

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* December 2023 NEWS



Price Electric
Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

EVERGLEAM, EVER HOPEFUL

MAKING HISTORY, FILLING A NEED

ENERGY-SAVING GADGETS AND GIZMOS

BEST OF KIDS AND CRITTERS





STAY SAFE

AS YOU GO OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The winter holiday season is a busy time of year for many of us. Along with putting out decorations and baking cookies, we often spend more time in our cars than usual: shopping for presents, traveling to family gatherings, or attending holiday events. However, all that time in the car can also mean facing extreme weather conditions that can make safe driving difficult.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, winter weather conditions such as snow, sleet, and slush cause more than 550,000 traffic accidents each year, leading to approximately 138,000 injuries and 1,700 fatalities.

Along with risk of injury, possible damage to your vehicle, and plain inconvenience, collisions may also involve downed power lines or other electrical hazards. Unfortunately, when this happens, it adds another very significant danger to the mix that can cause severe shock, burns, or electrocution. Knowing what to do in this situation can be critical.

If you are in an accident involving a downed power line:






- Call 9-1-1, and tell the dispatcher a downed power line or other electrical equipment is involved in a collision. Power company personnel will be dispatched to the scene to deenergize the power.
- Put your window down and alert others not to approach the scene. They could be shocked or electrocuted if they walk or run over the energized area or touch anything that is energized.
- Never attempt to drive over a power line or through water, snow, or other debris that could be hiding one. There is no way to tell if a power line is energized, even if it is not sparking or buzzing.
- Do not exit the vehicle UNLESS the vehicle is on fire or you see smoke. The vehicle acts as an insulator that keeps you safe from stray electricity.
- If you MUST exit the vehicle, cross your arms across your chest, put your feet together, and make a clean jump from the vehicle. Then hop with feet together as far as you can—at least 50 feet away. Once a power line is in contact with a car or truck, the ground, or other objects, it energizes the area. The electrical current spreads to the vehicle and ground, and it ripples out. Each “ring” of the ripple represents a different voltage. Stepping from one voltage to the next can cause your body to become a path for electricity and electrocute you.
- If a power line is inside the vehicle due to damage or an open window, stay in the vehicle. DO NOT touch or try to move the wire. DO NOT attempt to use other objects to move it.
- If your vehicle collides with a pad-mounted transformer, which houses electrical equipment connected to underground power lines, the same precautions apply.

Keep your family safe while on the road this holiday season! For more information about safety around electricity, go to SafeElectricity.org.

Preparing for Storm Season?

DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:

-  Snowbrush
Shovel
Windshield washer fluid
Cat litter for traction
-  Warm clothing
Blankets
Drinking water
Nonperishable foods
-  Properly inflated spare tire
Wheel wrench & tripod jack
Jumper cables
Fire extinguisher
-  Reflective triangles
Reflective vest
Brightly colored cloth (to tie on side mirror)
-  First-aid kit
Flashlight and batteries
Compass
Car charger for cell phone

 Source: NSC



A YEAR OF RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION



Jeff Olson, President/CEO

As we reflect on the past year, it's evident that Price Electric Cooperative (PEC) has not just weathered the storms of 2023 but has thrived amid challenging circumstances. With a commitment to providing safe and reliable energy services to our members, we have demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and a spirit of innovation that has allowed PEC to emerge stronger than ever.

Unprecedented For those of you who were at PEC's annual meeting this past June or have had a conversation with me, you know that I have been using the word "unprecedented" frequently when describing the past couple of years. 2023 brought its fair share of challenges to PEC, and not surprisingly, supply-chain issues continue to plague the electric industry as well as most industries across the country. However, PEC was not only prepared but also proactive in addressing this challenge through creative ordering, leaning on established relationships, and forward thinking. Additionally, severe storms have hit PEC hard and tested our team, but we have been up to the task, sometimes working long hours in difficult conditions to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

PEC experienced two major storms in July, one from July 3 to July 4, and the other from July 27 to July 29, and both took a significant effort by our line crews to restore power.

The cooperative's management and dedicated staff have adapted to the ever-changing situations, keeping our members' needs at the forefront because we work for you.

Strategic Plan This past year marked the start of our implementation of PEC's strategic plan, which was developed by the board of directors and staff late last year. This plan includes five main areas with supporting objectives; these are: 1) Empowering Members Through Technology, 2) Evaluating Diversification Opportunities, 3) Substation Infrastructure Improvements, 4) Board and Employee Development, and 5) Empowering Members Through Education. This plan was

developed with our members and the future of the electric grid in mind.

Investing in Infrastructure Price Electric has long recognized the importance of having a robust and resilient infrastructure. To ensure a steady supply of electricity to our members, the cooperative develops and carries out a five-year construction work plan which is a key part of the cooperative's annual work budget.

One notable initiative is the Ogema Solar Project, which began construction this summer and is currently ahead of schedule. This is a 1.4MW array that will generate enough energy on sunny days to supply the energy needs of roughly 320 homes. This project will save the entire PEC membership approximately \$26,000 annually.

Furthermore, PEC is working on modernizing its power distribution grid to increase reliability and reduce the risk of outages. PEC is making this happen by installing smart grid technologies, allowing for more efficient monitoring and management of the electrical grid. This, in turn, enhances the speed at which issues can be detected and resolved.

We also upgraded our IT infrastructure for reliability and improved cyber security with new network switches and firewalls as we continue to monitor and protect your data and the overall operation of Price Electric.

A Focus on Sustainability Exploring options for sustainable energy is crucial in today's environment, and PEC is aware of this and making strides in this area. One such endeavor is the expansion of energy-efficient programs for members. We are working on revamping our energy-saving incentives and reviewing our water heater and electric heating rebates. By helping our members reduce their energy consumption, the cooperative not only lowers energy costs for households but also reduces the overall demand on the grid.

PEC installed and commissioned an electric vehicle (EV) fast charger at the Prentice Truck and Travel Center this past year, which is now providing high-speed EV charging in the Northwoods.

Commitment to Community One of the seven principles of a cooperative is Commitment to Community, and PEC believes and supports this principle wholeheartedly. Over



the past year, we have continued to work on strengthening our ties with the local communities we serve. We hosted a high-voltage demonstration for Wisconsin state employees to promote safety around electricity and are working on scheduling more of these with other entities in the future.

We are in the process of developing a 7-acre pollinator garden adjacent to the PEC office building that will not only provide a habitat for butterfly species and other wildlife but will also include a walking path which will be open for community members to access.

PEC also continued its philanthropic efforts. We supported local charities, schools, and community projects, embodying the cooperative principle of "Concern for Community." These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to being an active and responsible member of the community.

Member Owned On June 8, 2023, PEC held its 83rd Annual Meeting at Phillips High School, and on October 14, 2023, we held our largest Breakfast in the Northland event here at our headquarters with over 350 members and guests served.

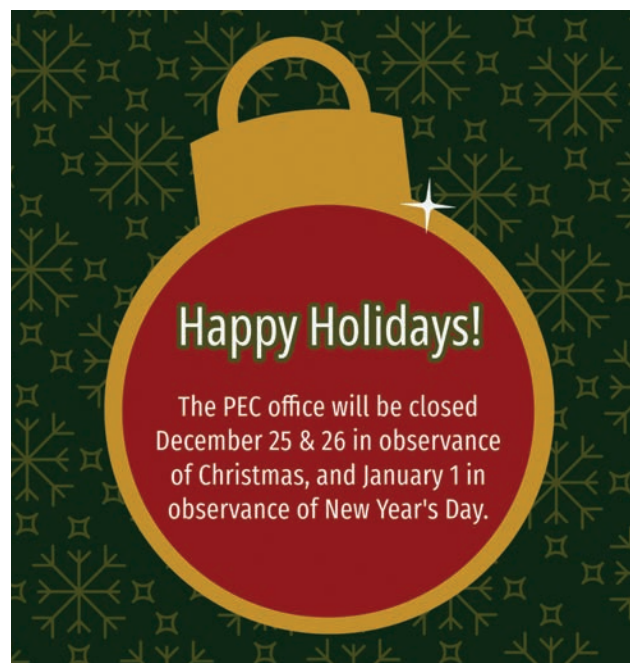
As a cooperative, we return money, or capital credits, to our members on a 28-year cycle. This year we were able to retire

a sizeable amount, approximately \$300,000 through general retirement and an estimated \$140,000 in estate retirements.

In response to the evolving needs of our members, PEC introduced new and enhanced services throughout the year. Budget billing and scheduled payments were implemented earlier this year and offer our members flexibility with payment options. These are available through Smart Hub along with many other features.

The past year has been a testament to the cooperative's unwavering commitment to its members and the communities we serve. Faced with challenges ranging from continuing fallout from the global pandemic to extreme weather events, the cooperative displayed resilience, adaptability, and a steadfast dedication to innovation.

Through strategic infrastructure investments, a focus on sustainability, community engagement, and member-centric services, PEC not only navigated a challenging year but emerged as a stronger, more sustainable, and community-focused organization. Our achievements demonstrate the cooperative principles that have guided our mission for decades, proving that even in the face of adversity, we remain dedicated to powering a brighter future for our members.





Price Electric Puzzler

How closely are you reading the *WEC News*? Find the answer to the question below for your chance to receive a \$25 bill credit. Drop off or mail your answer to Price Electric or email your answer to memberservices@PriceElectric.coop. A winner will be drawn from all correct entries the last day of the month.



How many times per year should vehicle emergency kits be checked?

Answer

Name

Account Number

Phone

Email

Please return to Price Electric Cooperative,
P.O. Box 110,
Phillips, WI, 54555



**UPGRADE
COMING
SOON!**




Smart Hub will be upgraded to an enhanced design in early February. This new version of Smart Hub puts your usage and payment details front and center for fast, easy access, and the simplified menu structure makes navigating the site easy.




Price Electric Cooperative
PriceElectric.coop
800-884-0881

REBATE REMINDER

As of November 1, 2023, \$85,069.00 has been distributed through the Smart Sense Rebate Program. Submit 2023 rebates by Wednesday, December 27, 2023. Qualified items purchased after this date will receive the 2024 rebate amount, if available.

2024



2024 CALENDARS ARE IN!

Stop by the PEC office to pick one up.

Jeff Olson, President/CEO

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Amy Klimowski, Editor



Price Electric Cooperative

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