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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

May 2026



PIERCE PEPIN
COOPERATIVE SERVICES

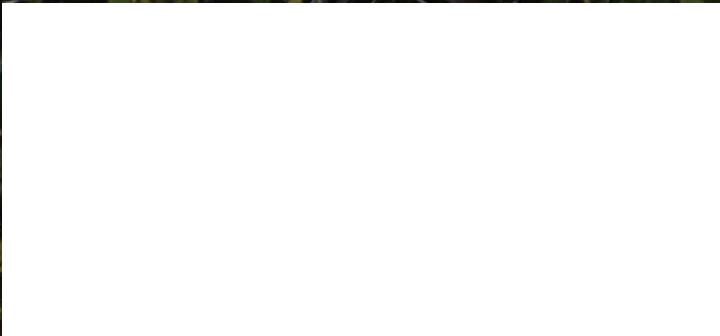
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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MAKE THEIR CASE IN WASHINGTON**

KIDS AND CRITTERS





KICKING OFF 90 YEARS

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO



With our 89th Annual Meeting behind us, we officially kick off the celebration of 90 years of Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services. There's a bit of a discrepancy when it comes to the actual date of the cooperative's beginnings. On April 28, 1936, we held our first meeting at the Ellsworth Theatre as Pierce County Rural Electric Cooperative. The wheels were set in motion for the new beginnings of the electric distribution cooperative.

The discrepancy came just a year later when a letter was dispatched from the United States Department of Agriculture alerting the co-op that its articles of incorporation did not meet the requirements of the Rural Electric Administration (REA) and the Wisconsin Rural Electrification Coordination offices. On February 3, 1937, the co-op disbanded and reorganized under new articles of incorporation. On April 2, 1937, the cooperative filed its new articles of incorporation, which put into motion the ability to take out loans from the REA. This new co-op was called Pierce Pepin Electric Cooperative.

As reported in a 1985 REC magazine, the newly formed co-op took a \$300,000 loan from the REA and awarded a bid of \$272,586.75 to L.G. Arnold Company to build 318 miles of line serving 932 farms. To put this in context, that same amount would be equal to \$6.1 million in today's dollars.

There are a couple of other interesting notes in our history. In the 1985 REC magazine, it discussed the growing pains of the co-op, stating, "Some members felt they could never have used all the energy the meter recorded and there must have been something wrong with the meter. How could a farm ever use 50 kWh in a month?" It's safe to say we still hear these comments 90 years later, albeit with much higher monthly usage.

In the beginning of the electric co-op, there was also pushback from Northern States Power (NSP), now Xcel Energy, against allowing co-ops to serve rural areas. NSP had constructed electric lines from Hudson to Prescott to Hager City, continuing to the Village of Pepin. They also constructed a line that went from Prescott to Ellsworth, and to Spring Valley and Elmwood. NSP worked against rural electrification back then due to competition. Ninety years ago, NSP made several attempts to build lines into rural areas and would often lower the cost of service in hopes of attracting those customers. Throughout the history of Wisconsin's electric cooperatives, disputes before the Public Service Commission and other regulatory battles have occurred, with cooperatives focused exclusively on protecting their members and the investments made to serve them. While territory disputes still happen, today Xcel Energy is a much more diverse company. Many

of the PPCS substations are served by transmission lines that are owned and operated by Xcel Energy. Power transmitted on these lines comes from Xcel power plants in Minnesota.

With our 90th Annual Meeting just 11 months away, we will be sure to bring additional tidbits of history into focus. The issues above were important to the formation of the cooperative. But as you read through the history of our co-op and many neighboring co-ops, one thing has consistently rung true: the involvement of the members is critical to the direction of the co-op.

While it may be easy to sit back and criticize decisions, cooperative governance by the membership is one of the most foundational principles. Members serving as directors guide us. Our co-op continues to serve a largely rural population, with low density and high infrastructure costs. Utilities often operate as monopolies due to these costs, with low margins returned through energy sales. Members are asked to pay for their portion of not only the energy they use, but also the operational costs of the cooperative. PPCS, with a high residential load, sees revenue fluctuations that vary greatly due to weather. Over the past several years, the co-op board has moved to covering operational costs through fixed charges that can be more evenly spread across all members. These challenges were present in 1936, and they will continue to be present in 2026.

The difference in a cooperatively owned utility is that our profits are returned to our members through capital credits. Our board has continued to ensure we refund money back to members each year. This was an important part of the structure set up in 1936, and it will continue to be important well into the future.

As we look forward to warmer weather, being outdoors, and planting, please take a minute to call before you dig. It's a free call. As always, we want to get through this year safely and with as little downtime as possible. Happy Memorial Day! See you this summer.



CALLING ALL KIDS!

JOIN US AT KAMP KENWOOD THIS SUMMER!



PPCS will sponsor six campers, ages 8 to 14, to the Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood on Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls, Wis. All camp and membership fees are paid by PPCS. Children of PPCS electric members not sponsored in 2025 are eligible. For more information, visit www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/youth-camp or call 800-272-5531. To register, contact the cooperative at 715-273-4355 (ext. 2451) or clubich@piercepenn.coop.



Youth Leadership Conference

FREE event for high school students.
July 14 - 16, 2026
at UW-Stout

Details and registration information at www.piercepenn.coop/youth-leadership or use the QR code to register today!

Coffee at the Co-op*

Join us! Friday, May 15
8 to 9 A.M.

*This is a member-focused event. Attendees will be entered in our prize drawing for three \$100 bill credits to be awarded in December 2026.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Watch your energy bill for capital credit allocation information

The 2025 capital credit allocations notice will be inserted with your energy bill in May. 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	198
Allocation Year	2024
Total Electric Patronage for Year	\$11.29
Total Electric Capital Credit Allocation For Year	\$81
Remaining Electric Capital Credit Allocation	\$81

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,



Brad Ristow,
Vice President,
Electric Operations

2026 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS STRENGTHEN RELIABILITY AND SYSTEM RESILIENCE

Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services (PPCS) is preparing for an extensive slate of construction projects during the 2026 construction season, all designed with one goal in mind: providing members with safe, reliable, and resilient electric service for years to come.

These projects focus on replacing aging electric lines and, where appropriate, converting overhead lines to underground. By modernizing infrastructure—some of which dates back to the 1940s and 1950s—PPCS will reduce the risk of outages caused by weather, tree contact, and equipment failure. Thanks to grant funding awarded to PPCS, approximately 80 percent of the total construction costs will be covered, allowing the cooperative to make these critical improvements while minimizing the financial impact on members.

Pepin County Projects

In Pepin County, PPCS crews will replace portions of electric line along Bear Pen Road, Bogus Road, Big Coulee Road, and Sunnybrook Road. These upgrades will improve service reliability for members in the area and reduce long-term maintenance needs.

Pierce County Projects

In Pierce County, PPCS will upgrade a three-phase line serving members on the east side of Ellsworth. This line is a key system asset, serving as a tie line between multiple substations, and improvements will enhance flexibility and reliability throughout the surrounding area. Additionally, line along 730th Street in Trenton Township will be converted to underground, further protecting service from weather-related disruptions.

Keeping Members Informed

PPCS understands that construction can be disruptive, and crews make it a priority to communicate with members throughout each project. Members will be notified in advance of any planned service interruptions, and PPCS staff are available to address questions or concerns during the construction process.

Over the past 20 years, PPCS has invested significantly in strengthening the connections between its 11 substations. These system improvements allow crews to perform maintenance or respond to major outages while maintaining service to as many members as possible. The 2026 construction projects continue this commitment—building a stronger electric system that supports reliable service today and prepares PPCS for the energy needs of tomorrow.




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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 Oak Grove, Clifton, Troy, Kinnickinnic, Martell, Gilman, Eau Galle, Gilman, and Spring Lake townships. If you have questions about this work, please contact our operations department at 715-273-4355 or 800-924-2133.

SAVE MONEY WITH A DIY HOME ENERGY AUDIT

Want to cut costs and make your home more comfortable? A DIY home energy audit can uncover hidden energy drains, like leaky windows, drafty ducts and inefficient appliances. Identifying trouble spots now can set you up for savings and comfort year-round.

We'll start with simple, no-cost changes you can do right away, then move on to tasks that take a little more effort.

Step 1: Adjust your thermostat

- Revisit your thermostat settings each season. Lower the temperature at night or when no one is home for a simple way to cut costs.
- Use a smart thermostat for even greater savings. It automatically adjusts based on your schedule.
- Discounts on smart thermostat upgrades are available through Focus on Energy (<https://www.focusonenergy.com/piercepepin>).

Step 2: Lower water heater temperature

- Lower your water heater temperature to save money and reduce the risk of scalding burns. Some water heaters are factory-set to 140 F, but most households only need 120 F.

Step 3: Find and fix energy drains

- Unplug appliances when not in use and fully power down devices like computers or gaming consoles.
- Use a smart power strip to shut off multiple electronics at once — it's an easy way to stop energy waste at the source.

Step 4: Check your lighting

- Swap out older bulbs, like incandescent or CFLs, for LEDs. They use less energy and last longer.
- Add dimmers or timers to cut down on wasted electricity.

- Choose LEDs with features like daylight shut-off or motion sensors for outdoor fixtures.

Step 5: Review major appliances

- Look for the ENERGY STAR label when buying new. If your refrigerator, washer, dryer or heat pump is more than 10 years old, it may be worth replacing rather than repairing. Newer appliances are more energy-efficient and can often pay for themselves in savings within a few years.
- Check your heating and cooling systems. Their lifespan can range from 10-30 years depending on the type and maintenance. If yours is older, start planning for an upgrade.
- Replace air filters to keep your system running efficiently.

Step 6: Seal leaks

Air leaks can waste 10-20% of your home's energy each year, but they're often simple to fix. Here's where to look and how to seal them.

- Check baseboards, floor edges and wall-to-ceiling joints indoors.
- Focus on where different materials meet outdoors.
- Pay special attention to windows, doors, light fixtures, plumbing, and outlets.
- Use caulk for gaps around windows, doors and baseboards.
- Add weatherstripping to doors and operable windows.

Step 7: Inspect insulation

Check attic insulation:

- Grab your dust mask and tape measure to check the depth of the insulation. It should be at least 12 inches deep, but you may need more depending on the type and your climate. Check EnergyStar.gov for recommended R-values.



- Spread insulation evenly. Loose-fill or blown-in insulation should be fluffy with even coverage, while rolled batt insulation should fit snugly with no gaps.

Inspect exterior walls:

- Check insulation by turning off the power, removing an outlet cover or switch plate and shining a flashlight into the cavity. Many homes built before the 1960s have little to no insulation, and houses from the 1960s-70s often need more.
- Call a professional to blow in insulation (from the outside or inside) if wall insulation is missing.

Don't forget the basement:

- Ensure rim joists (the area between the top of the foundation and the underside of the first floor) are well insulated in unfinished basements.
- Insulate the underside of the floor between the joists in crawl spaces.
- Add insulation to pipes and ductwork for an extra efficiency boost.

Enjoy your energy savings

Congratulations — you've taken important first steps toward lowering your energy bills and boosting comfort. Want to go further? A professional home energy audit can provide a complete plan to reduce waste, maximize savings, and make your home more efficient year-round. Contact our energy innovation team at 800-924-2133 to learn more.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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