

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* January 2026 NEWS



Price Electric
Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

QUILTS, COMMUNITY,
AND CREATIVITY
BIND IN WITTENBERG

PICKING WINNERS AND SOLAR LOSERS

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

SHEET PAN RECIPES



**Jeff Olson,
President/CEO**

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

As we reflect on the past 12 months at Price Electric Cooperative, I am proud of the progress we've made in advancing our mission to provide access to safe, reliable, and affordable electric service for our members. This reflects our commitment to innovation, community, and safety, and we couldn't accomplish any of this without

teamwork. Price Electric employees are dedicated and well trained. When there is a major storm, it's all hands-on deck and as you know, they work tirelessly to restore your power as quickly and safely as possible, much of the time in nasty weather.

Infrastructure Improvements

Each year, we focus on enhancing our infrastructure to ensure a reliable and efficient electrical grid. Several years ago, we entered into a collaborative agreement with Charter/Spectrum, enabling them to attach their fiber to our poles. As part of this partnership, they invested in upgrading our infrastructure to meet line clearance requirements. Over the past two years, we have enjoyed the benefits of these system enhancements. Looking ahead, this partnership will continue to offer us significant advantages, including annual, recurring revenue and expanded broadband internet access for our members in the southern half of our service territory.

Maintaining our right-of-way (ROW) is vital for reducing outages and ensuring power line reliability. Last year, we cleared approximately 162 miles of ROW, significantly supporting uninterrupted service for our members. Over the course of the year, we also installed 77 new services, retired 34 services, and added 3 miles of energized power lines.

Generac and ETS Services

We have two electricians that are factory trained in Generac generators and Steffes Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) units. Since PEC's Generac program's inception, we have installed approximately 150 generators and performed over 200 annual maintenance services. This program ensures our members have access to reliable backup power, enhancing safety and security. Additionally, we have expanded our offerings to include the service, sale, and installation of ETS units. Although our ETS services are relatively new, they are part of our broader strategy to offer diverse and reliable electric heating solutions for our members.

Member Engagement

Empowering our members with knowledge is at the heart of our cooperative values. Over the past year, we kicked off a new member outreach initiative called "Watts & Brats," where we hosted three events across our service territory. All three events were well attended with lots of interaction and a light meal for everyone. We are continuing these events again next year, so watch the *WECN* magazine, Facebook, and our website for our 2026 dates and locations.

This past year we upgraded our website, making it more intuitive and easier to find information about your cooperative. There is plenty of information for you at www.PriceElectric.coop that will keep you up-to-date on what is happening at Price Electric.

These efforts aim to help you make informed decisions about your energy use and maximize the benefits of your cooperative membership.

Commitment to Community

Our commitment to the community is unwavering. We continue to support local initiatives through sponsorships, scholarships for students, donations, and participation in community events. This winter we are co-sponsoring the Phillips Flurry snowshoe race with Norvado, two rural cooperatives working together for our communities. We will continue to seek other opportunities to work together for our common members. We provided \$11,000 in student scholarships and over \$52,000 in rebates. You may have seen one of our trucks in a local parade or two as well.

In October, National Cooperative Month, we hosted our annual "Breakfast in the Northland," achieving a record attendance of 337 members. The event featured a successful recycling initiative, vaccines administered by Price County Health, and a generous donation to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, thanks to members' contributions of non-perishable food items. During the breakfast, I received a great suggestion from a member to put out a container for cash donations for those who forgot to bring a food item, which resulted in the collection of approximately \$120. Thank you for your support!

These efforts foster a strong cooperative spirit and contribute to the well-being of the communities we serve.

Technological Advancements

In today's digital age, embracing technology is essential. We have been working on implementing smart grid solutions, which will provide data and remote-control capabilities allowing for more efficient response to outages, ultimately shortening outage times. SmartHub is one of our digital platforms that provides our members with better service options, such as online account management that allows you to see your usage, pay online, and now you can report an outage and receive notifications.

These advancements are designed to improve member experience and streamline our operations.

Safety and Training

The safety of our employees and members is paramount, period. We have conducted regular safety training programs and drills to ensure high safety standards across each department. These measures are essential in maintaining a safe environment for everyone involved. The fact that safety is our number one priority is demonstrated by the award that our Operations Manager received this past November, the Herman C. Potthast award for safety and training. Congratulations, Ben!

In April we hosted two safety (high voltage) demonstrations for local firefighters, law enforcement, and Price County employees where we demonstrated the dangers of electricity, specifically our power lines delivering electricity to your homes. Remember, if you see power lines on the road, stay away and call 911! We are planning on coordinating with the schools in our service territory to bring this safety demonstration to our children and young adults.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the past year has been one of growth and progress for Price Electric Cooperative. We are excited about the future and remain committed to serving our members with excellence and integrity. Thank you for your continued support and trust in our cooperative.

SMART SENSE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

PEC's Smart Sense program provides members with incentives for promoting energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy at homes, farms, and businesses served by the cooperative.

Appliances

Air Purifier – Capped at 50% of cost	\$75
All-In-One Washer/Dryer*	\$125
Clothes Dryer (electric)*	\$75
Clothes Washer*	\$75
Dehumidifier* – Capped at 50% of cost	\$75
Dishwasher*	\$75
Freezer*	\$75
Inductive Range	\$75
Refrigerator*	\$75
Appliance Recycling: Freezer, Refrigerator, Room A/C	\$25

*Must be ENERGY STAR certified

Energy Conservation

Residential Energy Audit	\$500
Compressed Air Audit	\$500
Electric Sense® Home Program – New Construction Only	\$500
Audit Recommended Improvements	\$500
Solar (PV) System	\$500

Program Notes:

- Rebates must be submitted within 3 months of purchase or installation.
- Rebate eligibility may be subject to additional requirements. See the rebate form for complete qualifications.
- Rebates are not to exceed the cost of the incentive item.
- Rebates are offered for properties served by the cooperative.
- Funds are limited. Submit required documentation as soon as possible.
- Incentive program is subject to change or cancellation without notice.

Contact PEC for more information or to claim your rebate.

Email: MemberServices@PriceElectric.coop

Phone: 715-339-2155

HVAC

Electric Boiler	\$50/kW
ETS Unit	\$150/kW
Heat Pump: Air Source & Mini Split	\$400/ton
Heat Pump: Commercial Air Source & PTHPs	\$400/ton
Heat Pump: Geothermal	\$600/ton
New Furnace with Efficient ECM Blower Motor	\$50
Plenum Heater	\$50/kW
Smart Thermostat	\$75

Lighting

LED Fixture	\$1.00 per 800 lumens
LED Bulbs – *Minimum of 5	\$1.00/each
LED Exit Sign	\$5/sign
Occupancy Sensor	\$5/each

*Capped at 50% of Cost

Water Heaters

Residential, 50-74 gallons	\$250
Residential, 75+ gallons	\$1,000
Commercial, 75+ gallons	\$1,000
Heat Pump Water Heater	\$700

*75+ gallon water heaters must enroll in PEC's load management program to be eligible for the rebate.

Ag/Commercial/Industrial

Dairy Plate Cooler/Well Water Pre-Cooler	\$500
Dairy Refrigeration Heat Recovery with Electric Backup	\$600
Electric Forklift Battery Charger	\$200
Circulation Fan	\$3/inch
Exhaust Fan	\$4/inch
Low-Energy Livestock Waterer	\$90
Zero-Energy Livestock Waterer	\$110
Scroll Refrigerator Compressor	\$50/HP
Variable Frequency Drive – Ag Primary Use Water System	\$80/HP
Variable Frequency Drive – Ag Secondary Use Water System	\$65/HP
Variable Frequency Drive – Irrigation Well Pump	\$65/HP
Variable Frequency Drive – Ventilation/Circulation Fan	\$65/HP
Variable Frequency Drive – Process Pump	\$65/HP
Variable Frequency Drive – Constant Torque	\$50/HP
High Volume Low Speed (HVLS) Fan	\$50/fan
Dairy Refrigeration Tune-up	\$50

HONORING DEDICATION:

BEN ORYSEN RECEIVES THE 2025 HERMAN C. POTTHAST AWARD

Ben Orysen, Price Electric Cooperative operations manager, was selected as the recipient of the 2025 Herman C. Potthast Award. The Job Training & Safety (JT&S) Committee selected Orysen for outstanding service, dedication, leadership, and cooperation, with an emphasis on safety.

Orysen was nominated by Dave Karcz of Karcz Utility Services. The company contracts with utilities throughout the Midwest offering services including utility inspections, mapping, and maintenance. Karcz said Orysen is an obvious choice for the Potthast Award.

“The line superintendent position is a tough job, torn between line crews, office staff, contractors, and members. They never completely unplug from work and carry a heavy stress load. Ben goes above and beyond from my perspective,” he said, adding that, “Until recently, Price did not have a GIS person. Ben had been running the GIS along with performing his line superintendent duties. This is a large undertaking as GIS is a full-time position. I have asked for Ben's help to give pointers and direction on how to implement the data we collect into NISC for other co-ops. Ben has always been more than willing to help out the fellow co-ops.”

Karcz said that Orysen has gone so far as to allow the contractors to park their trucks at his house over the weekend, and when they couldn't find lodging a few years ago, Orysen worked out a deal for them to rent his dad's cabin at a reasonable rate.

“The cabin was on a lake, and the guys would catch and eat crappie after work!” Karcz recalls.

From a safety standpoint, when Orysen and Price Electric treat the contractors like part of the team, it encourages everyone to do what they do, even better.

“Ben treats our crews with respect and always sets us up to succeed. He makes sure we have the supplies, maps, and the data we need. Some people see contractors as a tool. If the contractor is unhappy and struggling, there are little to no repercussions that fall onto the people in charge of us. By nature, we as a contractor are sadly disposable and easily replaceable. Ben and the Price staff do just the opposite. They treat us like we are part of the PEC staff. My crews look forward to working for PEC each year because of this. There is a difference between working for someone and wanting to work for someone.”

Orysen also works with local first responders, DNR offices, and county workers to hold trainings related to outages, power line safety, and electric vehicles and the challenges they may present in case of an emergency.

Orysen was honored with this award on November 12, 2025, at the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) annual meeting. The award was presented by Jeff Olson, PEC's CEO, who praised Orysen's dedication by saying, “We need to be committed to a culture of safety. We need to care about each other. It is foundational. I've only known Ben for 4 of the 27 years he's been at PEC, but he checks all the boxes. Ben is committed to safety and shows that daily.” In his acceptance speech, Orysen humbly stated, “This award isn't about me. It's about the fellow employees and contractors willing to share what they need to be successful. It doesn't matter if it is a contractor or employee, we treat them all the same.” Orysen is only the second employee



CEO Jeff Olson presents the award to Operations Manager Ben Orysen.

in PEC history to receive this award, following Jim Heizler, formerly PEC's VP of Electric Operations, who was honored in 2009. PEC takes great pride in Ben's hard work, commitment to safety, and well-deserved recognition.

About the Potthast Award

The Potthast Award is named for Herman C. Potthast, who served Wisconsin rural electric cooperatives for 29 years, always dedicated to the training and safety of staff, up until his death in 1972.

Because of his outstanding service, dedication, leadership, and cooperation, the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association launched the Potthast Award to be given annually to the worker in Wisconsin rural electrification who best represents those qualities of dedication, leadership, cooperation, and service that were exemplified by “Potty.”

PAPER BILLS WILL NOW BE \$1: CONSIDER SWITCHING TO E-BILL

PEC is committed to providing safe, reliable, and affordable energy to our members. As part of this commitment, we continuously evaluate our operations to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness. In the past couple of years, we have experienced a significant increase in postage and paper costs.

Starting March 1, 2026, reflected on the statement you receive in April, we will be implementing a \$1 monthly fee per bill for members who choose to receive paper copies of their bills. This decision was made after careful consideration and is aimed at offsetting the rising costs associated with printing and mailing paper bills.

Why the Change?

The cost of postage, paper, and return envelopes have increased, which has impacted our ability to maintain our current billing practices without adjustments.

What Are Your Options?

1. **Switch to E-Billing:** We encourage members to switch to electronic billing (e-bill) as a convenient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly alternative. E-bill allows you to receive your monthly statements directly to your email, ensuring quick and secure access to your bill. To sign up, you must create a Smart Hub account. Smart Hub is PEC's secure, online portal for you to sign up for e-bill, pay bills, set

up automatic payments, and monitor usage.

2. **Continue with Paper Billing:** If you prefer to continue receiving paper bills, no action is required on your part. The \$1 monthly fee will be automatically added to your bill starting March 1, 2026.

How to Sign Up for Smart Hub and Paperless:

- Visit our website at www.PriceElectric.coop. At the top of the screen, click Login to Smart Hub.
- A login page will open; below the sign-in button, click "Don't Have an Account? Register Now."
- Time to get registered. You will need your account number, last name, and email address.
- Follow the prompts to set up your password and complete your enrollment.
- Once logged in to your account, navigate to the Settings menu. Under settings, click "Paperless Billing."
- On the Paperless Billing screen, toggle the Go Paperless switch to be on. Once switched, the toggle will be green.

We understand that changes like these can be challenging, and we are here to assist you with this transition. If you have any questions or need assistance switching to e-bill, please contact our office at 715-339-2155.

2026 DISTRIBUTED GENERATION APPLICATION AND COMMISSIONING FEES

Effective January 1, 2026, PEC will be implementing an application fee and a commissioning fee for all new distributed energy resource (DER) project submissions.

Application Fee: This fee is necessary to begin the review process of your DER project application, including the evaluation of the one-line diagram and other required documents. Payment of the application fee is mandatory for the application review to proceed. If you apply via email, you will receive a response with an invoice and link to make your payment online through Pay Now. Payments may also be made in person or by mail.

Commissioning Fee: When your DER project is ready for grid interconnection, a commissioning fee will be applied. This fee covers the site visit to perform anti-island testing and verification that the system is installed per the approved one-line schematic.

After approval of your application, a commissioning fee invoice will be created and emailed to you. The payment may be made online through Pay Now, in person, or by mail. The fee must be paid prior to the scheduled commissioning date.

DER Fee Schedule		
Export Capacity	Application Fee	Commissioning Fee
20 kW or less	\$300	\$150
>20 kW to 200 kW	\$300 + \$10/kW	\$250
>200 kW to 1MW	\$2,000 + \$2/kW	\$1,000

All systems may be subject to a cost-based engineering review and distribution study.

Jeff Olson, President/CEO

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