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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* November 2025 NEWS

VERNON
Electric
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CAMP NAWAKWA REVIVING A CAMP, RENEWING A MISSION

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE POWER

PREP NOW FOR WINTER SAVINGS

KIDS AND CRITTERS





DURING HARVEST:

KNOW AND TEACH ELECTRICAL SAFETY ON THE FARM



From dump truck driver to teenager, everyone should be aware of potential electrical hazards

Harvest means long hours, increased stress, and tight schedules. Because of that, Vernon Electric Cooperative reminds farmers that it only takes a split second for someone to come into contact with electricity. Whether it be your most seasoned worker to your least experienced, a spouse, son, daughter, or other family member, an ag-related worker dropping off a load or applying fertilizer—any person on your farm is at risk of becoming injured or killed due to electrical contact.

To help keep those who work or do business on your farm safe not only during harvest but year-round, follow these electrical safety tips:

- **Educate everyone:** Potential electrical hazards include both direct and indirect contact with an overhead power line. Indirect contact (coming too close to a power line), could cause electricity to arc/jump.
- **Know the risks:** Both direct and indirect contact can energize anything in its path, such as a truck, a tractor, the ground, or a person.
- **Start every workday with a safety meeting:** Discuss all operations for the day and go over power line/pole locations. Emphasize safety above speed to everyone on the farm, especially during busy seasons like harvest.
- **Never assume:** The fact that someone grew up on a farm does not mean they understand the potential of electrical hazards. Do not assume this for anyone.
- **Take precautions with equipment:** Encourage drivers and operators to position grain augers in their lowest position or to lower truck bed boxes before moving. Be especially cautious of overhead lines when using augers to load trucks.
- **Review potential hazards:** Use a spotter for grain/dump truck driver whenever possible. Also:
 - » Encourage drivers to load and unload all materials away from overhead power lines.
 - » Create a dedicated drop zone away from all overhead power lines.
 - » Post 10-foot clearance rule and “look up and look out” reminders.
- **Contact:** If you see that a hydraulic truck bed, extensions, or other equipment gets within 10 feet of or contacts a power line, utility pole, or guy wire, instruct the driver to stay in the cab. Call 9-1-1 to have your electric cooperative or utility dispatched to deenergize the power. Give instructions from 50 feet away and inform everyone else to stay back.
- **Exiting a vehicle:** Know how to instruct someone to properly exit a cab if necessary due to fire. Again, do so from at least 50 feet away. The person should cross their arms close to their chest and make a solid jump out of the cab. Then, the person should make deliberate hops, with feet together, hopping away as far as they can. When people walk or run in an area where the ground is energized, they could be exposed to two different voltages at the same time and become electricity’s path. This is known as step potential.
- **Safe storage:** Do not store hay bales, machinery, or anything else under power lines.
- **Know the risks:** Be aware of power line locations in the proximity of grain bins. Always load and unload on the side without a power line. Contact your electric cooperative or utility with questions about grain bin power line clearance.

Contact your electric cooperative or utility about damaged or downed power lines or poles. Utility crews would much rather check out an issue than risk a potentially dangerous situation.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:

Karla Yanske Retires After 33 Years

By Leah Call

For more than three decades, Vernon Electric Cooperative (VEC) Chief Financial Officer, Karla Yanske, has been the steady hand, ensuring the co-op's books were balanced, the bills accurate, and the members well-served. Now, after 33 years of dedicated service, Yanske looks forward to the sweetness of unscheduled days, more family time, and growing her baking business, Karla's Kitchen.

Yanske's story with VEC began in 1989, when she served as the co-op's outside auditor. Three years later, she accepted a full-time position. Within months she found herself managing the entire office—billing and accounting included—and remained at the financial helm ever since.

Mixing Tradition with Change

Over the years, Yanske has guided VEC through significant change. "When I started, we sent meter readers out to read 10,000 meters every month," she recalled. "Then we had to

enter 10,000 readings and try to catch human error."

Those meter readers are part of local history. They trudged through mud, scaled snowbanks, and dodged dogs to manually read each meter. Yanske still hears from members who reminisce about a parent's or grandparent's work as a meter reader.

Technology eventually put an end to the manual process. Today, Yanske can read a meter, disconnect, and reconnect right from her desktop. "Now we know when members are out of power before they even call us," she said.

The rise of solar energy and electric vehicles has added new challenges to the mix. With more than 300 members now generating solar power, billing has become more complex.

Reflection and Appreciation

Accuracy has always been Yanske's secret ingredient. In 33 years, her year-end audit never required a journal entry adjustment, and billings always met the highest standard of accuracy.

Beyond numbers, Yanske is proud of



Karla Yanske retired on October 3 after 33 years of service.

the co-op's focus on community—one of the seven cooperative principles. From county fairs to annual meetings, she found joy in connecting with members. "Working here was great when I was raising my family, too," she reflected. "My kids grew up in Vernon Electric and even helped serve food at member appreciation picnics."

Her children, Nicholas and Alyssa, now both teach and coach locally. In retirement, she looks forward to spending more time with family—



especially her grandkids. With her husband already retired, the couple plan to enjoy their lake house and travel—starting with a trip to Arizona for their granddaughter's gymnastics meet.

Yanske plans to also volunteer and serve on boards for the Vernon Economic Development Association

and Bethel Home and Services. And, of course, she'll be baking. Karla's Kitchen offers cookies, cakes, and other treats for parties, fundraisers, and community events.

A Well-Baked Legacy

Yanske's career at VEC has prepared her well for this second act: careful

measurements, attention to detail, and a knack for getting the recipe just right. "I've given a lot, and it's time to take care of me," she added.

As she exits VEC, Yanske says that she will miss her interaction with members most of all. As a farewell gift, she shares a favorite recipe for members to enjoy.

Karla's Monster Cookies

Ingredients

- 2 ¼ C peanut butter
- 1 ½ C packed light brown sugar
- 1 ½ C white sugar
- 12 T unsalted butter, softened
- 6 eggs
- 1 ½ T vanilla extract
- 6 ¾ C quick oats
- 3 t baking soda
- 2 C chocolate chips
- 2 C plain M&M candies

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray cookie sheets with nonstick spray.
2. In a large bowl, mix peanut butter, sugars, and butter until well combined. Mix in eggs and vanilla. Mix in oats and baking soda. Then stir in chips and M&Ms.
3. Drop cookies by heaping spoonfuls onto prepared sheets.
4. Bake 10 to 12 minutes. Do not overbake. Cool for 5 minutes and enjoy!



SAVING ENERGY DURING PEAK TIMES BENEFITS ALL

Article provided by NRECA

Conserving electricity during peak energy use times not only lowers your monthly bill—it can benefit our entire community.

“Peak times” refer to periods of the day when the demand for electricity is highest. Think early mornings when people are getting ready for work or school and evenings when families return home, cook dinner and unwind with electronics. When everyone uses energy at once, it adds pressure on the electric grid.

Vernon Electric Cooperative works around the clock to ensure that electricity flows to your home whenever you need it. Behind the scenes, an enormous and intricate system is at work—one of the most complex machines in the world: the U.S. power grid. The grid is made up of three major interconnections that span the country, each managing supply and demand through regional authorities to keep the lights on and our economy running smoothly.

Electricity comes from a diverse mix of sources—hydropower, natural gas, coal, solar, wind and more. Some power plants can respond quickly to spikes in demand,

while others are less flexible. Once energy is generated, it travels through high-voltage transmission lines to local utilities, like Vernon Electric which then delivers it to your home or business through distribution power lines.

When electricity demand surges during peak times, it’s more expensive to generate or purchase power. If supply can’t keep up, the risk of outages increases. That’s why using less energy during peak hours is more important than ever. It not only eases strain on the grid but also helps you save money.

So how can you “beat the peak”? Start by adjusting your thermostat a few degrees during peak hours. Smart thermostats can automate this for you. Delay using energy-hungry appliances like ovens, clothes washers and dishwashers until later in the evening. Charging your electric vehicle overnight instead of right after you get home can also help.

Small actions taken by many households can lead to big results. When we all work together to reduce energy use during peak times, we protect our power grid, help control costs and ensure reliable electricity for our communities.



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