

Since 1940


WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative*

April 2023

NEWS

PIERCE PEDERSEN
COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A Tallahassee Energy Cooperative



THE POWER BEHIND
OUR POWER:
WE SALUTE OUR
LINEWORKERS

OBSERVING EARTH DAY

CONTACT YOUR CO-OP BEFORE
MAKING THE CALL ON SOLAR

AMERICA'S FUEL MIX IS CHANGING





POLICIES AND POLITICS MATTER

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

Billed as one of the most expensive political races in Wisconsin history, the 2023 Wisconsin Supreme Court election will likely define the court’s ideological makeup for the next several years. While Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services does not take a political stance one way or the other, we are certainly mindful that elections have consequences. We work with Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association to ensure our rights as cooperatives are protected and to ensure our members’ interests pertaining to reliable, affordable electricity and broadband are not infringed upon. But as the saying goes, “elections have consequences.”

Look no further than our neighbors to the west. In the Minnesota Senate, the DFL party holds a one-seat margin. In the Minnesota House, the DFL outnumbers the Republicans 70-64. In a few of the Senate races, races were won by less than a few hundred votes. The DFL party has used this majority along with the governorship to push forward many agenda items, including pushing a carbon-free goal on electricity by 2040. Dairyland Power Cooperative, our power supplier, serves cooperatives in Minnesota and this mandate could impact us in the future.

The 2022 Wisconsin governor election renewed Tony Evers’ contract for another four years. Governor Evers has pledged support for broadband which we have utilized in the past to build out our broadband network. All three Wisconsin Public Service Commissioners have been appointed by Evers.

Recent PSC rulings have given cooperatives pause. Recently the WI PSC allowed third-party ownership of renewable projects. While we may not be impacted by this ruling today, we are not immune to future regulations or decisions that could ultimately impact how we serve our members with reliable and affordable power. Likely, the WI PSC written ruling will be fought in the courts and ultimately end up in the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Elections have consequences.

April’s Wisconsin Supreme Court race will dictate the court’s balance. As with any race, it’s important for voters to recognize that elections have an impact on a broad range of issues. While it may be trendy to focus on candidates’ views and beliefs on single issues, as we have seen in Minnesota, this can transcend into a much broader agenda. While most supreme courts, including those at the federal level, are largely focused on interpreting the law as it is written, in more recent times there is an appearance that courts are being politicized. The fabric of our federal and state government is a system of three separate but equal branches of government. This system has worked for hundreds of years—let us hope that our public servants and candidates continue to recognize the importance of this.

As always, we encourage all members to vote in the election and in future elections. Elections have consequences, but we the people have the right to determine our future when we exercise this right.



Youth Leadership Conference

FREE 3-day event for high school students.
July 11 - 13, 2023 at UW-Stout

Details and registration information at www.piercepepin.coop/youth-programs.

A TREE GROWS IN MAIDEN ROCK

About 21 years ago, a little boy who lived in Maiden Rock Township received a pine seedling from Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services through its Arbor Day program. He carefully brought the tree home, picked a spot on his parents' property where there were no overhead powerlines or underground utilities, and planted his tree. The little boy was vigilant in caring for the tree, bringing buckets of water to it weekly.

Well, that tree grew and so did the little boy. Today, the tree stands over 20 feet tall. And the little boy? He became a journeyman lineman for PPCS. Aaron Langer joined PPCS as an apprentice line worker in May 2014 and completed his four-year program to become a journeyman.



Aaron Langer

The tree continues to grow on his parents' property and Langer continues to grow in his career with PPCS. PPCS will be providing pine seedlings to area fourth-graders again this April.



BROADBAND BYTES

Quick Updates from Fiber Freddie



FIBER
FREDDIE

Accounts Connected: 1,313

Phase I Construction: Complete

Portions of Ellsworth, El Paso, Hartland, River Falls, Oak Grove, Trenton, and Trimbelle Townships

Phase II Construction: Underway – will continue with frost out

Portions of Troy, Kinnickinnic, Clifton, River Falls, Martell, Gilman, Oak Grove, Trimbelle, Ellsworth, El Paso, Hartland, and Salem Townships

Phase III Construction: Planned – Summer 2023

Portions of Warren, Kinnickinnic, Clifton, Troy, Pleasant Valley, River Falls, Hartland, El Paso, Salem, Isabelle, and Maiden Rock Townships

With spring right around the corner, we are excited to resume hooking up homes with fast and reliable SwiftCurrent Connect Broadband Internet! Visit www.swiftcurrent.coop to start your service order today. You will begin by searching for your address then follow the prompts to "Start Your Service Order". Follow us on Facebook and our website, www.swiftcurrent.coop, for the latest construction updates.



ROUND-UP REPORT

The board of PPCS' charitable foundation, Pierce Pepin Cares, met on January 5 to review and approve grant requests. Pierce Pepin Cares is funded by PPCS members through Operation Round Up® and with direct donations.



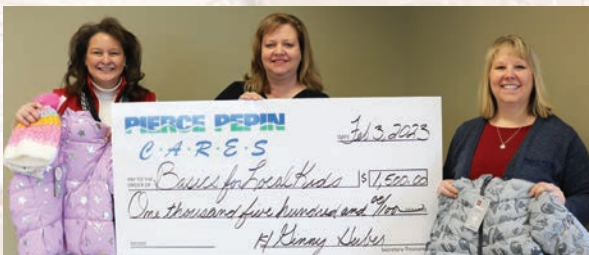
Ellsworth Gift Box Program was awarded \$1,500 to assist in purchasing gifts for families. Left to right: Josie Pechacek, Taryn Baker, Juliana Winger, Morgan Kolodzienski, and Charity Lubich, PPCS vice president of member relations and human resources.



Free Clinic of Pierce and St. Croix Counties received a \$1,500 grant for the purchase of dictation equipment. Left to right: Dr. Bob Johnson, medical director, Charity Lubich (PPCS), Mary Steele, clinic manager, and Jena Most, nursing supervisor.



The Assistance and Resource Center (ARC) accepted a grant of \$1,500 for direct housing assistance. Left to right: PPCS employees Charity Lubich and Barb Bee, and ARC representatives Peter Carr, Judy Perkins, and Sharon Shulze.



Kim Johnson (center), executive director of Basics for Local Kids, received a \$1,500 grant for the purchase of winter wear and kids in crisis programs. Pictured with Johnson are Barb Bee (left), PPCS senior accountant, and Charity Lubich, PPCS vice president, member relations and human resources.

FINDING JOY IN HELPING OTHERS

By Taryn Baker, Ellsworth High School Senior

When I was eight years old, my mother and I woke up at the first break of the morning. As I rubbed the sleep from my eyes, we began our shopping spree on Black Friday for the “Adopt-A-Family” program that she participated in. At the time, my mother, Stacey Baker, was a United Steelworkers Union member, contributing to multiple charities yearly. My Mother taught me how to navigate the ropes—from getting the most “bang for your buck” to incorporating the needs and wants of the families. My Mother inspired me to find joy in helping others. Ten years later, I rediscovered that joy by participating in the Ellsworth Gift Box Program. This program matches families in need with sponsors that shop for them during the holidays. While the Gift Box Program has existed in the Ellsworth community for years and didn’t begin with high school students, we are grateful that it transitioned into something we could be a part of. Our team consisted of two junior students and four seniors. The students involved are seniors Julia Anderson, Ana Winger, Rylee Tieman-Hoyer, and Taryn Baker, and juniors Josie Pechacek and Morgan Kolodezienski, who will take over the program next year.

The Gift Box program has meant something special to all of us participating.

We began our 2022 Gift Box “season” with various tasks, including computer work, emails, and routine phone calls. We compiled information into piles of paper-clipped packets and began matching sponsors to families in need. When we called to let the families know they were sponsored, we could hear their smiles through the phone, which became a rewarding and satisfying experience for our team. Nearing pick-up day, we were able to shop for several families—and we took the job very seriously. We especially enjoyed matching outfits and choosing unique toys for the children.

Moreover, it was an eye-opener because applicants often asked for socks, underwear, coats, and mittens. It goes to show how these items are not guaranteed for all families. One of our seniors, Ana Winger, said, “These are items I cannot imagine living without.” We were all set up when pick-up day finally arrived. It was located at Pierce Pepin Cooperative on December 12 and 13, 2022. Pierce Pepin has been an asset to the Gift Box Program for years. Since COVID, Pierce Pepin has provided us with the warehouse’s “Drive-Thru” section. The Drive-Thru has allowed cars to enter and exit efficiently. Over these two days, we became like bees in a hive, zooming around and staying incredibly busy, from completing computer work to lifting boxes into cars. Ana Winger said the most rewarding part

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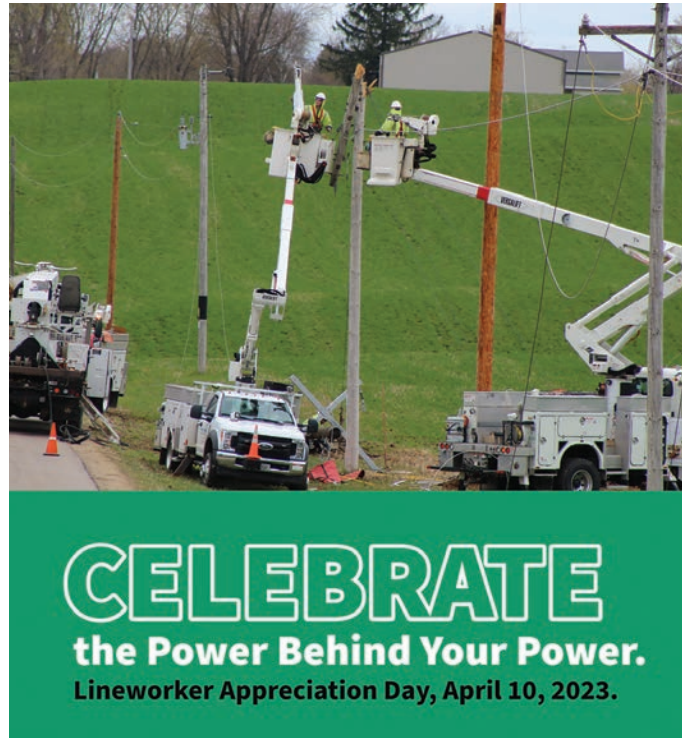
Gift Box Program Continued from previous page

was “seeing parents’ eyes light up when they received the gifts they brought home to their children.” Josie Pechacek, a junior, said that her favorite part of the experience was “wrapping gifts because I’ve helped my mom with it since I was little.”


The Gift Box program has meant something special to all of us participating. Throughout the weeks of preparing, we experienced much more than shopping and computer work. We acknowledged that we have learned not to take things for granted and to have empathy. We especially experienced the joy of helping others.

Most importantly, we couldn’t have done it without our incredible mentor, Anne Pechacek, who let us take the lead but was there by our side the entire time; we learned a lot from her experiences with the Gift Box program over the years. By the end of our “season,” we were able to help 81 families (325 people). In addition, we received support from over 50 local groups, organizations, and families. We are incredibly grateful for the support from the community; without them, we wouldn’t have been able to reach so many people and provide them with joy for their holiday season.

“I am relieved knowing these families had a happy Christmas,” said Rylee Tieman-Hoyer, senior Gift Box aid.






PIERCE PEPIN COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

W7725 U.S. Highway 10, P.O. Box 420
Ellsworth, WI 54011-0420
715-273-4355 • 800-924-2133

info@piercepepin.coop • www.piercepepin.coop

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram   

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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- District 2.....Edward Hass
- District 3.....Brian Berg
- District 4.....Joseph Bacon
- District 5.....Ann Young
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