



# THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE DEEP DIVE

## #4: Autonomy and Independence

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

**D**uring the last few months of 2020, I started to take a deeper dive into each of the Seven Cooperative Principles. In the months ahead I'd like to continue to look at and talk about how those principles are put into practice here at your cooperative.

Principle #4 is Autonomy and Independence. This is defined as follows:

*Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.*

One of the common themes that we have already explored in the first three principles comes to the forefront once again. Control by the members is one of the most vital components of a cooperative. This includes electing your board of directors from members who use the cooperative services, paying for the goods and services you use from the cooperative, and being involved as an engaged member of your cooperative. But this principle goes a little further and involves many aspects of the work we do here at Dunn Energy Cooperative.

First, we are autonomous. This means we exist inde-

pendently with the sole purpose of providing services to our members. There is no outside ownership of the cooperative; only the members who use electricity govern and participate in the cooperative. Thus, every decision we make is completely centered on the members we serve to the betterment of the cooperative as a whole.

Being a self-help organization goes back to our founding days as a cooperative. Those rural members needed electricity, so they worked together to make that happen in their area. The start of the cooperative was supported by the Rural Electrification Act, which was a program designed by the federal government to encourage the installation of electricity in the rural areas that were underserved at the time. They provided most of the starting capital in terms of loans and engineering assistance to get the cooperative off the ground. Local funds were also raised from those joining the cooperative.

Today we still work with the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), which is a sub agency of the United States Department of Agriculture. RUS provides financing to rural electric cooperatives as we continue to build and improve our electric grid. We are not subsidized by the federal government. In fact, the RUS loan program is a source of revenue to the federal government as we pay interest on the loans we receive.

For any program we participate in or partnership we develop with other entities, we do so with the sole purpose of ben-

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## COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES AND EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS: A PERFECT MATCH

Over the last few months in the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*, you've heard us explain why and how Dunn Energy is different—because we're a cooperative.

While our top priority is providing safe, reliable, and affordable energy, we also want to be a catalyst for good in our community. Because we are your local electric cooperative, co-op revenues stay right here in our community. In turn, we invest in our diverse community base through scholarship programs, charitable giving, educational programs, and more. We strive to make long-term decisions that improve and enrich the communities we serve.

While today's world is radically different than it was when Dunn Energy was founded, our cooperative values have stood the test of time and remain just as relevant



today. Each year Dunn Energy provides educational scholarships to 15 high school students who are embarking on higher education, as well as one non-traditional scholarship for someone going back to school to further their education after being in the workforce a while or raising their family. We also provide a scholarship at CVTC in memorium of Todd Bauer, a lineman we lost too early to cancer. His scholarship benefits a person going into the Line Worker Program. (2104002)

We believe in supporting the future generation of leaders in our communities. To make it as convenient as possible, you will find copies of both the youth scholarship application and the non-traditional scholarship application in the following pages of this month's magazine. Applications are due the first week of March.



# Youth Scholarship Application

Each year Dunn Energy awards local high school students from our membership educational scholarships, to promote advanced education. We firmly believe our future lies within these young leaders. Dunn Energy will choose 15 applicants at random as the winners of the \$1,000 scholarships.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DEC account no. \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian who is a member of Dunn Energy: \_\_\_\_\_

How you want your parents listed in the program: \_\_\_\_\_

High school you attend: \_\_\_\_\_

School you propose to enter: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list three goals you have for the future:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## THIS SECTION IS TO BE FILLED OUT BY SCHOOL COUNSELOR OR PRINCIPAL

1. Name of applicant \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the applicant have at least a four-year cumulative GPA of 3.0 on 4.0 scale? YES / NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Principal/Counselor Date

**Return application to:**  
Dunn Energy Cooperative  
P.O. Box 220  
Menomonie, WI 54751

**Or by email to:**  
jolene@dunnenergy.com

**Applications are due the first Friday in March**

### Qualifications:

1. Parent or guardian of student must be a member of Dunn Energy Cooperative.
2. Student must be a graduating high school senior and plan to begin college or vocational training in the following their senior year.
3. Student must hold a 3.0 GPA or better on a 4.0 scale.
4. Complete basic application and have it signed by guidance or school official.
5. Checks will be presented to students after Dunn Energy Cooperative receives a copy of your first semester college grades.

Disbursement of scholarships will be awarded after all qualifications are met and with receipt of transcripts and verification of enrollment from eligible recipient.



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## Non-traditional Scholarship Application

One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to an eligible student returning to a university, vocational, or technical college after spending a minimum of three (3) years in the workplace or raising a family.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DEC account no. \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Current school and program you are enrolled in: \_\_\_\_\_

How far along are you in your program? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose to go back to school? \_\_\_\_\_

**Return application to:**  
Dunn Energy Cooperative  
P.O. Box 220  
Menomonie, WI 54751

**Or by email to:**  
jolene@dunnenergy.com

**Applications are due the first Friday in March**

### To be eligible:

1. The applicant or their spouse must be a member of Dunn Energy Cooperative and a bona fide resident of the cooperative's service territory.
2. The applicant must be in good standing with Dunn Energy Cooperative.
3. The recipient must have maintained a 2.5 (or better) grade point average during their current quarter or semester of post-secondary education.
4. The recipient must be enrolled in a course of study leading to an associate's or bachelor's degree or certificate.
5. The recipient must be enrolled with a minimum of five (5) credits and be in good standing at the school they are attending.
6. Children of full-time DEC employees or directors are not eligible.
7. The non-traditional scholarship will be limited to a one-time award. After receiving a scholarship, the individual will not be eligible for future awards.
8. The program must be a minimum of one year.

Disbursement of non-traditional scholarships will be awarded after all qualifications are met and with receipt of transcripts and verification of enrollment from eligible recipient.



Dunn Energy members, through the Operation Round Up grant program, helped the Menomonie Fire Department get, for the first time ever, a complete set of high-visibility waterproof jackets. These rain jackets will help keep our local fire/EMS workers safe while working on the roadway or interstate. It's all too often we hear about police, fire, EMS, tow truck operators, or construction workers being hit while working on roadways. The high visibility of these jackets is just one more tool in an attempt to keep our local emergency workers safe. (2193003)

## Co-op Principle #4 Continued from page 15

efiting our members. The most important partnership we have is with other electric cooperatives in our region. As a group, we are member-owners of Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC). DPC generates and transmits all the electric energy that we sell to our members. The generation and transmission of electricity to our area represents about 70% of our total costs each year. So, as you can see, our partnership with DPC is very important. One board member from each electric cooperative that is a member-owner of DPC sits on their board of directors, and the manager of each local cooperative actively participates in DPC business to represent our local interest.

Cooperatives are truly a unique business model and as an employee it is great to work for an organization that is focused so strongly on the members we serve. Dunn Energy Cooperative has grown from an idea in the 1930s to an innovative energy cooperative today. But the driving force of what we are all about hasn't changed. It's YOU, our members!

### Jesse Singerhouse, Manager

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### Jolene Neisius, Editor



## 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 Rose Jerome-Bud and Tom Bauer.



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