



**Dunn Energy  
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



By **Jesse Singerhouse,**  
General Manager

## YOUR COOPERATIVE IN ACTION

For the first few months of each year the board of directors and staff at Dunn Energy Cooperative spend time looking back at the previous year as well as beginning to plan for the year ahead. For staff it's a unique time. We are wrapping up on activities from 2019, completing required reports for various state and federal

agencies, and prepping for our annual audit which takes place in early March. At the same time, we are beginning the work of our 2020 operational and strategic plans. In reality we spend the last few months of each year and the beginning few months of the current year working on projects for both years.

The actual end for work on the previous year culminates at the annual meeting each year. This year our annual meeting will take place on Saturday, March 21, at the Off Broadway Banquet Center/Stout Ale House in north Menomonie. Registration will begin at 11:30 a.m. We welcome members to come anytime between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to have lunch, which is served buffet style. We have some entertainment planned to start at 12:30 p.m. and our business meeting will begin at 1 p.m.

Why does your cooperative have an annual meeting? Well, most importantly, it is required in our bylaws that we hold an annual meeting of the members. Secondly, it is a great way to see your cooperative in action. You'll hear reports from our board president, get an overview of financial performance for the year, meet scholarship winners, and have a chance to interact with cooperative staff. (6225001)

Having a business that is structured as a cooperative is a great thing. While we are still a private company, which competes for territory and business on behalf of its members, we are set up as a cooperative in our business structure. That means the board of directors is made up of members of the cooperative. That means that we operate in the best interest of the membership as a whole, and it means that when we make a profit it is returned to

the members who did business with the cooperative or invested to make the services those members receive even stronger. Another benefit of being a cooperative member is the ability to vote for who you would like to represent you on the board of directors. Look for ballots in your mailboxes in early March.

Your electric cooperative had a good year in 2019. In the energy business, like in several other types of businesses, the weather plays a huge role in our revenue and expenses for the year. The colder it is in the winter and the warmer it is in the summer will determine how much energy we sell in a year. With a cooler than normal summer and a mild fall, our sales and revenue were below

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budget. We worked hard to keep expenses in check for the year, so overall the year ended well. The bills got paid, projects to improve the quality of service you receive were completed, and we ended the year with positive margins. So, all in all, it was another good year for Dunn Energy Cooperative.

Looking ahead to 2020, we've begun work on a new four-year work plan, which identifies projects such as wire upgrades or line changes that will keep our system strong. We are also working on a strategic plan that will help us identify ways we can run the cooperative better, grow the cooperative in a positive way, and transform the cooperative to meet the energy needs of the future.

It's an exciting time to be in the energy business. Things like electric vehicles, smart homes, and renewable energy will reshape our business in the years to come. One thing that won't change, however, is our commitment to our members and our community. The values of service, commitment, innovation, and integrity are rooted deep in our cooperative and its employees.

Thank you for being a member of Dunn Energy Cooperative. I look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting on Saturday March 21! I hope you'll join us.

### Hidden Account Numbers

The incentive to find your account number has increased! 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 Boon and Maila Xiong and Ze Hang.



# YOU SPOKE AND WE LISTENED...



In August we emailed a member survey out to nearly 3,000 people, and received responses from approximately 700. We've had some time to comb through the comments and will be answering some of the more common questions and concerns here in the magazine.

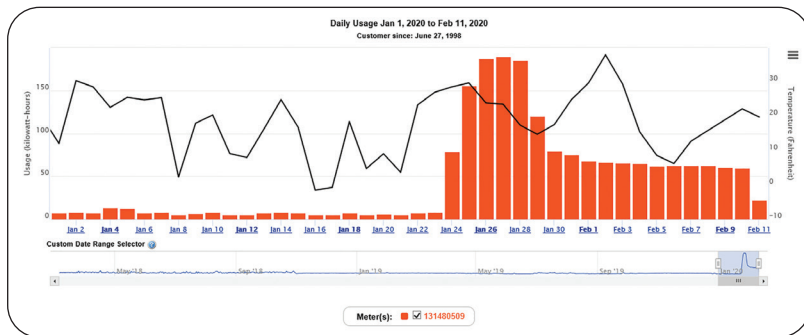
**Question:** My bill seems really high. Is there a way for me to troubleshoot my high bill before I call you?

**Answer:** You bet there is! Get your Sherlock hat out. We're about to create a "Choose Your Own Adventure" story.

### What you'll need:

- 1. Pencil and Paper.**
- 2. SmartHub.** We highly suggest logging in or signing up for an account before you begin, so you can see what your daily usage looks like. You'll need to look at your history to get a good idea of what average is for you. You can also see when your usage started to climb. (You may want to ask yourself if it coincides with the weather. If so, you probably just figured out the answer to your question) But sometimes it's a little harder than that. This is where the breaker test comes in.
- 3. A partner** to help you.
- 4. Maybe some walkie talkies** to communicate while you're doing the test. Okay, maybe just your cell phones if you aren't within hollering distance from each other.

First, log in to your account and see if you spot any anomalies. This one is a good example:



You can tell that something obvious happened on January 24 for this member. Did someone spend some time at the cabin without telling them? Did a pipe burst? Did their well pump

spring a leak? We don't know, but this was the first step in the investigation.

Before you start step one of the breaker test, shut off all of your sensitive electronics. Because their usage is so low, it won't matter that they're off for this test.

Now, let's get started. One of you will need to station yourself by the breaker box and flip breakers and the other of you will watch your meter and record numbers.

The new meters flash through a series of four screens with different information. The one you'll want to focus on is IKW. It will tell you the Instant Kilowatts you are using.

Flip off all of the high-use breakers:

- Hard-wired electric heat (i.e baseboards, Steffes storage units, electric boilers, etc.)
- Central air conditioning
- Electric water heater
- Well pump and septic pump

With those shut off, you should have your baseload. For the average home on our lines, that's going to be approximately 1,000 kilowatts. Homes are like fingerprints though. So, yours may be higher or lower than this. Also keep in mind, this number does not include your shop, garage, shed, extra living quarters, green house, or the camper plugged in out back. This is strictly an average home. If it is WAY over this number, you probably have something plugged in that you've forgotten about. This is your first adventure. You'll have to do some investigating from here on out to find it.

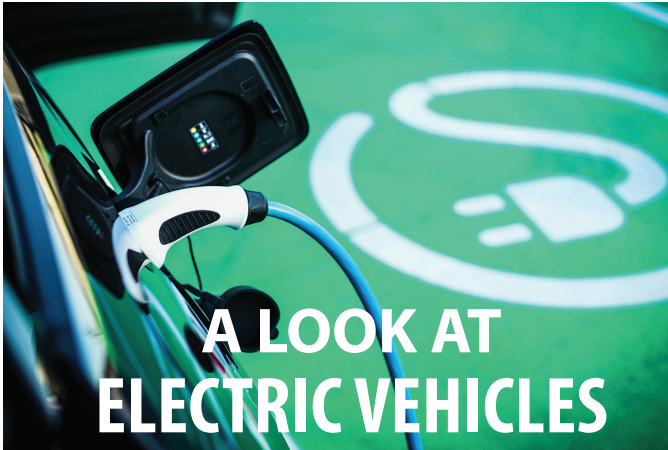
Is there heating tape still plugged in and on pipes? A humidifier or dehumidifier running somewhere? Heat tape for eaves and gutters still on? A tractor plugged in out in the barn? Stock tank heaters on? A heat lamp for the chickens on? A space heater in someone's bedroom on?

If you think your number looks relatively average for you, based on your SmartHub history, you can now start turning breakers back on. Record what is being turned back on and the IKW as it increases with each breaker.

Now, it's time to wait. Has each item that you've turned back on run its regular cycle and shut back off? If not, you've narrowed down your culprit. Is the well pump still running? Has the heat or AC cycled off?

If they have, it's time for the next adventure. Look at the numbers you've written down and see if they're drawing what they're supposed to draw. You may have to do a little Googling to find that out. The average usage for some items can be found in the Use Energy Wisely booklet on our website. You can find it by clicking on Energy Sense.

Figuring out a high bill isn't always easy, but it's oh-so-satisfying when your amateur sleuthing pays off. If you've done everything you can think of and can't come up with an answer, give us a call. We're here to help. Obviously, we won't know what's in your house that needs to be turned off, but we sure can help you by telling you about the most common culprits of a truly high bill.



## A LOOK AT ELECTRIC VEHICLES

**E**lectric vehicle owners want cooperatives to help put more EVs on the road by making it easier for drivers to charge their batteries and offering them discounted rates for power, according to a new National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) study created in partnership with E Source.

“EV owners want their energy utilities to play a role in expanding the EV community,” wrote Brian Sloboda, NRECA’s director of consumer solutions, in a report summarizing the findings of the consumer study.

Specifically, EV owners would like their utilities to help make it easier to purchase in-home chargers by offering information, rebates, or help with installation, according to the study. (6593002)

They also want discounts for charging their vehicles during non-peak hours and for owning EVs, which benefit utilities by boosting the demand for electricity. Demand has been stagnant across much of the nation because of increased energy efficiency, and many utilities see EVs as a way to help reverse that trend.

Some co-ops already offer special rates to EV users who agree to charge their vehicles overnight, when overall demand is low. Others provide financial incentives to EV users to buy

smart chargers that allow co-ops to have some control over when those vehicles are being recharged. Dunn Energy has both a reduced rate and rebate incentives for EV chargers on load control.

“The type of program implemented will vary greatly from one co-op to another,” Sloboda wrote. “This will be based on market readiness and acceptance of the technology.”

To assess EV consumers’ attitudes, NRECA partnered with E Source, a consulting company based in Boulder, Colorado, that provides research for utilities and their customers on a wide range of topics. The EV study used focus groups and detailed observations of a small sample of customers in their daily lives.

Co-ops can play a big role in educating their consumer-members about EVs, especially since auto dealers and car manufacturers have been “strangely absent” in getting the word out, the report said.

“There are several factors that accelerate the path to EV ownership that energy utilities could potentially help influence,” Sloboda wrote. “The range of programs runs the spectrum from educational materials on the co-op’s website to EV loaner programs to give people the experience of driving an EV.”

For example, Dunn Energy sponsors an EV Experience each spring at Chippewa Valley Technical College’s Energy Education Center in Eau Claire with other local cooperatives. This year’s event will be on April 4 with registration beginning at 8 a.m. and a keynote speaker at 9 a.m. From 9:30-noon attendants can ride and drive different electric vehicles from a Tesla to a Chevy Bolt. (*See notice on following page.*)

Quite a few co-ops own EVs that they allow their members to test-drive. Many EV owners experience “love at first drive” and are passionate advocates of their vehicles, convincing friends and family members to try them, the report said.

“EV owners feel as if they are part of a close-knit community,” Sloboda wrote. “They often share information and lessons. The co-op could help to facilitate the sense of community by sponsoring EV events for owners and potential owners.”

## DEADLINE FOR OPERATION ROUNDUP APPLICATIONS NEAR

**The next deadline for Operation Round Up grant applications is Sunday, March 31, 2020.**

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](http://www.dunnenergy.com) or by emailing Jolene for an application at [jolene@dunnenergy.com](mailto: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!





# Second Annual EV Experience!

**Saturday April 4, 2020**

Chippewa Valley Technical College • Energy Education Center  
4000 Campus Road • Eau Claire, WI 54703

**Drive and learn about electric vehicles  
and other smart electric choices.**

8:00AM Registration, Coffee & Refreshments

9:00AM Keynote Speaker

9:30AM-Noon Ride and Drive EVs

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