



## Cooperative Principle #3

# MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

This month I'd like to continue my focus on the Seven Cooperative Principles, the guiding basics of what makes Dunn Energy Cooperative (DEC) unique among other electric utilities across the country. Principle #3 is Member Economic Participation. Don't worry, this won't be a long article that ends with me announcing a need for a rate increase. In fact, you'll be happy to know that initial projections call for no rate increase being needed in 2021.

I'd like to focus this article on the benefits of being a cooperative when it comes to being good stewards of your investment into DEC. The main way you participate economically in the cooperative is obviously by paying your electric bill. Most bills have two main components. First is an energy charge, a cost per kilowatt hour for how much energy you consume that month. The second part is a fixed charge. That helps cover the basic costs of running the cooperative regardless of how much energy we sell. The fixed charge pays for things like replacing wires, staff time, outage restoration, and vehicles—all needed to run the business.

Members can help the cooperative be financially strong by paying their bills in full and on time each month. We certainly understand that situations come up and we are glad to work with our members on payment arrangements when needed. Members can also help us reduce our operating costs by signing up to receive your bill electronically. This saves us the costs of mailing you a statement each month. You can also sign up for autopay to help us process your payments more efficiently. Information on these programs can be found on our website or via the SmartHub app.

In a cooperative, your economic participation doesn't end with paying your bill. Since we are a local cooperative, any profits generated are allocated (promised) back to

the members who used the energy. For example, if the cooperative makes a \$10,000 profit, that money is allocated to the members based on what percentage their electric purchases were out of all the revenue the cooperative brought in that year. If you were 1% of the revenue, then your allocation would be \$100. About 4% of that money is returned every year to our members in the form of capital credits, such as the check you may have received in October. We only return a portion of that money each year; the rest is put to work at the cooperative

upgrading lines, performing maintenance, and reducing the amount of money we have to borrow. It establishes a reserve to make sure our business is able to run smoothly.

Your elected board of directors, made up of members of the cooperative, establishes a fiscal policy for us to achieve. They are updated monthly on financial performance and review long-term financial goals. We know our members work hard for their money, so we do our best to keep our costs down and your cooperative financially healthy. (13077001)

Your local investment in the cooperative also plays a key role in the economic activity in our area. We employ 26 local people, and they buy homes, groceries, gas, and other products that produce economic benefit in our community. We employ local contractors to help trim trees and install new services. We purchase many things needed to run our business from local vendors. We invest in community organizations, advertise with local media, and use local banks for many of our financial transactions. Your economic participation in your cooperative is an investment in your community.

The cooperative business model is a great way to get the goods and services you need, keep the local economy growing, and return profits back to the members who invested. Thank you for your business and your economic participation in Dunn Energy Cooperative.





# YEAR-END HOUSEKEEPING

With the end of 2020 quickly approaching, it's time for end-of-year reminders.

## Rebates and Incentives



Have you purchased any new Energy Star rated appliances in 2020? If you have, you may qualify for an Energy Sense incentive through Dunn Energy. We have incentives on new Energy Star rated appliances and LED lighting. We also have rebates on many new, efficient HVAC systems. Did you install a geothermal heat pump or an air source heat pump? We have rebates on those! You can find a full listing of rebates on our website at [www.dunnenergy.com](http://www.dunnenergy.com) under Energy Sense>Rebates & Incentives. **All rebates for any 2020 purchases have to be turned in no later than JANUARY 1, 2021, or they will not qualify.**

## Operation Round Up



Are you a not-for-profit group looking for help with a project you'd like to complete? Fourth-quarter grant applications are due in our office no later than December 31, 2020. You can find a grant application on our website at [www.dunnenergy.com](http://www.dunnenergy.com). Maybe you're wondering if your group qualifies for a grant. Here are our Giving Guidelines:

Our mission is:

Operation Round Up contributions will be used primarily in the local area for charitable, educational, and community needs to help provide opportunities for long-range enhancement of the communities' quality of life.

Evaluation factors are:

- *Generally* awarded to non-profit programs, projects, and organizations that improve the quality of life in our local communities and
- *Emphasize:* public safety, health care, self-sufficiency, basic human needs, our cultural environment, community leadership, and social issues for youth.
- Only one grant per year will be awarded to an organization.

Funding restrictions are:

Contributions are *generally* not awarded to:

- |                           |                          |                           |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| • lobbying                | • fundraising dinners    | • scholarship programs    |
| • political causes        | • raffles or events      | • general operating funds |
| • religious causes        | • individuals            | • national fund drives    |
| • veteran organizations   | • capital fund campaigns | • advertising             |
| • fraternal organizations |                          |                           |

If your program requires overheads/administrative costs to be written into your grant, Dunn Energy Cooperative requires an itemized print out detailing these costs, so if the board chooses, they can omit funding for those costs.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

# HANG YOUR SOCKETS WITH CARE

**C**herished family memories often involve the twinkling lights of the tree and decorations inside and outside the home. Keep your holidays free from electrical mishaps as you prepare your home. Safe Electricity offers these tips for keeping holidays safe and bright:

- Before decorating, look for signs of wear on cords, sockets, and plugs. Make sure that no bulbs are broken, and that your wires are not cracked or frayed. Repair or replace any damaged items.
- Make sure all holiday lights have been tested by a certified laboratory and labeled with a quality marker, such as “UL.” Such a mark signifies that the product is verified as safe for use.
- Don’t place cords over points of entry or exit to prevent tripping hazards and damage to cords. Don’t tuck them out of sight by running them under carpets and rugs; they could overhead and become a fire hazard.
- If you need to reach overhead, do not stand on a chair or desk; use a step stool or ladder. Use one with a study base and place it on a stable surface. After mounting the ladder, always climb facing towards the rungs.
- If using nails or tacks to hang your bulbs, don’t pierce the cords. Rather, rest the cords on them. Use plastic clips instead to avoid problems.
- When decorating outside, be aware of overhead power lines, including the service connection to your home. Keep yourself and any tools, like ladders, a minimum 10-foot distance away.
- If you need to use extension cords for outdoor decorating, use only heavy-duty cords designated for outdoor use. Plug outdoor lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI), or use portable outdoor GFCIs.(14001894)
- Keep live trees from drying out. Use a sturdy stand where water can be refilled at least once a day. Keep your tree away from heat sources, especially fireplaces and space heaters, as well as drapes or curtains. Know the location of your fire extinguisher. Although artificial trees are less flammable than real trees, purchase a flame-resistant model.
- When going to bed or leaving the house, make sure your lights are turned off. Leaving your lights on continually presents the risk of lights shorting out and resulting in an electrical fire.

*To learn more about safe holiday decorating and entertaining, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org).*





**T**his year will go down in the books as one of great challenge. It was a year that took a great deal of patience and flexibility, from both our employees and our members. The hardships of the year make celebrating this holiday season (however different it looks) even more special. All of us here at Dunn Energy want to wish you a merry and bright holiday season, and we look forward to serving you and our community in 2021!

Jesse Singerhouse  
Mike Andraschko  
Tyrel Blanchfield  
Pete Brantner  
Brian Jiskra  
Josh Millar  
Loren Luzinski  
Pat Rhude  
Chris Marlett

John Hestekin  
Dave Hoffman  
Lee Longmire  
Dan Heit  
Mike Frinack  
Landan Romsos  
Logan Scheel  
David  
Livingston

Jordan Hessler  
Tricia Bauer  
Diane Harschlip  
Heather Boesl  
Becky Weber  
Jolene Neisius  
Becky Gehring  
Julie Anderson  
Dee Fox

*Have a safe and happy holiday season!*

## 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 Scott and Apryl Goettl and Shelly Hawkins.

### Jesse Singerhouse, Manager

N5725 600th St., P.O. Box 220, Menomonie, WI 54751  
715-232-6240  
www.dunnenergy.com

### Jolene Neisius, Editor



## Dunn Energy Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative