

Since 1940

# WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

May 2018

## SPECTACULAR SPELUNKING



TAYLOR ELECTRIC  
*Cooperative*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

# CO-OPS TO CONGRESS: FUND RURAL BROADBAND

TAYLOR ELECTRIC  
*Cooperative*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



By Dan Riedinger

Congress has a good opportunity this year—actually, more than one—to jump-start rural economies and promote rural broadband deployment. The Trump administration and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have expressed support for funding rural broadband to help bridge the digital divide, so the political climate is right for striking a deal that makes a significant down payment toward this goal.

The Bipartisan Budget Agreement enacted in February contained a \$20 billion “infrastructure initiative” for fiscal years 2018 and 2019. House and Senate appropriators could set aside some of this funding for broadband in spending bills for either of the two years.

In order to maximize the impact of those funds, America’s electric cooperatives urged Congress to dedicate some of this funding to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Rural Utilities Service for rural broadband deployment, disbursing the funds through loans and grants to qualified organizations, including electric co-ops.

Another piece of legislation to be considered by Congress this year is the Farm Bill, which is reauthorized every five years. The bill sets the nation’s food and agriculture policy, affecting everything from what crops are grown to funding for food nutrition programs. But the bill also sets funding levels for many programs important to electric co-ops run by USDA—again, a possible source of broadband funding.

Finally, there has been plenty of discussions on Capitol Hill and within the administration on moving legislation to deal with the nation’s aging infrastructure. Roads and bridges are often the first topic of any infrastructure conversation. But in the modern economy, gleaming roads and bridges are irrelevant if they lead to rural communities that lack high-speed internet access. Quality broadband service is a necessity, not a luxury, in the 21st century economy and should be addressed by any proposed infrastructure package.

Whichever path Congress chooses, the imperative of funding rural broadband can’t be understated.

Rural America faces stiff economic challenges. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, less than 15 percent of American businesses are located in rural areas and small towns. Inadequate broadband access is making this problem worse and contributing to the exodus of talented, young people.

Access to broadband also is essential for modern education, health care, and business. But at least 23 million rural Americans lack access to high-speed internet. We can’t turn our backs on this digital divide.

For more than 75 years, America’s electric cooperatives have powered local economies across 56 percent of the nation’s landmass. As times and technology change, broadband has become an indispensable part of electric utility operations—extending beyond the electric meter and into household energy management. These state-of-the-art energy efficiency services increasingly require access to high-speed internet.

Now, nearly 100 electric cooperatives are reinvesting in rural America by bringing high-speed internet access to rural homes, businesses, and schools. This connectivity serves two

key purposes: bridging the digital divide for co-op members and enhancing the co-op business operation network, allowing the co-op and members to adopt emerging energy management technology. These newly connected co-op communities are proven to create jobs, attract new employers and directly jump-start local economies.

The convergence of new technology and partnerships has made rural broadband deployment more achievable than ever. As electric cooperatives work to bring broadband to rural America, some have formed innovative partnerships

with local telecom companies and others.

Yet despite these advances, the high cost of rural broadband deployment remains the biggest obstacle to successfully closing the digital divide. Rural service territory is often rugged and remote, which drives up the cost of deployment. At the same time, there are fewer customers to defray the costs.

That’s why an expanded combination of federal grant and loan funding is essential. An infrastructure package, the Farm Bill, and annual appropriations bills present opportunities to secure that necessary financial backstop.

What’s good for rural America is good for the entire nation. We can’t afford to leave our rural communities behind. Now it is time for Congress to allocate the necessary funding so that all Americans can enjoy quality broadband service.

Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.





# Youth Leadership Congress

UW-River Falls | July 25-27, 2018



The annual **WECA Youth Leadership Congress** is a dynamic three-day event for youth leaders across Wisconsin to develop their **leadership skills** while learning about the purpose, operation, and scope of **cooperative businesses**.

## Take the opportunity to...

- See **what makes the cooperative business model different and successful**, and then apply this knowledge to fun and challenging cooperative activities.
- Identify and learn how to develop your own **leadership skills**.
- Discuss **cooperative careers** with professionals in the industry.
- Be **entertained and challenged** by highly acclaimed motivational speakers who understand teens and address topics that are important and relevant in your life.

This is a **by-teens, for-teens conference** that is planned and developed by a youth board elected at the previous year's event.

## Who should apply?

- Students who will be sophomores or juniors next year, and whose parents are members of Taylor Electric Cooperative.
- Students active in their school and community.

## What does it cost?

- All registration costs are covered by the generous support of electric cooperatives and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.
- Interested students should fill out the form below and return it to Taylor Electric Cooperative.

## Youth Leadership Congress Participant Application Form

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring cooperative \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Grade entering in fall 2018 \_\_\_\_\_

Parent email (used to send links to online health forms) \_\_\_\_\_

*Return this completed form to Taylor Electric Cooperative, N1831 State Highway 13, Medford, WI 54451*

# CHANGE HABITS TO BEAT THE PEAK

As warmer weather sets in, our thoughts on keeping the house comfortable switch from heating to cooling. But as temperatures rise and air conditioners are switched on, looking for ways to improve energy efficiency at home can help you and Taylor Electric reduce demand, saving energy and money.

Making small adjustments in when, where, and how you use electricity won't only help control your energy costs, but it can also help keep temperatures in your home more pleasant on sultry days.

## Housework Hiatus

Avoiding peak energy costs is a good reason to put some chores on hold, at least until power demand dips. Consider some of the jobs one kilowatt hour (kwh) of electricity can do before you use it:

- Wash three loads of laundry
- Complete one dryer cycle
- Vacuum rugs in two average homes
- Iron five shirts
- Run three cycles in a loaded dishwasher

All of these activities can be done outside of peak demand periods, also known as peak hours.

## Love 78

Your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system or heat pump can play a huge part in controlling your energy use year-round, even if family comfort is a top priority.

At 78 degrees, most people are comfortable outside, so why not indoors? Most people aren't sensitive enough to notice much of a difference whether the thermostat is set at 73 or raised to 78. But the closer your air conditioner or heat pump setting is to the outdoor temperature, the less your unit will run.

Each degree of temperature difference represents a percentage of the total cooling load. That means when temperatures are in the high 80s, you could reduce your cooling demand by 10 to 15 percent

for each degree above 75 degrees.

Fans offer an economical alternative to air conditioning on mild days, and they can pitch in for comfort as temperatures climb. The key is evaporative cooling. At lower settings, a little air blowing across a room helps to bring down humidity levels.

When used in conjunction with your cooling system, set ceiling fans to blow air downward instead of pulling warmer air upward to get the most value in your cooling zone. Table and ceiling fans will offer more comfort if used to circulate air through areas where you are most active. You'll get a wind chill effect that will make you feel just a little cooler.

Central air conditioning can use as much as one kwh of electricity for each 12-minute cycle of cooling. A ceiling fan can operate for about 13 hours on the same amount of electricity, while a floor or table fan, depending on size, might run for 10 hours per kwh of power. Turn off fans when you leave a room because they cool people, not space.

## Kitchen Comfort

When it comes to heat and humidity, changing your kitchen activities presents a wellspring of opportunities to reduce your household energy demand throughout the day.

Your stove represents the modern hearth, and everything that makes the kitchen a favorite gathering place in winter can help send your electric meter into overdrive from late spring through early fall.

According to researchers at North Carolina State University, in Raleigh, cooking dinner for a family of four on an electric range releases about 20 ounces of water vapor into the air, and that amount can triple with a gas range.

Appliances on your countertops or stashed in your pantry could keep you cooler and use less energy. Microwaves use about 60 percent as much energy

as full-size ovens, and a toaster oven or induction cooker consumes about half as much power. Because they are generally designed to heat food more efficiently in less space, the surface areas available for heating are smaller, reducing waste heat surfaces and keeping kitchens cooler.

## Share the Space

In simpler times, families spent more time together in the same room even as they pursued different interests. Some members might have read books or magazines under the light of a shared lamp, while others watched television or played board games.

Today it's common for everyone to retreat to separate spaces, turn on their electronics, adjust their fans or window air conditioners, and close their doors to cocoon in their own environments.

Getting control of your energy use to reduce your home's overall demand can be really challenging when you have to consider the entire home, so bring back family time to beat the peak.

LCD televisions generally use 60 percent as much electricity as comparably sized plasma models. One laptop computer uses about 20 percent as much power as a desktop computer and monitor. And today's home assistant devices can play music using about 17 percent of the energy on a component stereo system, or about as much power as the boom box you use on the beach.

A video game console consumes about 200 watts of power. One system pressed into service for spirited intramural competition between family members in one room uses about a third of the power of three players engaged in online games around the house.

Finish the space with energy-efficient LED fixtures for lighting, a couple sets of headphones, and a few rechargeable power boosters for the family's handheld devices. You'll have a cool and fun place to spend a few hours with the family.



# SAFETY ABOVE ALL ELSE

By Anne Prince

“Safety” is a universal word that is mentioned often and used loosely. Communities large and small as well as companies across all industries are committed to safety. Sports leagues, at every level, take safety seriously. Unfortunately, when it really counts, steps to keep people safe are often ignored in the interest of expediency or convenience.

However, safety is a serious issue, especially when it comes to electricity. For Taylor Electric Cooperative, it’s the number-one priority. Taylor Electric has created a culture of safety by putting our employees’ safety and that of the community above all else. Taylor Electric’s mission is to provide safe, affordable, and reliable electricity to our member-owners. We strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to our member-owners, but equally important, we want to return our workers home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, and vigilance.

## Following Leading National Safety Standards

Working with electricity is inherently dangerous, especially for lineworkers. Taylor Electric has a safety team whose focus is keeping employees and the community safe around electricity. We established and follow safety protocols based on leading national safety practices for the utility industry. We require our lineworkers to wear specialized equipment when working next to or with power lines. There are specific protocols that our lineworkers follow when dealing with electricity. Our safety team meets regularly to discuss upcoming projects from a safety perspective. They monitor and track near-misses of accidents in order to understand

them, share “lessons learned,” and improve.

As importantly, we encourage all of our crews to speak up and hold each other accountable for safety. By cultivating a culture of openness and transparency, we promote problem-solving with regard to safety, rather than defaulting to a blame game. We examine the information and data gleaned from near-misses and accident reports to discern patterns and use safety metrics to improve in those areas where we have fallen short. As appropriate, we brief contractors on our safety protocols and set expectations for their engagement.

## Keeping the Community Safe

Because we live and work in the community we serve, we care about our neighbors. Taylor Electric conducts electrical safety demonstrations in schools and for community events. We also participate in the annual Digger’s Hotline safety meeting to ensure community and worker safety.

May is National Electrical Safety Month. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation, each year thousands of people in the United States are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents, and electrocution in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable.

Don’t attempt electrical DIY projects or overload your outlets. Report downed power lines, unlocked substations, or padmount transformers that look amiss. If you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or community event, please contact us at 715-678-2411. Be mindful when it comes to electrical safety. Pause and take the extra time to plug into safety.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



### Michael Schaefer, President/CEO

N1831 State Highway 13, Medford, WI 54451  
715-678-2411 • 800-862-2407  
email: [taylrec@tayloelectric.org](mailto:taylrec@tayloelectric.org)  
website: [www.tayloelectric.org](http://www.tayloelectric.org)

### Lainie Kellnhofer, Editor



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



Through **Taylor Electric Cooperative's** partnership with **Focus on Energy**, you can take advantage of the latest energy saving technology.

For a limited time, get access to these **free and discounted** energy saving kits.



## Select from various products, including:

- Philips Hue White Starter Kit & TrickleStar 7-Outlet Multi Sensing Advanced Power Strip (**FREE**)
- Emerson Sensi Wi-Fi Programmable Thermostat (**FREE**)
- Nest Thermostat E (**FREE**)
- Nest Learning Thermostat (**\$120 Copay**)
- ecobee4 Smart Thermostat (**\$120 Copay**)


**LIMITED  
TIME  
OFFER**

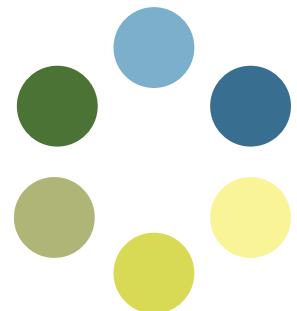
# ORDER TODAY

[focusonenergy.com/access](http://focusonenergy.com/access)

*Questions?* Call: 800.762.7077

**TAYLOR ELECTRIC**  
*Cooperative*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



**focus on energy**<sup>sm</sup>

Partnering with Wisconsin utilities