

Since 1940

# WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

January 2025



**PIERCE PEPIN**

**COOPERATIVE SERVICES**

Live Better

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



# KICKING OFF A QUARTER-CENTURY



Nate Boettcher,  
President and CEO

As we step into 2025, it's incredible to think we're already a quarter of the way into the 21st century. It feels like just yesterday, we were grappling with the uncertainty of Y2K, preparing for potential chaos as the calendar turned to 2000. Fast-forward 25 years, and here we are, reflecting on yet another busy and productive year, particularly in our electric and fiber businesses.

This past construction season has been nothing short of remarkable. The growth we're seeing in our electric operations is unprecedented. Last spring, we were awarded a broadband grant to expand by an additional 400 miles, and we hit the ground running to make that a reality. While it may sometimes seem like good fortune is on our side, experience has taught me that success is built on a foundation of hard work, determination, and seizing opportunities when they arise.

## A Team Behind the Success

Our progress wouldn't be possible without the talented team working behind the scenes. We're approaching 40 full-time employees who handle everything from maintaining the electric grid to connecting homes with high-speed fiber broadband. They also tackle electrician services, answer member calls, manage billing, communicate with members, update maps, organize data, and keep our financials on track. The collaboration and leadership required to keep these moving parts in sync are truly impressive.

Our senior management team has been a driving force, pushing our cooperative to new heights. They've challenged me to grant them more autonomy, empowering them to make decisions and set strategic objectives. While the bar remains high and responsibility is a cornerstone of leadership, this transition marks a pivotal moment in my five years here—and one I fully embrace. With this team in

place, I'm shifting my focus to the bigger picture: charting a course for the cooperative over the next 5, 15, and 25 years.

## Preparing for the Future

The energy and communications industries are in constant flux, driven by rapid advancements in technology, evolving regulations, and emerging challenges to traditional business models. Staying ahead requires vigilance, adaptability, and a commitment to innovation. Fortunately, our cooperative has established itself as a hub of forward-thinking solutions and effective execution. This spirit of leadership extends from our boardroom, where generations of board members have set a high standard, to every corner of our organization.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to share more next month about our rates. For now, I'll offer a sneak peek: we don't anticipate significant rate increases in the coming year. This stability reflects the solid foundation we've built, our ability to attract new growth, and the innovative evolution of our cooperative. This progress is rippling across our community, fostering new jobs, homes, and opportunities that make our region a vibrant place to live and work.

## Building Momentum

A few years ago, I spoke about the flywheel effect—the idea that our investments in the community would build momentum over time. Today, that momentum is undeniable. Reliable, affordable electricity paired with world-class fiber optic broadband has positioned us for a future full of promise.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. We take immense pride in serving you and remain committed to achieving great things together. As we kick off another year, I hope you share in our pride for this cooperative and the incredible progress we've made—and will continue to make—together. Happy New Year!



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**PIERCE PEPIN**  
COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

DASHING THROUGH  
THE SNOW

A NEW YEAR FOR NUCLEAR

EVER-CHANGING, FAST-GROWING  
DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY

KIDS AND CRITTERS



## ELECTRICAL SAFETY FOR YOUR FARM AND LIVESTOCK

At Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services, we are committed to ensuring the safety and reliability of electrical systems for all our members, including those who operate farms.

### Recognizing Electrical Concerns

Farm animals, such as dairy cows, can sometimes display behaviors that suggest sensitivity to their environment. Hesitancy when animals approach stalls, milking parlors, or other areas, may indicate an issue with your electrical system, such as grounding or equipment performance.

### How We Can Assist

Your cooperative offers a range of services to support farm electrical safety:

- **System Assessments:** Our trained professionals can inspect your electrical system to identify any potential issues, such as grounding concerns or aging equipment.
- **Safety First! Farm Rewiring Program:** We participate in this statewide initiative designed to help farmers offset the costs of electrical rewiring projects. For more information about the stray voltage and Safety First! Farm Rewiring programs visit [www.piercepepin.coop/power-quality](http://www.piercepepin.coop/power-quality).

Both services are part of our commitment to supporting your operations and ensuring safe, efficient electricity use on your farm.

If you have questions about electrical safety on your farm or would like to schedule a system evaluation, please contact us at 715-273-4355, 800-924-2133, or [info@piercepepin.coop](mailto:info@piercepepin.coop). We're here to provide expert guidance and resources tailored to your needs.

## NOTICE OF LAND AVAILABLE FOR LEASE

Through a Sealed Bid Process, PPCS will lease four lots, approximately 11 acres of land. The abbreviated legal description of the property is Lots 2, 3, 4, and 5, which are part of the SE ¼ of NE ¼, Section 23, Township 26N, Range 18W. Contact Laure Andrie at 715-273-2413 to request the lease bid form, full legal descriptions, and acreage information.

Lease requirements:

- Rental is for the year 2025 only.
- Land must be used for agricultural purposes.
- Land may not be used for storage, and nothing permanent may be added to the property.
- Property stakes may not be removed or damaged.
- Preference will be made to a member of the cooperative.

Sealed bids must be submitted to the cooperative by January 24, 2025. They can be dropped off at the cooperative office or mailed to Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services, c/o Laure Andrie, Executive Assistant, PO Box 420, Ellsworth, WI 54011. A committee will review bids the week of January 27 and award them by January 31, 2025. In the case of a tie, a drawing will be held to break the tie.

## Scholarships Available

for high school seniors graduating in Spring 2025.

Learn more at [www.piercepepin.coop/scholarships-student-contests](http://www.piercepepin.coop/scholarships-student-contests).

**Applications due by February 15, 2025.**



As a member of PPCS, you have access to various rebates and incentives available through our Electric\$ense program and our partnership with the Focus on Energy program. From appliances to water heaters, PPCS can help you save energy and money and live more comfortably. Information about rebates and incentives is on our website at [www.piercepepin.coop/programs-rebates](http://www.piercepepin.coop/programs-rebates) and the Focus on Energy websites at [www.focusonenergy.com/piercepepin](http://www.focusonenergy.com/piercepepin).

**Electric\$ense**



## DID YOU KNOW?



# 2025: THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES



In a world increasingly focused on sustainable development and inclusive growth, the United Nations has designated 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC 2025) with the theme “Cooperatives Build a Better World.” This proclamation underscores cooperatives' vital role in addressing global challenges and achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## The Significance of Cooperatives

Cooperatives are unique entities that operate on principles of democratic control, member participation, and concern for the community. Unlike traditional businesses, cooperatives prioritize the needs and aspirations of their members, who are also the owners. This model fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, leading to more sustainable and equitable outcomes.

There are approximately 3 million cooperatives globally, representing over 1.2 billion members. These cooperatives span diverse sectors, including agriculture, banking, consumer goods, energy, fisheries, health, housing, insurance, and industry services. Their widespread presence and diverse applications make cooperatives a powerful tool for driving inclusive growth and community resilience.

Through this designation, the United Nations hopes to raise public awareness of cooperatives, promote growth and development, advocate for legal and policy environments that support cooperative growth, and inspire cooperative leadership.

## Cooperatives and Sustainable Development

Cooperatives are inherently aligned with the principles of sustainable development. Their focus on participatory decision-making, equality, and solidarity ensures that they contribute positively to social, economic, and environmental well-being. By prioritizing the needs of their members and communities, cooperatives

help reduce poverty, enhance economic resilience, and promote inclusive growth.

Agriculture is one critical area where cooperatives make a significant impact. These cooperatives help small-scale farmers access markets, secure fair prices, and improve their livelihoods. By pooling resources and knowledge, these cooperatives enhance productivity and sustainability in the agricultural sector.

Cooperatives in the energy sector are driving the transition to renewable energy sources. Energy cooperatives enable communities to invest in and benefit from renewable energy projects, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering carbon emissions.

## Celebrating IYC 2025

The designation of 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives is a testament to cooperatives' critical role in building a better world. By promoting sustainable development, fostering inclusive growth, and enhancing community resilience, cooperatives are essential drivers of positive change.

As we celebrate IYC 2025, it is an opportunity for everyone to recognize and support the cooperative movement, ensuring it continues to thrive and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future. Watch the magazine and our social media channels for special activities sponsored by PPCS to celebrate IYC 2025 and our members.





# PPCS MEMBERS SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY THROUGH PIERCE PEPIN CARES GRANTS

In 2024, Pierce Pepin Cares Foundation awarded \$33,150 to local organizations for the betterment of our communities. Pierce Pepin Cares Foundation is funded through Operation Round Up® and direct donations. Operation Round Up allows PPCS members to round up their monthly energy bills to the next dollar and pool this money. On average, this amounts to about \$6.00 per member annually. These donations allow the cooperative to support worthy causes on behalf of our members that benefit everyone in our community.

"The majority of our members participate in Operation Round Up. Their generosity allows us to support those less fortunate, which is a testament to our members' concern for their communities," says Nate Boettcher, president and CEO.

In addition to the Pierce Pepin Cares grants, grants for educational purposes were also provided through the Federated Youth Foundation (FYF), which is funded through abandoned capital credits.

Recipient	Amount
Scholarships	\$2,000.00
Chippewa Valley Council Boy Scouts of America	\$1,500.00
Prescott Middle School Musical	\$500.00
Spring Valley Youth Baseball	\$3,000.00
Hurricane Helene Victims	\$2,500.00
Hope Farm School	\$10,589.50
Foundation for Rural Housing	\$719.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,808.50</b>

Thank you, PPCS members - Your small change is changing lives!



Recipient	Amount
Salvation Army.....	\$1,000.00
Assistance & Resource Center (ARC).....	1,000.00
Ellsworth High School .....	800.00
Basics for Local Kids.....	1,000.00
Durand Fire Relief Association.....	500.00
Healing Play, Inc.....	500.00
Luke 3:11 Project .....	500.00
Pierce Co Historical Assoc.....	500.00
River Bluff Humane Society .....	500.00
Kinne-Engelhart American Legion Auxiliary Unit #204.....	1,000.00
Staying Put, Inc. ....	2,000.00
River Valley Charities .....	2,000.00
Heart .....	1,000.00
Lost Creek Ranch-Therapeutic Riding & Horse Rescue .....	500.00
Our Neighbors Place .....	1,000.00
Ellsworth Fire Services .....	1,000.00
Landmark Conservancy .....	250.00
8 Local Food Pantries .....	17,600.00
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$33,150.00</b>





# DEMAND RESPONSE PROJECT UPDATE: UPGRADING LOAD MANAGEMENT DEVICES

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy, we're excited to update you on the progress of our Demand Response Project. This initiative, focused on upgrading the load control switches installed in your homes, is critical to optimizing energy use across our cooperative and enhancing the efficiency of our electrical system.

## What Are Load Control Switches?

Load control switches are small devices installed on or inside your house to connect to appliances such as electric water heaters, central heating systems, and other high-energy equipment. These switches enable us to manage electricity demand during peak periods by temporarily reducing the energy consumption of participating devices. This helps stabilize the grid, lower overall electricity costs, and reduce the need for additional power generation.

## Why Are We Upgrading?

The existing switches have served us well, but technological advances have provided opportunities for improvement. By replacing the current devices with modern, state-of-the-art load control switches, we're improving:

- **Reliability:** New devices are built for improved performance and longer lifespans.
- **Communication:** Upgraded switches integrate better with advanced metering infrastructure,

providing real-time communication and data for smarter grid management.

- **Flexibility:** The new system allows for more precise control, helping us fine-tune energy usage and respond more effectively to demand changes.

## What Does This Mean For You?

For participating members, the switch replacement process will involve a brief service visit to your home. Our trained technicians will work efficiently to ensure minimal disruption. You may experience a short power interruption to the controlled appliance during the installation, but no action is required on your part.

The upgraded switches will continue to operate seamlessly, allowing you to contribute to grid reliability and energy savings. Participation in this program helps keep electricity costs stable for everyone in our cooperative while reducing our environmental footprint.

## Project Timeline

We have replaced about 60% of our switches and are on track to complete the upgrade across all participating homes by the end of 2025.



## Thank You For Your Support!

We appreciate your cooperation and continued partnership in this vital program. By working together, we're building a more resilient energy future for all. Thank you for being an essential part of our cooperative!

If you have any questions about the Demand Response Project or would like to learn more about participating in the load management program, please call 800-924-2133 or visit [www.piercepepin.coop/load-management](http://www.piercepepin.coop/load-management).

## SHIFT for Savings

Reduce non-essential energy use from 7 to 11 a.m. and 5 to 9 p.m.

Together, we can lower demand and help keep rates stable.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

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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

# 2025 CALENDAR

We've got lots of great events planned for 2025. We hope you will join us – each time you attend a member-focused event, you will be entered in our drawing for three (3) \$100 bill credits to be awarded in December 2025. Watch our monthly magazine, *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*, for event updates, as well as on our website, Facebook, Instagram, and X!

<b>January 1</b>	Happy New Year! Our office is closed for the New Year holiday. Electric outages can be reported through SmartHub or by calling 800-927-5705. Internet issues can be reported by calling 866-307-5326, option 1.
<b>March 15</b>	Live Better Community Service Award nominations and Pierce Pepin Cares grant applications are due. Information is available at <a href="http://www.piercepepin.coop">www.piercepepin.coop</a> under My Community.
<b>April</b>	Capital credit allocation notices are mailed in April.
<b>April 7</b>	Lineman Appreciation Day
<b>April 18</b>	Happy Easter! Our office is closed on Good Friday (April 18) for the Easter holiday. Electric outages can be reported through SmartHub or by calling 800-927-5705. Internet issues can be reported by calling 866-307-5326, option 1.
<b>April 22*</b>	Annual Meeting
<b>May</b>	Electric Safety Awareness Month
<b>May 26</b>	Happy Memorial Day! Our office is closed for the holiday. Electric outages can be reported through SmartHub or by calling 800-927-5705. Internet issues can be reported by calling 866-307-5326, option 1.
<b>June 15</b>	Live Better Community Service Award nominations and Pierce Pepin Cares grant applications are due. Information is available at <a href="http://www.piercepepin.coop">www.piercepepin.coop</a> under My Community.
<b>July*</b>	Visit our booth at Durand Music in the Park. Watch <i>WECN</i> magazine and social media for the date and time.
<b>July 4</b>	Happy Fourth of July! Our office is closed in observance of the holiday. Electric outages can be reported through SmartHub or by calling 800-927-5705. Internet issues can be reported by calling 866-307-5326, option 1.
<b>July 15-17</b>	Youth Leadership Conference–PPCS sponsors high school juniors and seniors for a 3-day conference at UW-Stout. Seniors can compete for scholarships. Find details on our website: <a href="http://www.piercepepin.coop">www.piercepepin.coop</a> under My Community>Youth Programs.

<b>August 7-10*</b>	Join us at the Pierce County Fair! Our booth is in the Round Barn.
<b>September 1</b>	Happy Labor Day! Our office is closed for the holiday. Electric outages can be reported through SmartHub or by calling 800-927-5705. Internet issues can be reported by calling 866-307-5326, option 1.
<b>September 15</b>	Live Better Community Service Award nominations and Pierce Pepin Cares grant applications are due. Information is available at <a href="http://www.piercepepin.coop">www.piercepepin.coop</a> under My Community.
<b>October</b>	<b>Happy National Cooperative Month!</b> Watch for your <b>capital credit retirement</b> over the next few weeks. Members receiving a retirement of over \$100 will receive a check in the mail. Those receiving less than \$100 will receive a bill credit. You get a return on your investment in the cooperative – <i>that's the power of co-op membership!</i>
<b>October 25*</b>	Join us from 9 to 11:30 a.m. for a member appreciation pancake breakfast.
<b>November 27 &amp; 28</b>	Happy Thanksgiving! Our office is closed for the holiday. Electric outages can be reported through SmartHub or by calling 800-927-5705. Internet issues can be reported by calling 866-307-5326, option 1.
<b>December*</b>	Prize drawing for three \$100 bill credits. Members receive one entry each time they attend a 2025 cooperative event.
<b>December 15</b>	Live Better Community Service Award nominations and Pierce Pepin Cares grant applications are due. Information is available at <a href="http://www.piercepepin.coop">www.piercepepin.coop</a> under My Community.
<b>December 25</b>	Merry Christmas! Our office is closed for the holiday. Electric outages can be reported through SmartHub or by calling 800-927-5705. Internet issues can be reported by calling 866-307-5326, option 1.

*\*Indicates member-focused event.*

**\*Attending these cooperative events will earn you an entry in our prize drawing for three (3) \$100 bill credits in December 2025.**



We held our prize drawing for three \$100 bill credits in early December. Members received one entry in the prize drawing for each time they attended a cooperative event in 2024.

## **Congratulations to:**

Carl R. Haese – Ellsworth  
Michael Masyga – Prescott  
Karl E. Anderson – Ellsworth

In December 2025, we'll have another prize drawing for three \$100 bill credits. Watch the *WEC News* magazine, our website, and social media channels for opportunities to attend cooperative events.





# *Happy* **NEW GEAR!**

**THE NEW YEAR HAS BEGUN, AND  
YOUR HOME MAY HAVE NEW  
INTERNET-CONNECTED  
DEVICES IN IT.**

The more devices you have, the more speed you need—to enjoy the best internet experience. Ask us about upgrading to a faster speed.

