



**Dunn Energy
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



PLANNING

By James Hathaway, General Manager

Last month I wrote about strategic planning and how important it is. Along with strategic planning your electric cooperative also does financial planning and construction planning.

Our annual budget is basically a financial plan for the coming year. We project revenues and expenses and develop a plan to meet the financial needs of the cooperative.

At the end of May we met with our engineering consultant to start developing a new four-year work plan. A work plan is basically a road map for what construction work should be done to our electric system over the next four or five years. The number of new services we will put in during the four-year period are estimated. So are the number of service upgrades, pole replacements, and other miscellaneous equipment replacements.

Our last work plan included installing our new metering system. (6520003)

We also take a look at our entire distribution grid. Dunn Energy has about 2,000 miles of electric power lines. Our service area extends from North of Ridgeland in Northern Dunn County to Durand in Pepin County. We also have lines running to just west of Chippewa Falls and all the way to Elmwood in Eastern Pierce County. The system is served by 14 substations. These are the locations where the electricity is received at transmission voltage from our power supplier, Dairyland Power.

The co-op has two types of power lines: three-phase lines and single-phase lines. You can tell the difference by counting the number of wires. A three-phase line has four wires: the three phase wires, or high-voltage wires, and a neutral wire. Single-phase lines have two wires: a high-voltage wire and a neutral. The three-phase lines are the backbone of our system. They connect our substations and also feed the

larger accounts on the system. Over the past 20 years or so we have upgraded many of our three-phase lines. The older, smaller wires installed back in the 1940s and 50s have been replaced with larger wires to handle the increased demand for electricity. As part of the new work plan, we will examine our three-phase backbone and determine which lines should be upgraded this cycle.

Because Dunn Energy is a rural system, some of our distribution power lines run many miles through the countryside. As part of the work plan, we take voltage readings out at the end of the lines. Voltage levels drop as the electricity gets farther and farther from a substation. If voltage readings are not adequate we look at our options for improving the voltage levels. This may mean serving the account from a different direction, upgrading the power line

serving the account, or installing a voltage regulator to boost the power. These corrective steps are documented in the work plan.

Over the years our system has grown with the addition of houses and businesses. This means more demand for electricity. We take a look at where this growth has happened and look at the size of the wire serving these areas. Some of the wire is almost as old as the co-op itself. The poles and other equipment have been replaced but not the wire. Our goal for the past several years has been to replace 5 to 10 miles of this wire each year. The new work plan will continue to provide for replacing several miles of old wire each year.

Planning is important, whether it is strategic planning, financial planning, or construction planning. Surprises may be fun for parties, but they generally aren't good for business. Careful planning helps a business chart a course for the future. That's both good for the business and for the people it serves.





Congratulations

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

At Dunn Energy Cooperative we are excited to again award 15 \$1,000 scholarships to local youth whose parents are members of our cooperative. The quality of all of the applicants was impressive. They each displayed the level of community involvement and achievement it takes to be a success.

Our mission at Dunn Energy is to make a difference one member at a time. We hope that our scholarships make a difference in the lives of the recipients and we challenge them to continue to make a difference throughout their lives.

On behalf of all of our members, we are honored to present \$1,000 scholarships to:



Mark Timper (Nat & Ilona Timper) from Wheeler is interested in studying at U of M – Twin Cities

Jaida Peterson (Grant & Kari Peterson) from Menomonie is interested in studying at Minnesota State University – Mankato

Beth McIlquham (Jon & Cara Schueller and Brent & Shirley McIlquham) from Chippewa Falls is interested in studying at CVTC

Alyssa Dachel (John & Dianna Dachel) from Colfax is interested in studying at UW-Eau Claire

Madison Shipley (Ryan & Kimberly Shipley) from Ridgeland is interested in studying at UW-Eau Claire

Abby Klueckmann (DJ & Stacey Klueckmann) from Colfax is interested in studying at CVTC

McKenzie Brion (Curt & Lisa Brion) from Durand is interested in studying at Winona State University

Samuel Weiss (Brian & Jennifer Weiss) from Durand is interested in studying at CVTC

Alyssa Lauer (Dale & Jessica Lauer) from Elk Mound is interested in studying at UW-Stevens Point

Paige Romanowski (Paul & Lisa Romanowski) from Elk Mound is interested in studying at Winona State University

Dillon McLaughlin (Robin & Julie McLaughlin) from Elk Mound is interested in studying at CVTC

Sara Gjestson (Don & Amy Gjestson) from Knapp is interested in studying at UW-Green Bay

Lyndzi Bignell (Dan & Jen Bignell) from Menomonie is interested in studying at Southwest Institute of the Healing Arts

Elizabeth Fluekiger (Chris & Nicole Fluekiger) from Mondovi is interested in studying at CVTC

Ruth Gehring (Roger & Rebecca Gehring) from Menomonie is interested in studying at Martin Luther College

Non-traditional Student Scholarship Winner:
Chue Yee Yang, Elk Mound – going back to school for computer and electrical engineering at UW-Stout

Converting a Regular Home to a Smart One: IS IT WORTH IT?



Depending on your age, your techie factor, or even your interests, you may or may not be excited at the thought of installing smart devices in your home. Having a “smart home” or even a semi-smart one can help make many of the tasks we do each day less time consuming and possibly even more fun.

So what, exactly, are smart homes? They are houses that have a number of interconnected devices (lights, thermostats, fans, window shades, speakers, etc.) and home appliances that perform certain actions or functions on their own after programming.

You can program your shades to shut at night, your thermostat to change when it senses no one is home, and to feed the dog at a specific time.

If all your devices are interconnected, you can run them from one place, like on your tablet or cell phone. And if you have voice-assisted technology (think Alexa or Siri), you can just use your words, and presto!—the coffee maker starts or your lights turn on or off.

In many upper-end markets, buyers can consider a new home that is already smart. For the rest of us, it can cost a lot to upgrade our entire home with multiple smart devices. But if your house has not yet arrived on the smart scene, there are ways to increase your home’s “smartness.”

You can start small. SmartThings is a company that offers a wide variety of devices that can help you automate your home. You start with a hub, or brain, for your home and add what you want to automate from there. You can start with adding occupancy sensors for room lighting or a thermostat that learns your routines. You can go as far as adding home security to the mix, with cameras, doorbells, and automatic locks. (12473002)

You see, a smart home doesn’t always have to be about the sound system, a refrigerator that tells you when you’re out of milk, or a plant monitor that tells you when your plant needs to be watered. (Oh, yes. They make those!)

Your system can alert you to water in the basement or when your doors are being opened when no one is supposed to be there. A smart home isn’t for everybody, but in the right situations can come in handy. Whether or not upgrading to a smart home is worth it, is completely up to the homeowner.

Options for Upgrading to a Smarter Home

Don’t have the budget to make all the devices in your home smart and interconnected? Consider these stand-alone items that could help you save money on your utility bill:

- **Smart thermostats** usually cost in the \$200 to \$300 range. With an estimated cost savings of around 10 percent on energy costs, this smart device could pay for itself in just a year or two depending on where you live and your indoor comfort preferences. (Of course, actual savings depend on heating and cooling habits prior to smart thermostat installation and how you use it after the fact.)
- **Smart plugs** allow you to plug in an appliance and track its energy use. Seeing how much energy your old garage refrigerator uses may motivate you to give it the old heave-ho. These intelligent plugs are relatively inexpensive compared to other smart gadgets (they cost around \$30 to \$50)

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and they also allow you to control an appliance or gadget remotely. This saves money on energy since you can turn things off remotely instead of leaving that light or coffee maker on all day.

- For a little more money, **higher-end energy monitoring devices** give real-time feedback on energy consumption and track your energy stats (kind of like a fitness tracker for your home); these typically cost between \$200 and \$300 but can make a real difference in your energy bills if you make adjustments based on feedback.
- **Smart lighting** allows you to take advantage of higher tech motion sensors and dimmers, which means using less energy to light (or should we say not light?) your home.
- **Smart bulbs** help save money because they are internet-capable LED bulbs that allow lighting to be controlled remotely. If your teen or spouse is always leaving the lights on in an empty house, you can turn them off from your phone.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



The Power of Change OPERATION ROUND UP HELPS AREA SOFTBALL TEAM

The Menomonie Jr. Mustangs softball team applied for and was awarded an Operation Round Up grant for protective gear for the team. On June 7 the team thanked organizations that supported them throughout the year. We also got to watch the girls in action!

Operation Round Up® uses the power of cooperation to provide much-needed grant dollars for community projects, 501©3 organizations, and non-profit groups within the Dunn Energy Cooperative service territory.

If you, or a group you are a part of, are interested in applying for an Operation Round Up grant, you can find the application and our Giving Guidelines on our website at www.dunnenergy.com or by emailing Jolene for an application at jolene@dunnenergy.com. Grant applications are due March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31, and reviewed shortly thereafter.

Thank you for your interest. Let's show the community the Power of Change!

\$\$ FOR HIDDEN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

If your account number is one of the two hidden account numbers in this issue, it will mean \$50 credit on your account if you call the office before the end of the month. Two customer account numbers have been randomly selected and are hidden in the Dunn Energy Cooperative section of this *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*. Last month's winners were Cory Pember and Brian and Staci Hanson.



James Hathaway, Manager

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Jolene Neisius, Editor



"Energy Through Excellence"

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