



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

Later this month the Board of Directors and leadership team at Dunn Energy Cooperative will spend a day working on strategic planning. While we talk about our strategic plan at nearly every board meeting, it is good to set aside time to talk about the future direction of the cooperative. We run the cooperative today, learning from the past while also preparing for the future.

In our last strategic plan, we focused on five key concepts.

1. Developing a comprehensive staffing plan to address short- and long-term needs.
2. Maximizing the use of data to improve service and efficiency.
3. Promoting a culture of safety with 200% accountability.
4. Maintaining the financial strength of the cooperative to keep energy affordable long term.
5. Improving our engagement with our members and increasing our renewable energy portfolio.

I'm happy to report we accomplished many of our goals. We navigated the retirements of long-term employees and implemented new technologies that help us do our jobs and improved the service to our members. Our crews worked safely with no vehicle accidents and we improved security in our office. Rates were relatively stable and the cooperative is on strong financial footing. We developed over 3 MW of renewable energy, put



in a public EV charger, and started our Power Connection program, plus a whole lot more.

To prepare for our next strategic planning session we've done several things. First we gathered feedback from our membership. This summer we conducted a member survey and over 500 members participated. Members had the chance to let us know how we're doing and give us any suggestions they might have for their cooperative. Secondly, in August, I had one-on-one meetings with each employee to gather their input on what's working well and what we could be doing better to serve our members. We take all this data and feedback to our board to develop a good picture of how we are performing and what areas we could focus on in the future.

At the end of our strategic planning session the board will help narrow down our focus areas for the next few years. Staff will then take those big-picture objectives and develop an action plan to accomplish the goals. The energy business is undergoing rapid change and innovation. Having a solid strategic plan that focuses on our goal of safely providing our members energy that is reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible is key to keeping the cooperative successful in the future.

Working for You

Hidden Account Numbers

If you find your account number hidden in the pages of this magazine and you call and tell us before the next issue is mailed, we'll put a **\$50 credit** on your electric bill. Happy hunting!

Last month's winners were Judy Ferguson and Barbara Mathiesen

60th ANNUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE A WRAP!

Held over July 16–18, the annual conference dedicated to teaching youth about the cooperative way, the WECA Youth Leadership Conference hosted nearly 70 students whose parents or guardians are members of electric cooperatives across Wisconsin. UW-Stout welcomed the Youth Leadership Conference (YLC) and gave high school students an opportunity to experience life on campus firsthand.

Students heard from inspirational speakers like Megan and Bel of Dialed in Digital, who talked about navigating life after high school without knowing what they wanted to do with their life. They gave advice on following your passion, not someone else's. Craig Hillier spent time with the group talking about Breakthrough Leadership in a very interactive session. It was Hillier's 36th year presenting at YLC.

Dunn Energy was thrilled to take four students, Mallory Wisemiller, Rebekah Bignell, Brooke Svihovec, and Susan Holmen, to YLC. All four are bright young students who



represented the cooperative well. Two of the students, Susan and Mallory, ran for Youth Board. As a conference organized by students for students, members of the youth board are awarded a trip to Washington, D.C., for the history, networking, and engaging in the political process by meeting with legislators. While neither made it on this year, we

hope they try again next year.

If you have a student entering their sophomore or junior year check out the YLC website at <https://www.weca.coop/youth-leadership-conference>. If it's something your student would like, watch for communications from Dunn Energy announcing the registration process in early 2025. (8307001)



Dunn Energy Youth Leadership Conference delegates (pictured at right, l-r) Susan Holmen, Mallory Wisemiller, Rebekah Bignell, and Brooke Svihovec were among high school students from throughout the state who participated in the Youth Leadership Congress. Pictured above: students engage in a team-building activity.





MORE THAN A FEW CANS OF SOUP...

Which Foods Are In Your Emergency Kit?



THE FOOD IN YOUR EMERGENCY KIT SHOULD:

- Have a long storage life.
- Require little or no cooking, water or refrigeration.
- Include nourishment for infants and toddlers if applicable.
- Meet special dietary needs.
- Include the needs of pets if you have them.

WATER AND PREP ITEMS

Include in your supplies:

- One gallon of water per person per day to last at least three days.
- A manual can opener and cooking supplies.
- Indoor warming methods, such as chafing dishes and fondue pots.

EMERGENCY STASH

Plan for several days' worth of food for each person in your household. Edible items could include:

- Canned meats, fruits and vegetables.
- Grains, such as crackers and multigrain cereals.
- Protein or fruit bars.
- Dried fruit.
- Peanut butter.
- Canned soups, meats and beans.
- Powdered milk.
- Dried meat/jerky.
- Oatmeal or breakfast bars.

BE PREPARED TO KEEP THOSE YOU LOVE SAFE, NOURISHED AND HYDRATED DURING AN EMERGENCY.

Learn more at:

Sources: FEMA and CDC

THE POWER OF PREPARATION

With severe weather events occurring more frequently, now more than ever it makes sense to be prepared. During a prolonged power outage or other emergency, this means having enough food, water, and supplies to last at least a few days.

In honor of National Preparedness Month in September, Dunn Energy wants to remind members of our community about the power of preparation. While you don't have to achieve a "doomsday prepper" level of preparedness, there are several practical steps you can take to keep you and your family safe.

Even at a modest level, preparation can help reduce stress and anxiety, and lessen the impact of an emergency event. We recommend starting with the basics. Here are general guidelines recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- Assemble a grab-and-go disaster kit. Include items like nonperishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), diapers, batteries, flashlights, prescription medications, first-aid kit, battery-powered radio, and phone chargers.
- Develop a plan for communicating with family and friends (i.e., via text, social media, third party, etc.).
- Have some extra cash available; during a power outage, electronic card readers and cash machines may not work.
- Store important documents (birth certificates, property deed, etc.) in a safe place away from home (for example, a bank safe deposit box).
- Keep neighbors and coworkers apprised of your emergency plans.
- Fill your car with gas.
- Organize your supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location that family members know about.

Continued

Vulnerable Family Members

If you have older family members or those with special needs, make sure they have enough medication and supplies for a few days. If they don't live with you, arrange for a neighbor to check in on them. If a severe weather event is expected, consider having your relative stay with you if feasible, otherwise call them daily. If you have an infant or young children, make certain that you have ample formula, diapers, medication, and other supplies on hand

to weather an outage lasting several days or more. (140019196)

Four-legged Family Members

For families with pets, having a plan in place in the event of a prolonged outage or an emergency will help reduce worry and stress especially if you need to make a decision during an emergency.

- Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or other emergency. Pets can become disoriented and frightened during severe weather and may wander off during an emergency.

- Microchip your pet and ensure the contact information is up to date.
- Store pet medical records on a USB drive or in an easy-to-remember location.
- Create an emergency kit for pets (include shelf-safe food, bottled water, medications, and other supplies).

At Dunn Energy, we care about your safety. Planning for an emergency situation today can give you more confidence to deal with severe weather and potential outages in the future.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

West CAP provides energy assistance for Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, and St. Croix Counties

As the heating season quickly approaches, we'd like to remind everyone of the services available to help with your energy bill, should the need arise.

Established in 1965, West CAP is one of over 16 Community Action agencies in Wisconsin, and one of over 1,000 across the country, working to end poverty. The West CAP team of nearly 70 staff strives to provide resources that promote the self-sufficiency of low-income families in the rural communities of west central Wisconsin and by working to create a more just and sustainable society.

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) provides assistance for heating costs, electric costs, and energy crisis situations. Operating with federal and state funding, the program provides assistance to households across our service area to help lower the burden of monthly energy costs.

WHEAP assistance is a one-time payment during the heating season (October 1 – May 15). The funding pays a portion of energy costs, and the payment is not intended to cover the entire annual energy costs of a residence. The amount of the energy assistance payment varies depending on a variety of factors, including the household's size, income, and energy costs.

Crisis Assistance

Crisis assistance may be available if you have no heat, are nearly out of fuel, or your electricity has been or will soon be shut off.

Furnace Assistance

The Home Energy Plus (HE+) Furnace Program provides services to eligible homeowners and some renters when their heating system stops operating or is operating in an unsafe manner. HE+ Furnace Program assistance can include repairs, or in some situations, a total replacement of an inoperable system. Call West CAP immediately if you are experiencing a no-heat situation.

For more information on all of their programs, please call West CAP at 715-265-4271. You can also visit the West CAP website for an application at <https://westcap.org/services/energy-assistance>.



The DUNN COUNTY Cooperative COOKOUT

Saturday, October 26
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Lunch includes: hot dogs, beans, chips, deep fried cheese curds, cookies, & beverages

- ✓ Cooperative Displays
- ✓ Raffle Prize Drawing
- ✓ Kids Trick-or-Treating
- ✓ Come in Costume!

Brought to you by Dunn County's Cooperatives

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