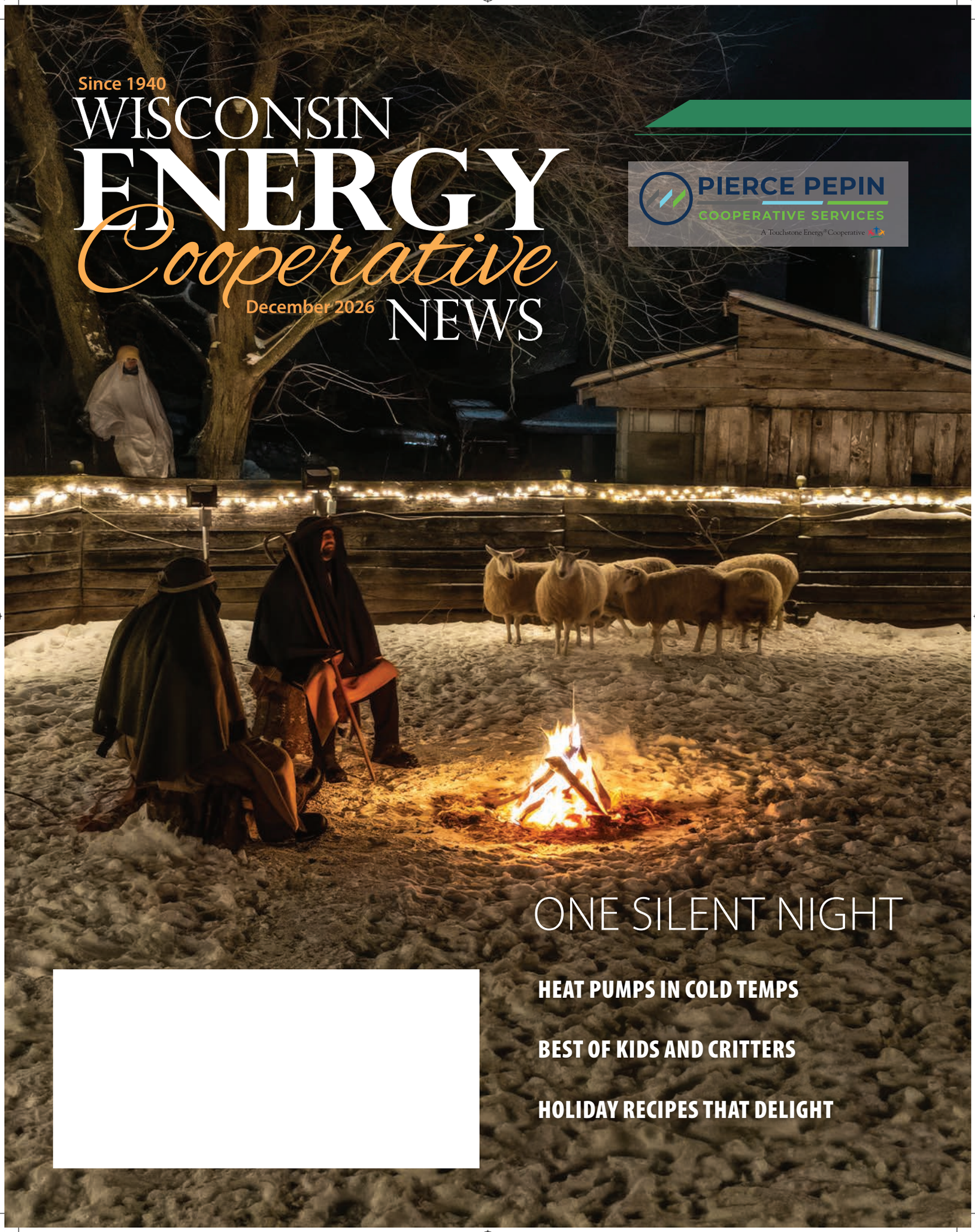


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WISCONSIN ENERGY Cooperative NEWS

December 2026

PIERCE PEPIN COOPERATIVE SERVICES

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ONE SILENT NIGHT

HEAT PUMPS IN COLD TEMPS

BEST OF KIDS AND CRITTERS

HOLIDAY RECIPES THAT DELIGHT

PIERCE PEPIN COOPERATIVE SERVICES
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MY CHRISTMAS WISH LIST



Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

We are just a few weeks away from Christmas and all the festivities that come with it. My children have been putting together their wish lists for several weeks already, which says a lot, considering I am writing this shortly before Election Day.

Recently, someone I follow on social media shared his collection of Sears Christmas catalogs from his childhood. We are about the same age, so seeing those catalogs brought back memories of flipping through the pages and imagining what might be waiting under the Christmas tree. That got me thinking about my own Christmas wish list. This year, though, my list includes a few things I would like for PPCS and the members we serve.

Predictability

This would be first on my list. Over the past several years, energy costs have become increasingly difficult to predict. Earlier this year, a power plant failure resulted in a significant, unbudgeted expense on our wholesale power bill. Other wholesale power cost adjustments added to those expenses, requiring us to recover additional costs from our members.

We know unexpected costs affect your household or business just as they affect the cooperative. Accurately forecasting our power costs would help us plan investments, manage expenses, and provide greater stability for our members. If I could put one thing under the cooperative's Christmas tree, it would be power costs we can reliably plan around.

Informed Political Leadership

My second wish is for political leaders who understand the challenges facing our electric system and the long-term consequences of their decisions. Our country's growth over the past century was fueled in part by electrification, especially in rural communities. Electricity improved daily life, helped farms and businesses become more productive, and created demand for appliances, equipment, and the manufacturing jobs behind them.

Today, we face growing demand for electricity alongside the retirement of generating plants. Meeting that demand requires planning, investment, and policies that provide a consistent direction. Promises to lower energy costs need to be backed by an understanding of what it takes to produce and deliver reliable electricity. My wish is for leaders willing to listen, learn and support practical solutions that balance reliability and affordability.

Human Connection

My final wish is something each of us can help make happen. Social media can be a wonderful way to stay connected with friends, family, and our communities. It can also become a place where disagreements overshadow relationships. Too often, our differences pull us apart before we discover how much we have in common. As a cooperative, we are built on people working together. That same spirit can strengthen our communities. A conversation, a willingness to listen, or a little patience can help us find common ground and work toward solutions together.

I recognize that my Christmas wish list won't appear in a Sears catalog anytime soon. Still, these are wishes worth working toward, and I hope we can each do our part to bring them closer to reality.

Our office will be closed December 24 and 25, as well as January 1.

From my family and everyone at our cooperative to you and yours, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and best wishes for a wonderful holiday season.



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CELEBRATING COMMUNITY DURING NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH

Good food, family fun, and community spirit were all on the menu during National Cooperative Month as PPCS and Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery teamed up to host the first-ever Co-op, Curd and Candy Crawl.

The event welcomed cooperative members and residents for an evening of celebration and connection. PPCS served a community meal, hosted bounce houses and a trunk-or-treat for families and provided a special gift for cooperative members. Meanwhile, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery kept everyone smiling with free fried cheese curds and mini bags of curds for kids.

The event showcased what cooperatives do best: bringing people together. Judging by the turnout and enthusiasm, the inaugural Co-op, Curd and Candy Crawl was a sweet success and we hope for more success next year!





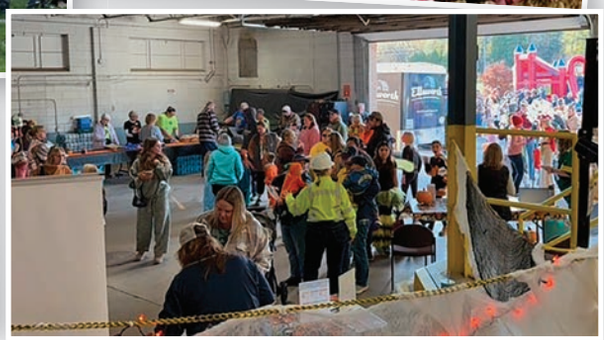












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DELIVERING HOLIDAY MAGIC, One Gift Box at a Time

Ellsworth Gift Box Program Brings Holiday Joy to Local Families

When the holiday season rolls around, the Ellsworth community comes together remarkably. Through generosity, kindness, and a little holiday magic, the Ellsworth Gift Box Program helps ensure local families can experience the joy of the season, regardless of financial circumstances.

What started many years ago as a community effort has grown into a beloved local tradition. Since 2015, Ellsworth High School student aides, guided by Anne Pechacek, have coordinated the program, giving students a hands-on opportunity to make a meaningful difference in their neighbors' lives.

The concept is simple but powerful: families in need are matched with sponsors who purchase holiday gifts for them. The result is hundreds of smiling faces and a reminder that the spirit of giving is alive and well in Ellsworth.

Each year, the program helps approximately 90 families, benefiting around 350 community members. Families do not need to have school-age children to qualify. They must live within the Ellsworth Community School District and not receive holiday assistance from another organization. The sponsors who make the program possible come from every corner of the community. Individuals, churches, businesses, civic groups, and organizations all step up each year to help neighbors they may never meet. Every year, organizers are amazed by the outpouring of support.

More Than Just Gifts

While presents are certainly part of the program, what sponsors are really giving is hope, dignity, and a little extra holiday cheer during what can be a difficult time for many families. Community members who wish to contribute financially can do so through a partnership with the Ellsworth School Foundation. Monetary donations help ensure the program can continue serving local families year after year.

Pulling off a program of this size takes more than generous sponsors. It also relies on dedicated volunteers and community partners.

One of those invaluable partners is Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services, which has provided its drive-through garage for gift distribution for the past decade. The space allows volunteers to load gifts privately and efficiently while protecting families and volunteers from Wisconsin's unpredictable December weather. It's a partnership that has become an essential piece of the program's success story.

Whether you're looking for assistance, interested in sponsoring a family, or simply want to lend a helping hand, there's a place for you in the Gift Box Program.

Those interested in volunteering during gift distribution or learning more about the program can contact Anne Pechacek at EllsworthGiftBoxProgram@gmail.com.

The True Meaning of the Season

In a world that often feels busy and disconnected, the Ellsworth Gift Box Program serves as a reminder of what communities do best: take care of one another. Every donated toy, wrapped package, volunteer hour, and financial contribution helps create brighter holidays for local families. And year after year, the people of Ellsworth prove that the greatest gift of all isn't found under a tree. It's the kindness of neighbors helping neighbors.

That's the kind of holiday tradition worth celebrating.

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RECYCLE HOLIDAY LIGHTS SAFELY

With the holiday season upon us, many people find themselves sorting through decorations and discovering tangled strands of old or broken holiday lights. Instead of tossing these lights into the trash, consider recycling them. Recycling holiday lights is a simple way to reduce waste, conserve valuable materials, and help protect the environment.

Holiday lights contain a variety of materials, including copper wiring, glass, and plastic. When these lights are thrown into a landfill, valuable resources are wasted. Recycling allows these materials to be recovered and used to manufacture new products, reducing waste.

How to Recycle Holiday Lights

Check Local Recycling Programs

Many communities offer seasonal recycling programs for holiday lights. Contact your local recycling center, public works department, or waste management provider to see if they accept light strands.

Visit a Retail Collection Site

Some hardware stores, home improvement centers, and other retailers host holiday light recycling drives during and after the holiday season. These programs make it easy for residents to drop off unwanted lights.

Use a Scrap Metal Recycler

Because holiday lights contain copper wiring and other metals, many scrap metal facilities accept them for recycling. Be sure to call ahead to confirm acceptance requirements. Most recycling programs accept:

- Incandescent holiday light strands
- Electrical wiring from decorative displays
- LED holiday lights
- Extension cords
- Rope lights

Always check with the recycler for specific guidelines, as acceptance policies may vary.







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Nate Boettcher, President & CEO
Maddi Smith, Editor

W7725 U.S. Highway 10
Ellsworth, WI 54011
715-273-4355 • 800-924-2133
info@piercepepin.coop • 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

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