becoming more and more scarce. When supply of a product goes down, price goes up if demand stays the same or goes up. A good analogy is airline travel. There are only so many planes and seats available each day. During the holidays, seats fill up, demand is high, and prices go up as well. When the flight is nearly sold out of capacity, airline

In 2023, we are anticipating rolling out a new demand billing component as part

ticket prices are at the highest. We see this with event tickets as well; popular games or concerts draw a higher ticket price. If there are seats open as you get closer to the event, prices tend to go down as fewer and fewer people are vying for those tickets.

This same occurrence happens with energy in the summer and winter during hot and cold periods. On a really hot day, energy needs outpace supply, and prices rise. The more energy we need, the more we get charged in future years to ensure this energy is available. Our load control programs are designed to help reduce our demand by reducing the energy needs from electric heat, air conditioning, water heaters, and other loads. Over the past several years, we have been encouraging members to SHIFT for Savings, reducing energy use during peak times. Essentially, we want you to take a later flight where there are more seats available and cheaper prices.

Unfortunately, not everyone participates in our load control program, which means that some members are getting to ride in first class on a coach fare. Our single biggest expense on our power bill

is our demand or capacity charge. Yet, it is the one expense that collectively as a membership we can control. Our new rate programs will tackle the challenge.

If you are participating in load control programs and your energy demand remains low, our future rates will have little impact on your bill. If you choose not to participate in load control, we will ask you to pay your fair share of these costs. For the past two years, your billing statement has included your

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monthly demand with an explanation. In 2023, we plan to start showing and billing for the coincidental peak demand (the amount of energy you require) during

the peak periods that occur currently about five to six times in the winter and again in the summer. I'll continue this conversation next month with a view of the wholesale energy market.

Finally, November is a busy month. Please take an opportunity to vote. We also salute our veterans who served to ensure we could participate in our democracy. Happy Thanksgiving and best of luck to all the hunters. Please be safe and enjoy your time with friends and family.

INTERNET: 101

Join us for a fun, informative session to learn about internet basics.

Residents of El Paso/Ellsworth Townships:
Nov. 9 - 1:00 to 2:00 PM
at El Paso Town Hall

Residents of Oak Grove Township:
Nov. 15 - 1:00 to 2:00 PM
at Oak Grove Town Hall

RSVP to Laure by calling 800-924-2133, ext. 113, or email landrie@piercepelin.coop.

SWIFTCURRENT
BROADBAND POWERED BY PPCS

LOAD MANAGEMENT TEST FOR DUAL-FUEL ELECTRIC HEATING

Wednesday, November 16

Load management receivers for dual-fuel electric heating systems will be tested on Wednesday, November 16, from 5 to 10 p.m. The test ensures our load management system is working properly before the winter heating season.

In-floor electric cable storage heating, electric thermal storage (ETS) room heaters, corn drying bins, and commercial heating applications will not be affected by this test.

Postcards will be mailed to load management program participants with dual-fuel heating systems prior to the test. If you have questions about the program, please contact our Member Relations Department.



POWERED BY ELECTRICITY EVENT RECAP

On Saturday, September 24, PPCS joined forces with St. Croix Electric Cooperative, UW-River Falls Office of Sustainability, and Hope for Creation to host Powered by Electricity. The event included an electric vehicle showcase, solar panel displays, electric equipment demonstrations, and electric bikes. Over 40 test drives were taken in Chevrolet

Bolts and Tesla Model 3. The electric vehicle showcase included every model of Tesla, Chevrolet Bolt, Ford F150 Lightning and Mustang Mach-E, Mini Cooper, Audi, Rivian, Hyundai, and Mitsubishi. An electric tractor, motorcycle, and snow scooter were also on display. Thank you to everyone who came out and helped us celebrate everything electric!

NEED HELP WITH YOUR ENERGY BILL?

Our Commitment to Community program offers additional help to PPCS members who qualify for energy assistance through the county where they reside. Program assistance is provided on a first come, first serve basis so don't delay if you need help. To get started, contact your county's Department of Human Services.

Pierce, Pepin & St. Croix Counties.....715-265-4271
 Buffalo County.....608-685-4412

Meeting Your Payment Obligation

If you are having trouble paying your monthly energy bill, please contact us. We are happy to work with you, but it is your responsibility to contact our office to set up a payment agreement.



PPCS WELCOMES RUBY'S PANTRY

As a cooperative, PPCS is challenged to show concern for community. As a congregation, Bethel Covenant Church was challenged by its former pastor to find a project that demonstrated their commitment to the community. The congregants accepted the challenge and took on the role of being a Pop-up Pantry for Ruby's Pantry in the Ellsworth area.

Established in 2003, Ruby's Pantry has over 91 Pop-up Pantry locations across Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and North Dakota. Annually, they serve over 510,000 people. Each Pop-up Pantry is staffed entirely by volunteers. There is no financial requirement to participate. Participants pay \$25 per share and each share's value is over \$200 in various food and household products. The food is surplus that is given to the foundation rather than being wasted and then distributed to the Pop-up Pantries.

Becky Bechel, site coordinator for Bethel Covenant Church, said they began the program in April 2022. They generally need about 60 volunteers for the process to run smoothly. They welcome anyone to volunteer, but volunteers must sign up and have a background check completed. The Bethel Pop-up Pantry is held the first Saturday of each month from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. The distributions have been as an outdoor drive-through at Bethel Covenant Church on County Road K.

"We have some people who get in line while we're still setting up," said Steve Johnson, Bethel

volunteer. "But each month we keep improving the process. Originally, it took about eight minutes to get them through the line and now we have it down to two minutes."

With cold weather quickly approaching, Bechel and the other core team volunteers began searching for another location to do the distribution that would provide some shelter for the volunteers. PPCS had previously hosted drive-through COVID-19 testing and vaccinations in its warehouse and back shop. It seemed like hosting the Pop-up Pantry might also be a good fit.

"Commitment to community is one of our core cooperative principles," said Charity Lubich, PPCS vice president of member relations and human resources. "When the volunteers from Bethel approached us, it seemed like 'a match made in heaven'. Our back garage area works very well for these types of drive-through programs, and we're excited to help make the distribution of food to local families easier during inclement months."

The Bethel Covenant Church Pop-up Pantries will be held at the PPCS office on November 5, December 3, January 7, and February 4. Participants are asked to enter the PPCS parking lot on the Highway 63 side and follow directional signs/cones through the parking lot. Additional information can be found at the group's Facebook page, Ruby's Pantry – Ellsworth, WI at Bethel Covenant Church, by email at office@bethelcov.org, or by calling 715-792-2397.





WATT'S UP?

INQUIRING MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

Q: I receive electric service from PPCS and use Smart-Hub to pay my energy bill. I can see my SwiftCurrent Connect internet bill in SmartHub. Why do I have to pay my SwiftCurrent Connect bill separately?

A: SwiftCurrent Connect is a subsidiary of PPCS providing internet and voice service to western Wisconsin residents. Rather than having multiple software applications for users to learn and navigate, PPCS uses one platform, SmartHub, as the customer interface to manage both PPCS and SwiftCurrent accounts. These are two wholly separate accounts; they each generate a unique bill and each bill must be paid separately. For PPCS members who use our automatic payment plan, you must set that up for SwiftCurrent Connect, too, if you want to pay that bill using the same method. You can use SmartHub to make those changes to your account. Contact our member relations staff at 866-307-5326 if you need additional assistance.



TIME FOR TURKEY, TOUCHDOWNS, AND TECH

FEAST ON THE FUN OF THANKSGIVING

What's not to love about this holiday? Thanksgiving brings together treasured family and friends. Plus, it combines some of our favorite things—enjoying a turkey dinner with side dishes galore, streaming football games for hours, and sharing memorable moments via video calls and social media.

If your bandwidth is being gobbled up by the growing number of devices in your home, it's time for an internet upgrade.

**CALL 866-307-5326
NOW FOR FASTER
INTERNET**

**Happy Thanksgiving
to you and yours!**


Our office will be closed
November 24-25.



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Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Power Outages and Emergencies: 800-927-5705

Nate Boettcher, President & CEO

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