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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* June 2024 NEWS



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SPOTTING ENERGY SCAMS

Consumers with water, gas, and electricity connections have long been targets for utility scams. But in today’s digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams.

Scammers are more sophisticated than ever before, and they understand our increasing reliance on technology. With their sharpened digital knives, scammers have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting consumers through a variety of methods. PEC wants to help you avoid energy scams, whether a financial loss or leak of your personal information.

Recent Utility Scams

Scammers typically disguise themselves—either physically or digitally—as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers’ money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer’s bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn’t received immediately. Scammers approach consumers through a variety of means, including phone calls, text messages, emails, and even in-person visits. However, the digital line of attack is increasingly more common.

For example, new capabilities disguising caller ID or “spoofing” can make the phone number you see on caller ID appear to be from a trusted source. Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you because it’s more difficult to immediately verify the call. Another recent scam uses fraudulent websites that are identical to a utility payment webpage—and what’s worse, these pages are often promoted on search engines to trick consumers into clicking and making a payment.

Another recent scam involves phone calls, text messages, or emails claiming you overpaid your electric bill and will receive a cash or banking refund. This offer may seem too good to be true, and it is—it’s likely a scam aimed to steal your personal information.

Spotting a Scam

There are several red flags you can watch for to identify an energy scam.

Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency, like claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn’t made immediately.

Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, it’s likely a scam.

You’ve probably noticed that many digital scams, like emails or text messages, include poor grammar, spelling

errors, and odd email addresses. These are red flags, so when you see these dodgy forms of communication, consider it a potential scam.

What PEC Will (and Won’t) Do

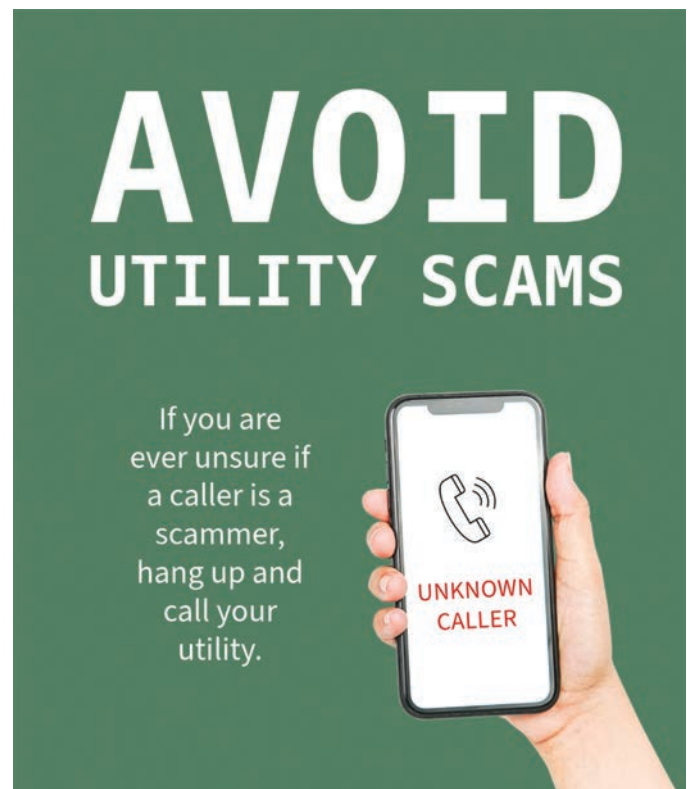
PEC will never demand an instant, immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without prior notice or warnings. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our members to avoid disconnects.

PEC will never ask for your banking details over the phone or through email. We offer several secure payment options, including in-person, through Smart Hub, or our secure pay-by-phone system.

Avoiding Scams

Whether in-person, over the phone, or online, always be suspicious of an unknown individual claiming to be a PEC employee demanding banking or other personal information.

If you’re ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, just give us a quick call at 800-884-0881 so we can assist.



FINANCE MANAGER FAREWELL NEW EMPLOYEE WELCOME

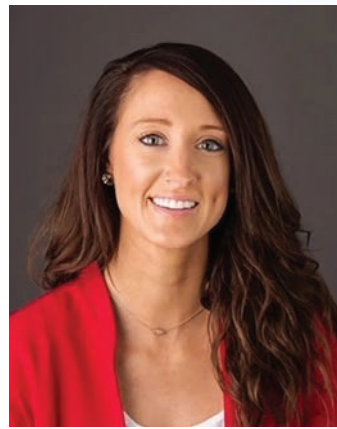


Loren Erickson, PEC's finance manager, retired on May 31, 2024, after nine years of service at PEC, eight of which were as the finance manager. Loren has enjoyed working with the employees at PEC, meeting members at the annual meetings, fall breakfast, and through day-to-day activities.

Loren is looking forward to spending more time with his wife Cindy, kids, and grandkids. He also plans to do more camping this summer, explore Wisconsin, and travel throughout the country.

Thank you, Loren, for your dedication to PEC's members and the finance department. We wish you all the best in your retirement.

Shelby Biermann joined the PEC team in April as a consumer service representative. Shelby grew up in Stetsonville and attended Northcentral Technical College where she earned an associate degree in Sign Language Interpreting. Shelby lives in Ogema with her husband. She enjoys working outside in her flower beds and birdwatching.



PEC also welcomed **Samantha Bosacki** to the team in April as the new executive assistant/human resource administrator. Samantha is a Phillips High School graduate, and attended UW-Stout where she earned a bachelor's degree in business

administration. In her free time, Samantha enjoys spending time outdoors and with her family.

Congratulations to Loren on his retirement, and welcome, Shelby and Samantha!

2024 MEMBER PHOTO CONTEST

The PEC photo contest is still open for the 2025 calendar! Submit your best photos by July 31, 2024, to be entered!

Photo Contest Criteria:

- Photos must be taken within the Price Electric Cooperative service area.
- Photos should capture life in northern Wisconsin (seasons, wildlife, landscape, etc.)
- Photos must have a horizontal (landscape) orientation.
- Photos can be in color or black and white.
- Photos must be high resolution—at least 300 dpi and 8"x10".

Photo Contest Rules and Details:

- Three (3) photos per member will be accepted.
- All PEC members 18 years and up are eligible to submit photos.
- A PEC member under 18 is eligible to participate but must submit a parent/guardian form with entry.
- A completed entry form must accompany each photo.
- Member must own rights to photo.
- PEC employees and PEC's Facebook page will determine the winning photos.

**Entry forms and parent/guardian forms can be found on the PEC website, picked up at the PEC office, or emailed upon request*



HEAT UP THE GRILL

TO SAVE ENERGY THIS SUMMER

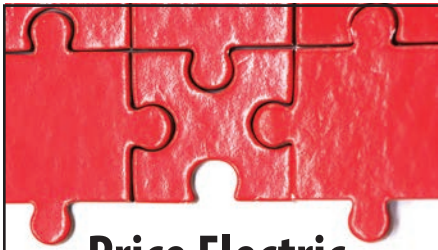
Nothing screams summer more than firing up the grill.

The good news is that using your grill in the great outdoors helps lower your energy bill. If you cook outside, less energy is needed to cool your kitchen.

- Nearly 70% of Americans own a grill.
- The Fourth of July is the most popular holiday for outdoor cooking.
- The hamburger is the favorite item to grill.
- The all-American hot dog gets the most votes from kids.
- More men grill than women.
- Grilling and barbecuing are not the same thing.
- Grilling means cooking over a fire, hot and fast.
- Barbecuing means cooking slowly over indirect heat.

Source: Breo Box

Safe Electricity.org



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.

Last month's Puzzler winner was Donna Schmidt.



When is PEC's 2024 annual meeting?

Answer _____

Name _____

Account Number _____

Phone _____

Email _____

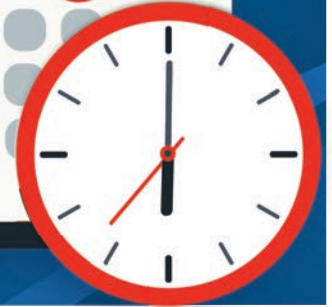
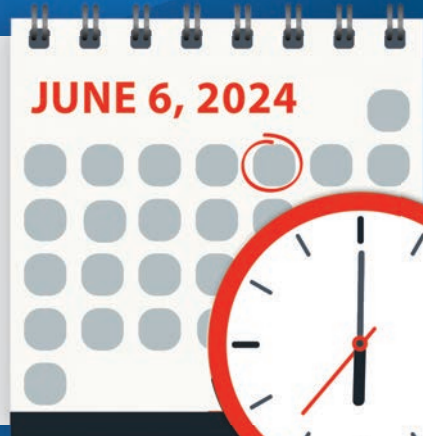
Please return to Price Electric Cooperative,
P.O. Box 110, Phillips, WI, 54555

ANNUAL MEETING REMINDER

PEC's annual meeting is Thursday, June 6, 2024, at Phillips High school.

Dinner: 5 p.m.
Business Meeting: 6 p.m.

JUNE 6, 2024



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Did you know ceiling fans can help you save energy? Ceiling fans create a windchill effect on your skin to make you feel a few degrees cooler. Raise the thermostat a few degrees and turn on fans to reduce air-conditioning costs.

Set fan blades to rotate counterclockwise during summer months and clockwise during winter months. Remember, ceiling fans cool people but don't actually lower the indoor temperature. Turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: energy.gov



Know what's below.

Before you dig, call 811 or visit call811.com to have underground utility lines marked.

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Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.

Amy Klimowski, Editor



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