

Watt's New

October 2024



Vernon Electric Cooperative

"Information for our member-owners."

Monthly Co-op Trivia

September Trivia:

Approximately how many people are served by electric cooperatives in the United States?

Answer: *Electric cooperatives in the United States serve around 42 million people in 48 states, often in rural and underserved communities.*

October Trivia:

In October, we celebrate National Co-op Month. How many cooperative businesses are there in Vernon Electric's service area (Vernon and the edges of surrounding counties): A) less than 20; B) More than 20?
(See next month's newsletter for answer.)

Co-op Month Member Appreciation Picnic – Come Join Us

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29,
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Vernon Electric Cooperative Headquarters
110 Saugstad Rd, Westby

Brats, hotdogs, chips, baked beans, refreshments, & dessert



Vernon Electric Receives Award for Magazine

Each month, every member of Vernon Electric Co-op receives a copy of the Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News magazine. The center pages of the magazine are dedicated to local news from your cooperative. Members of nineteen other electric cooperatives in Wisconsin receive the same magazine with unique center pages written by staff at those individual co-ops.

This year, Vernon Electric received an award judging our center pages as the best in the Human Interest category. Trevor Clark edits our center pages, but Leah Call, a local freelance writer, provides stories about our members that helped earn us this award. Thank you, Leah, for your quality work!

If you know of a Vernon Electric member who has an interesting business, hobby, or story that might be willing to be interviewed for a feature in our magazine, feel free to give us a call or send us an email.

Founded in 1940, the Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News focuses on statewide issues that affect electric



Trevor Clark, right, Manager of Communications & Member Relations, presents the Human Interest Award to feature writer Leah Call.

cooperatives. It promotes the general welfare of Wisconsin's electric cooperatives, their member-owners, and the areas they serve. The magazine reaches 152,000 mailboxes each month.

POTUS Visits Vernon Electric

For the first time in the history of Wisconsin's electric cooperatives, and perhaps the nation's, a sitting president of the United States has made an official visit to an electric co-op headquarters. President Joe Biden was at Vernon Electric Cooperative Wednesday, September 4th, to award Dairyland Power Cooperative a \$579 million New Empowering Rural America (New ERA) grant to help accelerate the clean energy transition.

Dairyland will use the funds to develop projects totaling 1,020 megawatts (MW) of power purchase agreements for solar and wind energy installations in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Projects include 593 MW of wind, 427 MW of solar, and 60 MW of energy storage.

Dairyland President and CEO Brent Ridge kicked off the event, calling it a "transformative day."

"It's a win, win, win," Ridge said. "It's a win for our members, the environment, and the farm economy. This investment will allow us to accelerate our energy transition. Yesterday we were at a crawl, today we're going to run. The impact of this grant will be stunning, reducing our carbon footprint by 70% or over 3 million metric tons, equivalent to 700,000 cars on the highway. This is good news for everyone. Lower emissions and lower costs for our members."

In his remarks President Biden joked the first time he was in Wisconsin was "108 years ago with William Proxmire when I was a 31-year-old senator."

The New ERA grant Dairyland received is the first of \$7.3 billion in awards for rural cooperatives in the first round of grant announcements in the coming months. Biden said the investment, funded by the Inflation Reduction Act, will help bring clean energy to more than 5 million households in 23 states while creating 20,000 good-paying jobs.

"I've kept my commitment to be president for all Americans and all of America, including rural America," Biden said. "Their communities are the backbone of this country and deserve the same



President Joe Biden waves to the crowd prior to his speech next to Vernon Electric's solar array by its headquarters building in Westby.

resources as folks in our cities and our suburbs. That's what today's announcement is all about. Generating rural power for rural America."

President Biden added, "Today's announcement is about far more than just giving rural America the power to turn on the lights but giving it the power to shape our own future. In fact, Wisconsin has a strong, strong history of neighbors helping neighbors and forming cooperatives, which are literally owned and powered by the people of Wisconsin. Because of you, the seeds planted today will grow and blossom for generations to come. That's what we're seeing here in Wisconsin – A state with a proud tradition of rural communities leading our nation forward. Again, that's not an exaggeration. You are a leader in the nation."

Biden was joined by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, Governor Tony Evers, and other state and federal leaders at the event, which was not open to the public but was well-attended by invitees, including Wisconsin electric cooperative managers and directors.

This is the first time on record that a Wisconsin electric cooperative has hosted a current POTUS. John F. Kennedy made a stop at Crawford Electric Cooperative's (our neighboring electric cooperative to the south, now known as Scenic Rivers Energy) Annual Meeting during the 1960 presidential campaign, but he had not yet been elected.

As for electric co-op-related vice-presidential visits to Wisconsin, there have been several. Most recently, Donald Trump's V.P. Mike Pence made a stop at Dairyland Power Cooperative in 2020 to celebrate Labor Day. Alben Barley, Harry Truman's V.P., was on hand for the dedication of WECA's headquarters building on Park Street in Madison in 1951, and former V.P. Henry Wallace visited the WECA office in 1945.

Note: Vernon Electric Cooperative has hosted elected officials from all political parties. However, Vernon Electric is not a partisan organization and does not endorse individuals or elected officials.



President Biden tours Vernon Electric's office and facilities in Westby along with (from l to r) Governor Tony Evers, Vernon Electric CEO Craig Buros, Dairyland Power CEO Brent Ridge, and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

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The information in this newsletter has been prepared for you by Trevor B. Clark, Manager of Communications & Member Relations. Comments or questions regarding information contained here should be directed to:
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