

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative*

January 2023

NEWS

TAYLOR ELECTRIC
Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



THE POWER OF GRACE

SHOULD I CHANGE
MY CHARGING HABITS?

TACO TUESDAYS

KIDS AND CRITTERS





ANNUAL MEETING IS ON THE HORIZON

Kenneth Ceaglske, President/CEO

Winter has hardly begun, and I am looking forward to June already. Not for the obvious warm weather and recreational reasons; I haven't spent enough time on my snowshoes yet. June is annual meeting time. With magazine deadlines and candidate filing deadlines, we need to get the word out that if you have interest, the time is coming soon to run for the board.

We have three seats up for election this year. Currently Pat Waldhart, Chuck Zenner, and Don Everhard hold those positions. Pat has served since 2006 and has reached her term limit. If you have an interest in running, contact me at the office, or one of the nominating committee members listed below. Feel free to contact any of the existing board members to get their perspective on the duties and time commitments that go along with serving on the board.

At the most recent board meeting, the board authorized a method for absentee ballots for the elections and possible bylaw amendments coming in June. Absentee ballots were in the bylaws in 2021, but with the run-off style election

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process, they did not provide a valid method of voting for any of the runoffs; therefore, it was removed as a specific option. The new bylaw allows voting by mail or electronic means if specifically permitted by board action. This was a technicality that we missed last year in time for reasonable notice to the membership. Look for more details on this option as we get closer to annual meeting time.

Coming up more immediately is the rate change for 2023. I've gotten a few questions regarding the change. The most common was that an \$8.05 change to the service availability charge is way more than 4% of the \$36.90 that is currently on the bill. The 4% change is an average change across the total bill. Our average member bill is about \$200 including energy and service availability—the change is about 4% of that total number. There will be no change to the basic energy charges this year.

As many utilities have had to deal with rising costs, each has done it in a slightly different way—some on energy, and some on fixed charges, depending on their situation. This change will take effect on January 1, so the first time you will see it will be on the bill that you receive in February.

As we begin the new year, we look forward to working for you, our members, to do what we can to support and improve life in and around Taylor County.

Want to serve as a board member?

HERE'S HOW

Members interested in serving on the board should contact CEO Kenny Ceaglske or one of the nominating committee members:

- Rod Adams, 715-678-2397**
- Jack Johnson, 715-785-7777**
- Kathy Jochimsen, 715-785-8049**

Interested candidates will need to fill out a form and be willing to submit a brief questionnaire for publication in the annual report candidate section.

Please contact one of the committee members by February 24, 2022 if interested.

MAJORITY OF HOME FIRES INVOLVE HEATING EQUIPMENT

Heating equipment, such as space heaters, kerosene heaters, fireplaces and wood-burning stoves, is a leading cause of fires in U.S. homes, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The term “homes” includes one-and two-family homes (including manufactured homes), apartments, townhouses and other multi-family dwellings.

- Heating equipment caused one in seven home fires and 19% of home fire deaths.
- Most home heating fire deaths (81%) included stationary or portable space heaters.
- More than half of the home heating fire deaths were caused by placing heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as furniture, clothing, mattresses, or bedding.
- Nearly half (48%) of all home heating fires occurred in December, January, and February.
- Failure to clean equipment, such as chimney flues, accounted for a quarter of all heating equipment fires.

In addition, approximately two in five home heating equipment fires involved items that ran on what is considered solid fuel, such as wood-burning or pellet stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. However, electric-powered heating devices were responsible for the largest share of losses, accounting for more than half of the fatalities, three in five injuries, and two-fifths of the property damage.

Follow these safety tips to use space heaters safely:

1. Read all instructions and use space heaters only as recommended.
2. Do not leave space heaters unattended.
3. Plug them directly into an outlet; most power strips and extension cords are not equipped to handle the energy spikes caused by space heaters cycling on and off.
4. Unplug any other items from the outlet you are using and try to use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload.
5. Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
6. Turn the heaters off before you leave the room or go to sleep.
7. Do not use heaters that are in disrepair or have frayed cords or damaged plugs.
8. Place them on flat, level surfaces and never on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.
9. Unplug and put space heaters away (out of the reach of children) when not in use.

For additional safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.

feeling chilled?

HEAT YOUR SPACE SAFELY

1. Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away

2. Place on a flat, level surface

3. Make sure the cord is not frayed or cracked

4. Plug it directly into an outlet

5. Follow all instructions and use models endorsed by a reputable testing lab

6. Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which can overheat

7. Do not use around small children or pets

8. Do not use one with a damaged plug or prongs

Safe Electricity.org



CONGRATULATIONS

to these members of Taylor Electric for their hard work and true dedication to dairy farming:



Joe and Christy Tomandl at their Medford farm.
(Photo courtesy of Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship)



Jake Peissig of JTP Farms and his daughter.
(Photo courtesy of Kenna Rathai, Boehringer Ingelheim)

Dairy farmers and members of Taylor Electric Cooperative, **Joe and Christy Tomandl**, Medford, are the recipients of the 2022 Wisconsin Leopold Conservation Award presented annually by Sand County Foundation, American Farmland Trust, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. The award recognizes farmers and forestland owners who inspire others with their dedication to land, water, and wildlife habitat management on private, working land.

We would also like to congratulate dairy farmer and Taylor Electric member **Jake Peissig** of Dorchester. Jake was chosen as the recipient of the national Boehringer Ingelheim's Dairy First Award. The award was given to Jake for his commitment to milk quality practices and animal well-being.

JANUARY 10 IS NATIONAL CUT YOUR ENERGY COSTS DAY

But you don't have to wait for January 10 to save energy! Here are a few simple ways you can save energy every day...

- Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes, or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. Blocked air vents will force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in your ductwork.
- Save money on water heating costs by using cold water to wash your laundry whenever possible, and by waiting for a full load before running your dishwasher and washing machine.
- Use energy-saving LED lights, which are 75 percent more efficient than incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer. No matter what type of bulb you use, be sure to turn lights off when you leave a room.



Source: energy.gov



WINTER DRIVING WOES

Would you know what to do in a vehicle accident involving power equipment?

Winter weather is great for beautiful scenery and fun outdoor recreation, but it's often not so great for driving. 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 save lives.

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 over

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 safety precautions apply.

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

To learn more about what to do in the event of a vehicle accident involving electric power lines or equipment, watch *License to Live* at <https://safeelectricity.org/license-to-live/>. This educational video is sponsored by all of Wisconsin's electric cooperatives and developed by employees of five electric cooperatives and WECA in conjunction with the Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange and Safe Electricity.



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