

Since 1940

# WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* January 2020 NEWS

## ISLAND POWER

TAYLOR ELECTRIC  
*Cooperative*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner





# Congratulations, Mike!



## President & CEO retires after 37-year career with Taylor Electric

The new year will bring plenty of change to Taylor Electric Cooperative with the retirement of President & CEO Mike Schaefer. Mike has been employed with Taylor Electric

Cooperative since 1982, when he started as office manager. In 1992, Mike was promoted to president & CEO. He will retire in early January 2020.

During his 37-year career at the cooperative, Mike steered the co-op through many challenges and rewarding changes. He was very involved in the office and shop additions and remodeling. From self-read meters to automatic reading meters to community solar and broadband research, he ensured the cooperative kept on trend with the ever-changing ways of the electric industry. Mike helped to implement the innovative rate designs such as prepaid metering and time-of-day meters. Under Mike's leadership all federal loans were paid off in 1996.

Mike's dedication to cooperatives is evident from his involvement in many groups within the cooperative network. He served as a manager-director on the board of the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association from 2003–2009, and represented Wisconsin electric cooperatives on the Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives' board from 1994–2005. He has served on the board of the Taylor County Association of Cooperatives since 1992, also serving as the treasurer. He has been a member of the Dairyland Managers Association and the Electric Cooperative Managers of Wisconsin since 1992, including service in all officer positions for both groups.

Community service is also very important to Mike. He served on the Memorial Hospital Foundation Board from 1995–2003, including one term as president, and on the Memorial Member Association Board from 2009–2018. Mike is a founding and current board member of Medford Junior Achievement, which he's served since 2002. He was also a volunteer fourth-grade instructor for the program for seven years.

Mike has been a Kiwanis member since 2005, and has earned the following honors: club president 2012–

**...he ensured the cooperative kept on trend with the ever-changing ways of the electric industry.**

2013, Kiwanian of the Year 2012–2013, Distinguished Service Award 2018. He was also recognized by the Medford Area Chamber of Commerce as the "Man of the Year" in 2003.

Mike lives near Gilman with his wife, Debra. They have four daughters and one son, ages 32 to 41. He enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, gardening, volleyball, bowling, ATV riding, spoiling his five granddaughters and two grandsons, and get-togethers with family and friends. Mike and Debra will be taking advantage of retirement this winter when they head to Florida for a couple of weeks.

Mike says the best thing about working for co-ops has been the people; co-op people are friendly and they care about the people they work with, and especially the people they serve. Mike says, "I like to think I resemble that remark."



# WELCOME, KENNETH CEAGLSKE

## Taylor Electric's new president and CEO

Welcome, Kenneth Ceaglske, new president & CEO of Taylor Electric Cooperative, effective January 3.

Ken comes to Taylor Electric Cooperative from Niobrara Electric Association in Lusk, Wyoming, where he served as general manager for

the last eight years. Before that, he worked in the transmission operations area of Great River Energy in Elk River, Minnesota, and prior to that, he held various positions at East Central Energy in Braham, Minnesota. His past service also includes 13 years on the City Council for the City of Braham, Minnesota, with three years as mayor.

Ken grew up in Braham, Minnesota, and is familiar with Wisconsin, having family stretching from Braham across to Tomahawk. Many camping trips and motorcycle rides have brought him to the area in the past as well.

Ken and his wife, Tammy, have two daughters, Emma and Lucy. Tammy is the social services director at the hospital in Lusk, Wyoming. Emma is a sophomore at the University of Wyoming and Lucy is a senior in high school. Following Lucy's graduation this spring, all will be settling here in Wisconsin, where both daughters will attend college. Ken's hobbies include woodworking, riding ATVs and motorcycles, boating, skiing, snowshoeing, and camping. He and his family also have two dogs named Wanda and CeeCee.

Ken said his family is excited to make the move to Medford for the new opportunities, proximity to family, and the recreation that Wisconsin offers.

"I look forward to the opportunity to work with and for the membership, board, and employees of Taylor Electric," he said. "I will do my best to bring value to the organization and continue it on a track of continuous improvement and member focus."

We welcome Ken and his family to Taylor Electric Cooperative!

## DIRECTORS TO BE ELECTED AT APRIL 4 ANNUAL MEETING

### Nominating Committee seeking candidates

Taylor Electric Cooperative's 84th annual meeting will be held at the Stetsonville Centennial Center in Stetsonville on Saturday, April 4, 2020. One of the most important duties of the members at this meeting will be to elect members to fill two seats on the board of directors.

The Bylaw provision for nominating a member to serve on the board is as follows:

*(Article V) Section 3. Nomination and Election of Directors. It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint a nominating committee in time to allow the committee to meet at least forty-five (45) days before the date of the annual meeting of the members, at which directors are to be elected. The nominating committee shall consist of three members. The committee chairman shall present the committee's nominations at the annual meeting.*

*Nominations may also be made by petition signed by not less than 25 members delivered to the Cooperative's headquarters not less than 7 days prior to the annual meeting. Election shall be by majority vote for each director position. In the event no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast for a position, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped from nomination on each successive ballot until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast.*

The following members have been appointed the following to serve on the Nominating Committee for the 2020 annual meeting:

- Bill Elsner – 715-678-2276
- Ken Nernberger – 715-748-3055
- Rich Feldbruegge – 715-223-8564

Please contact any of these Nominating Committee members by the end of January if you are interested in being nominated for a seat on the board.

At the 2020 annual meeting, there will be elections for two board seats: the seats currently held by Patricia Waldhart and Chuck Zenner. Directors are eligible to serve up to five three-year terms. Pat and Chuck are eligible for re-election.



Patricia Waldhart



Chuck Zenner

To be on the ballot for election to the board, a member needs to be nominated by the Nominating Committee, or be nominated by petition, which involves getting signatures of not less than 25 members and delivering that nomination petition to the co-op not less than seven days prior to the annual meeting (by March 27, 2020, for the upcoming annual meeting.)

# CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT, KEVIN!

Congratulations to Kevin Comstock, who retired at the end of December as line superintendent after 13 years of service at Taylor Electric Cooperative, with a total of almost 34 years in the rural electrification program.

After growing up on a farm and then going to line school, Kevin knew he wanted to work for a rural electric cooperative. He began his career at Columbus Electric Cooperative in 1986, the same year he met his future wife, Sandy. In 1987, he started working as a second-year apprentice with Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative after Columbus merged with Adams-Marquette Electric Cooperative. He got married in 1988 and later bought a house in the country south of Montello.

In 1990, Kevin became a journeyman lineman while working between the Briggsville and Montello outposts for ACEC. He was transferred to the Wautoma Service Center in 1991 after the co-op's merger with Waushara REC. In 1994, he transferred to ACEC's new service center in Pardeeville, 10 miles from where he grew up on the family farm. He was promoted to the operations supervisor of the Pardeeville shop in

2002 and held that position for four years.

Kevin and Sandy had always wanted to live in northern Wisconsin and the opportunity arose in 2006. Around Christmas that year they moved to Medford, where Kevin started his new position as line superintendent at Taylor Electric Cooperative.

As line superintendent, Kevin was able to engineer, design, and stake new overhead and underground lines for safe and efficient operation of the utility system. With many hours of service and extreme dedication, organized work processes, and crews and contractors that had a great sense of teamwork, they replaced over 200 miles of line to provide a much more reliable electrical distribution system and greatly reduce the average outage time for Taylor Electric's members. Kevin also enjoyed meeting with members to discuss options and costs for new services and upgrades.

He also played a large part in designing and coordinating the new shop and pole shed addition in 2013 that improved efficiency and resulted in savings in heating costs.

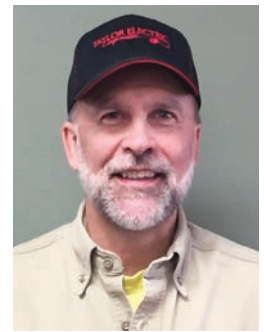
Kevin says he is thankful to have had

the opportunity to work at Taylor Electric and felt privileged to work with great employees, directors, vendors, and members. He said he also feels fortunate

to have worked with linemen with a great work ethic and safety awareness in a very dangerous industry.

Kevin says he has enjoyed his career and will miss many things including the good friends he made in the industry. However, after 34 years he is looking forward to retirement. He and Sandy are ready to enjoy their freedom to do some overdue traveling, spend more time with family and friends, snowmobile, bike trails, and get back to hunting and fishing as well as complete a few outdoor projects at home.

Congratulations, Kevin, from the staff and board of directors at Taylor Electric Cooperative. We wish you the best in your retirement!



## WADE MATYKA NAMED TEC'S NEW LINE SUPERINTENDENT



A familiar face will be taking over as line superintendent on December 27 when Kevin Comstock retires from this position. Wade Matyka has been a journeyman lineman with Taylor Electric since 2011. From 2007–2011 Wade worked at Marshfield Utilities as a lineman and at Dairyland Power in La Crosse in the line construction department. He graduated from Chippewa Valley Technical College in May 2007 with a degree in Electrical Power Distribution. Wade

brings experience and knowledge with the everyday line operations of the cooperative.

In his free time Wade enjoys moto-cross racing and restoring old vehicles. We wish him the best of luck in his new position.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10%.

—Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)





# We want to hear from **YOU!**

**W**e live in a device-driven world. Our smartphones, tablets, laptops, and an assortment of other devices help us communicate and connect. Companies spend billions pushing out a steady drumbeat of messages and information, and we are constantly bombarded with one-way communication. But is anyone listening on the other end?

At Taylor Electric, we are not only listening, we are eager to hear from you. Whether you text us, respond to a survey or social media post, send an email, or simply stop by and chat in person, we thrive on your feedback. Connecting with you helps us keep pace with our community's priorities and needs.

Because we are a cooperative, we have a different way of operating. Taylor Electric exists to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve. We hope you will consider us more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

You will notice that throughout the year, we create

opportunities for you and other community members to attend co-op gatherings and events in order to hear from you. These include our annual meeting and customer appreciation day, as well as events like the annual Christmas Wish Program.

Our planning is led by local members just like you who understand the needs of the community and are looking out for the long-term interests of the larger community. We are in the midst of significant changes in the energy sector, as technology and the drive for more renewables and a more balanced energy mix is impacting long-term planning. These are complex issues that we will be navigating in the coming months and years. This is why it's so important that we hear from you and other community members as we plot our course for the future.

Taylor Electric works to continually learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you—because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community. But we can only improve, adapt, and effectively plan for the future if we have two-way communication.

For our co-op and community to thrive now and in the future, we depend on hearing from you. We hope you will connect with us and let us know your perspective.

## **Kenneth Ceaglske, 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**

**TAYLOR ELECTRIC**  
*Cooperative*



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

