

# LIVELines

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## Annual Conference happening in May

**S**et along the banks of the iconic Mississippi River in picturesque La Crosse, you won't want to miss this year's Annual Conference! The event takes place over three days — May 14–16 — and will feature informative sessions about topics relevant to municipal utilities, along with time to connect, collaborate, and celebrate.

This is MEUW's 95th Annual Conference, offering attendees the chance to learn about and discuss critical

subjects like emerging trends influencing public power utilities, including national politics, advances in battery storage, trends in human resources that are impacting municipal utilities, as well as regulatory and legal matters.

The conference will feature both large and small group presentations and discussions to give every participant a chance to ask questions and offer insights, whether from a large or small community, and regardless of role.

The three-day agenda includes:

- A four-person scramble-style golf outing at Forest Hills Golf Course in La Crosse. Registration includes a boxed lunch, drink tickets, and eligibility for prizes and awards.
- Guided tours of the office and facilities of La Crosse-based Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), including

the 24/7 System Operations Center and its state-of-the-art Powered Printing operations.

- A welcome reception hosted by DPC aboard the La Crosse Queen Riverboat, including food and beverages.
- Thursday's conference will be held at the Radisson La Crosse, and in-

cludes breakfast and the MEUW Honors awards luncheon where utilities will be recognized for their safety achievements and individuals

will be honored for their contributions to public power and the overall success of their utility's operations.

- A closing reception will feature hors d'oeuvres and refreshments, and networking time before participants can explore the many dining options available in downtown La Crosse.
- Breakfast on Friday morning will precede the association's Annual Business Meeting at 8 a.m., where members will elect MEUW's slate of officers for 2025-26.

The conference registration fee is \$295 per person, with an "early bird" discount before May 1. Participation in the Golf Outing is \$75 per person.

Details and the link to register online are available at [meuw.org/95thAC](http://meuw.org/95thAC). ●

### 95TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

May 14–16 • La Crosse

Full details: [meuw.org/95thAC](http://meuw.org/95thAC)

## Five utilities earn 2025 "Reliable Public Power Provider" designation

Municipal electric utilities in five Wisconsin communities have earned a Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) designation from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for providing reliable and safe electric service. The 2025 designees are Cedarburg Light & Water Utility (Platinum), Marshfield Utilities (Diamond), Plymouth Utilities (Platinum), Stoughton Utilities (Diamond), and Waupun Utilities (Diamond).

The RP3 designation, which lasts for three years, recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate proficiency in four key disciplines:

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Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin's mission is to **strengthen and unify community-owned utilities**. Since 1928, MEUW has been the trade association for Wisconsin's 81 public power communities and is affiliated with the American Public Power Association (APPA) — [www.publicpower.org](http://www.publicpower.org)

## Icy conditions cause outages and trigger mutual aid response

**M**essy conditions from an early spring storm brought ice and snow to parts of northeast Wisconsin during the weekend of March 29-30. Reports of up to a half-inch of ice from freezing rain accumulating on tree limbs and power lines contributed to outages throughout the region. Hardest hit among the municipal utilities was the Village of Gresham, in Shawano County, where more than 75% of customers lost power at some point over the weekend.



Corey Huntley (left) and Sean Palubicki from Kaukauna Utilities were among more than a dozen electric linemen who responded to the call for mutual aid after ice and wind caused widespread outages in the Village of Gresham in late March.

The storm arrived in two waves, with ice building up on tree branches during the day Saturday, only to be followed by more freezing rain and stronger winds overnight and into Sunday, taking out more lines, including those that had already been repaired. MEUW put out the call for mutual aid assistance to utilities nearest to Gresham. At the height of the recovery, crews from Kaukauna, Manitowoc, Menasha, New London, and Sturgeon Bay were working to help restore power in the challenging conditions. Other member utilities were on standby but never called upon.

“The conditions were miserable, but the response was incredible,” according to Brian Carroll, Operations Manager for the Village of Gresham.

“With back-to-back storms, there were too many trees on the lines to count. We’re really thankful for all the crews that helped out.”

After working in the treacherous conditions, Carroll noted, “Ice should only be for keeping your drinks cold.” ●



## ROFR bill gets hearing at State Capitol

The “Right of First Refusal” (ROFR) bill — SB-028 and AB-025 (Transmission Facilities) — addresses the rights of incumbent transmission facility owners to construct, own, and maintain certain transmission lines, especially those shared regionally. If the bill isn’t signed into law, transmission projects will be competitively bid under a federal regulatory process that could lead to out-of-state investors controlling parts of Wisconsin’s transmission system and impacting the efficiency, reliability, and cost of the grid.

Municipal utilities support ROFR because, among other benefits, ROFR ensures Wisconsin’s power grid decisions remain within the state and critical grid-operation centers stay local; the Public Service Commission (PSC) would continue to oversee the grid with consumer interests in mind; and the approach maintains competitive bidding for transmission project construction.



The state Senate’s Committee on Utilities and Tourism held a joint hearing with the Assembly’s Committee on Energy and Utilities on

March 4. The hearing included testimony from WPPI Energy President and CEO Mike Peters (pictured above, at left) and Marshfield Utilities General Manager Nicolas Kumm, who also currently serves as MEUW Board Chair. The marathon hearing lasted more than four hours. The bill is still making its way through the legislature and is expected to be considered later this spring. ●

*Images captured from online coverage by WisconsinEye.*

*Continued from page 1*



reliability, safety, workforce development, and system improvement. Criteria include sound business practices and a utility-wide commitment to safe and reliable delivery of electricity. The process involves

a rigorous online application, which is reviewed by a panel of national public power experts, who score based on the extent to which each utility meets program criteria — Diamond (98-100%); Platinum (90-97%); or Gold (80-89%).

The six utilities honored this year join 10 other Wisconsin utilities that achieved RP3 status in 2023 and 2024. They are: Kaukauna Utilities (‘23), Manitowoc Public Utilities (‘24), Menasha Utilities (‘23), City Utilities of Richland Center (‘24), Rice Lake Utilities (‘24), River Falls Municipal Utilities (‘24), Sun Prairie Utilities (‘24), Two Rivers Utilities (‘24), Wisconsin Rapids Water Works and Lighting Commission (‘24), and Waunakee Utilities (‘23). APPA reports more than 250 of the 2,000 public power utilities nationwide hold the prestigious RP3 designation. ●

# MEUW NEWS Monitor

## Share your feedback: Member Engagement Survey underway

Let your voice be heard and tell us how we're doing! MEUW is currently conducting a member survey to gather feedback about the services and future direction of the association. The survey link was emailed directly to the key contact on file from each of our member utilities. Feedback from all members is important to this effort, and you can share your thoughts [here](#) or by scanning the QR code. This periodic survey is an important part of MEUW's planning and member services, and the input provided is used to shift priorities and assess progress toward achievement of strategic goals. The survey was last conducted in October 2023 and had a response rate of about 53%. Responses to this year's survey are being accepted through April 25.



## Excavation Competent Person workshops scheduled

Learn safe excavation operation to avoid a common hazard faced by utility employees. As with any hazard, a well-trained employee is the best defense against injuries on the job. MEUW is pleased to offer Excavation Competent Person training that includes both classroom and hands-on field training.

Attendees will review OSHA's 29 CFR 1926 Subpart P Excavation Standard (adopted and enforced by the state under SPS 332) and learn safety aspects, potential hazards, protective systems, and planning for safe excavation and trenching. Choose from five locations and dates. Details and instructor information can be found [here](#).

## Brush up on methods for delivering exceptional service

Everyone knows that providing outstanding customer service is critical to municipal utilities. This 90-minute virtual training focuses on providing exceptional customer service, offering insights to elevate your customer service skills with strategies that align with the mission and values of your organization. This course explores methods to assess and improve service processes while offering practical tools for handling difficult people and challenging service situations. Learn how to frame and present options effectively to create positive outcomes, and maximize "The Power of One" differences we can each make. Held Thursday, April 24 at 10 a.m., this class has something for everyone. Find out more [here](#).

## Learn techniques to safely operate a chainsaw around downed wires

Stored energy in trees represents a significant danger for line workers. Understanding the dynamics of stored energy, and how to safely work with and around it, is critical for every line worker. MEUW's Stored Energy/Chainsaw workshop will cover how to recognize stored energy, and how to control and mitigate it when working at trees with chainsaws.

This workshop is recommended for electric line workers, line clearance workers, and Department of Public Works employees who work with and around live wires. Material is first covered in the classroom and then applied in the field. Attendees learn how to

identify and control stored energy, selecting the right tools to use, chainsaw safety, remote cuts, and how to evaluate difficult situations encountered in the field. The workshop will be held April 24, in Kaukauna. Details are available [here](#).

## Next Fundamentals of Utility Management training series course set for June 4

Continue — or kickstart — your own professional development by attending the Utility Planning and Risk Management course planned for June 4 in Mauston. Recognizing the complexity of electric utilities as well as the careful attention to detail and comprehensive planning that's needed to maximize operational efficiency, this one-day course will explore basic strategic and operational planning and discuss how careful risk assessment can influence long-term success. The training is suitable for municipal workers at all skill levels and backgrounds. Additional information and registration are available [here](#). ●

## Elections for MEUW Board of Directors begin soon

Nominations for individuals interested in serving on the association's Board of Directors for a two-year term are being accepted through April 15. This year's election will be for Directors and Alternate Directors in [odd-numbered districts](#). The voting will take place April 20 to May 6. Each member utility is entitled to a single vote for seats in their respective district. Full details available at [meuw.org/elections](http://meuw.org/elections).

## Mutual Aid Hotline

When you need help, call MEUW – 24 hours a day, seven days a week – for help coordinating mutual aid assistance

**1-844-MEUW-911**  
(1-844-638-9911)



## “Field day” allowed PSC staff to experience municipal utilities

**M**ore than 50 employees from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) took part in two separate “municipal utility field day” training opportunities organized by MEUW in March. The events are part of the association’s ongoing effort to strengthen relations with regulatory stakeholders and help expose PSC staff to “a day in the life” of a public power utility.

Waunakee Utilities hosted two dozen staffers on March 5 for a tour of its facilities, including a city-owned well and electric substation, as well as a new public elementary school that showcases geothermal and solar energy. A similar-sized group was in Marshfield on March 14 for a visit to an electric substation and water tower, as well as a tour of Marshfield Utilities’ state-of-the-art office and garage facilities that



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## Members' *NEWS*



**Karsten Huse** has been named General Manager of Cedarburg Light & Water Commission, where he started as an apprentice lineman 25 years ago. He served as line crew foreman before taking his most recent role as Electric Superintendent. He succeeds Ben Collins who left Cedarburg for a role with WPPI Energy.

**Send us your news!** Tell MEUW about new hires, promotions, retirements, honors, and awards, so those tidbits can be shared in MEUW member communications. Simply send an email to [news@meuw.org](mailto:news@meuw.org) to share your news.

opened in 2022. Those participating in the Marshfield visit also had the chance to gain some “hands-on” experience with rubber-gloving exercises. The PSC has recently added a number of new staff to keep up with the increasing workload and the employees taking part represented a number of different operational areas, including auditors and analysts with less than a year on the job.



Each of the “field day” programs began with an overview presentation detailing the history of municipal electric utilities in Wisconsin as well as the advantages of public power, which were followed by discussions of the operations at each of the sites. MEUW has hosted this kind of event in the past, but these were the first to happen since the COVID-19 pandemic. Both MEUW and the PSC hope to make the “municipal utility field day” an annual activity to encourage even more education and information sharing. ●



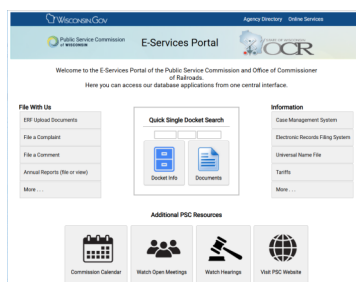
## PSC launches new Commission Calendar



The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) has completed the roll out of its new “[Commission Calendar](#).” The online calendar was launched in late February and is designed to provide easy access and

an “at-a-glance view” of information related to Commission open meetings, public and party hearings, and filing deadlines in contested cases. According to the Commission, the calendar reflects the agency’s continued commitment to transparency, accessibility, and public participation in PSC proceedings.

The new calendar replaces several former tools, including the PSC’s Events Calendar, Contested Case Calendar, and the Broadcast APP. Like its predecessors, the new Commission Calendar allows individuals to subscribe for docket-specific notifications. Subscribers will receive an email with a calendar attachment for all existing events and be notified as new events are entered for a docket. Those who were previously subscribed will need to create a new subscription in the Commission Calendar.



To begin the process of subscribing to the Commission Calendar, visit the [Schedule by Contested Case](#) section and select [Subscribe](#).

Subscriptions for the Commission Calendar are separate from those used to receive notifications from the PSC’s Electronic Records Filing (ERF) System. Additional information is available [here](#). ●

## Cold-weather moratorium on disconnects ends April 15

The annual winter moratorium from Nov. 1 to April 15 prohibits all utility providers from disconnecting residential heating services for nonpayment. Customers who are behind on their bills may be at risk of disconnection if payment arrangements are not established by April 15. Wisconsin is one of 39 states with set dates for cold-weather moratoriums. Three states have set dates only for high-temperature disconnections, while 10 have both low and high temperature-based moratoriums.

## Utilities are reminded to correctly calculate charges and sales taxes for net-metered customers

During recent reviews of electric utility billing practices, staff at the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) have found common errors related to net metering of parallel generation customers (mostly rooftop solar) across multiple municipal utilities. All munis are reminded of previous guidance from Commission staff regarding Commitment of Community (CTC) charges and sales taxes associated with net metering of parallel generation customers.



When assessing CTC charges, the CTC charge should be calculated based on the total electric charges prior to any credits for energy sold back to the utility by the customer. In other words, the CTC charge assessed to the customer should not be impacted or reduced by any parallel generation energy credits received by the customer. For example, if the net metered customer incurs \$100 in utility charges, but then receives a credit of \$50 for net metered energy production, then the CTC fee assessed should still be calculated based on the \$100 in utility charges.

The calculation of CTC charges is different from the calculation of sales tax. When calculating sales tax, the electricity sold by the customer to the utility is considered as a “trade-in” toward the purchase of electricity from the utility. In the example above, if the customer incurs \$100 in utility charges, but then receives a credit of \$50 for net metered energy production, then the sales tax should be assessed on the net of \$50.

Please note that when assessing sales tax for net billing or net metering, the monthly sales tax cannot be a net credit (i.e., the monthly sales tax cannot be negative). If a customer’s credit for energy production sold to the utility is greater than the total electric utility charges (i.e., the customer has a net monthly credit), then the monthly sales tax would be \$0.

Utilities are advised to review the calculation of CTC charges and sales tax in their billing systems and make adjustments as necessary to ensure that CTC charges and sales tax is correctly assessed to parallel generation customers. Incorrectly assessed CTC charges and sales tax could result in a finding and directive to recalculate customer bills in any future electric billing audits conducted by Commission staff.

# LIVELines

Official monthly publication of **Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin, Inc.**, the statewide trade association representing the interests of Wisconsin's public power providers since 1928.

This e-newsletter is distributed to more than 1,200 utility professionals and leaders throughout Wisconsin and the Midwest on the first Tuesday of every month.

*LIVE LINES* has been published continuously for many decades and provides useful information, news on emerging utility issues and legislation, updates on events, training programs and member services, as well as engaging feature stories spotlighting utilities, communities and leaders.

Reader comments and suggestions are welcome — send by email to [news@meuw.org](mailto:news@meuw.org)

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An archive of past issues of *Live Lines* is available at [www.issuu.com/meuw](http://www.issuu.com/meuw)



# 95th Annual Conference

May 14–16, 2025



La Crosse, Wisconsin

## Wednesday, May 14

- 8:00 a.m. Conference Golf Outing  
*Shotgun Start at 9:00 a.m.*
- 3:00 p.m. Hotel Check-in Available
- 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Utility Open House
- 5:15 to 7:15 p.m. Welcome Reception  
*Riverboat Cruise Hosted by Dairyland Power Cooperative*

— Dinner on your own —

## Thursday, May 15

- 7:00 to 8:15 a.m. Registration
- 7:00 to 8:15 a.m. Networking Breakfast
- 8:00 a.m. Welcome / Opening Session
- 8:30 a.m. General Session I
- 9:30 a.m. Networking Break
- 10:00 a.m. General Session II
- 10:45 a.m. General Session III
- 11:30 a.m. MEUW Honors Luncheon
- 1:15 p.m. Breakout Session A
- 2:00 p.m. Breakout Session B
- 2:45 p.m. Networking Break
- 3:00 p.m. Breakout Session C
- 3:30 p.m. Keynote Presentation
- 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Post-Conference  
Networking Social

— Dinner on your own —

## Friday, May 16

- 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. Breakfast Buffet
- 8:00 a.m. Board of Directors' Meeting

Conference events will take place at the Radisson Hotel in downtown La Crosse

MEUW's Annual Conference provides a unique forum for networking, education, and information-sharing among municipal utility leaders and industry partners from around the state. The program structure enables attendees to get the most out of their time.

- General sessions bring everyone together on broader issues.
- Breakout sessions dive deeper into strategic priorities to help MEUW support its member utilities.
- Pre- and post-conference receptions and networking breaks allow attendees the chance to make and renew connections.

Register online at

**MEUW.org**

## Registration Fee:

\$295 per person through May 1  
\$325 on May 2 or later  
Registration deadline is Friday, May 9

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# Bangor: Improving infrastructure to keep community strong



By Karen Whitmer

Nestled in Wisconsin's Coulee region, Bangor (pronounced *bain-gore*) is a picturesque village on the La Crosse River.

The area features deep valleys and steep hills formed by ancient glaciers and was named after the French word "coulee," meaning ravine or valley.

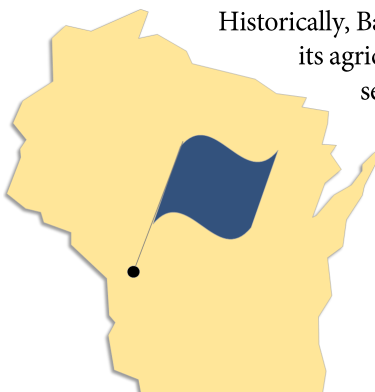
Less than a 20-minute drive from both La Crosse and Sparta, Bangor combines the charm of small-town living with convenient access to urban amenities. The village operates its own electric, water, and sewer utility, Bangor Municipal Utility (BMU), which serves Bangor and the surrounding areas. BMU's expansive 220-square-mile service area spans parts of eastern La Crosse County and western Monroe County.

The electric team includes Bangor Utility Manager Pat Reilley, three lineworkers, and three office staff (*see photo on page 8*). "We have an amazing team," Reilley said. "Our people respect the job; they are responsive, and they care about our customers, who are also our friends and neighbors," he continued.

Reilley has served as Bangor's Utility Manager since 2020, bringing a background of more than 25 years as a Journeyman Lineman/Operations Manager in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. "My wife and I tested out retirement in Florida, but couldn't stand the heat," Reilley joked. When exciting job opportunities appeared in and around Bangor, they "unretired," moved, and made the area their home. "We love it here. It's beautiful and friendly, with a small-town vibe like our hometown, but with much, much less snow and cold! We're proud to call the region our home," Reilley said.

## Brewery plays key role in Bangor's history

Bangor's history dates back to the mid-19th century. The village was named after Bangor, Wales (part of the British Isles), reflecting the Welsh heritage of many of its settlers.



Historically, Bangor has been recognized for its agricultural heritage, with farming serving as a key component of its economy. But beer also plays a crucial role in Bangor's history!

In 1854, Joseph Hussa, a native of Prague (then part of Austria-Hungary, now the Czech Republic) established the Hussa Brewery.

The brewery sourced ingredients from nearby farms and created employment opportunities in the community.

The brewery's beer gained national recognition, putting Bangor on the map. When Prohibition started in 1920, beer production was ceased because of the ban on alcohol and the brewery was converted into a canning and pickling factory.

In 1932, the Village of Bangor established its own municipal utilities, including electric services — a move that proved crucial for the community's development and modernization.

After Hussa's canning and pickling operations ended in 1937, Sprehn Brothers Feed Mill continued its operations at the location until the late 1990s. Other enterprises moved in to adjust to the village's evolving economic conditions.



## BMU serves a diverse group of customers

Although there is no longer a brewery in town, the village currently has a population of approximately 1,600 and continues to grow and thrive. According to Reilley, the village has added several apartment buildings, duplexes, and at least 25 single-family homes since 2020.

Today BMU serves around 2,000 electric customers, with 1,200 outside the village. About 80% are residential, and 20% are commercial or industrial. Stella-Jones, one of BMU's largest customers, manufactures industrial pressure-treated wood products. Their facility near Bangor produces railway ties and employs more than 60 people in the area. Rockland Flooring, a producer of laminated hardwood flooring for trailers, containers, and truck bodies, is also a BMU customer. The company, which employs about 100 people, manufactures products to improve the durability of trailer flooring.

Another large customer and an even larger source of pride for the community is the Bangor School District. The Bangor Cardinals high school athletic teams have achieved remarkable success over the years. During the 2017-18 school year, the Cardinals won three state titles in the same academic year — in football, girls' basketball, and boys' basketball.

Like other Wisconsin municipal utilities, BMU has seen a decrease in the number of farms in its service territory over the years. However, it still serves key agricultural customers. Ban-

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gor's Creamery Creek Dairy is a family-owned farm known for sustainable practices and high-quality milk, pasture-raised beef, and hormone-free pork.

BMU recently installed a 2,000 kVA transformer at Creamery Creek Dairy to meet their increased power needs. "Creamery Creek Dairy's growth is exciting," Reilley said, "and we are upgrading to ensure they continue to receive the reliable power they need to continue to grow their business."

### Electric team is focused on upgrades

BMU owns a substation constructed in 2012 and procures its power through Great Lakes Utilities.

The electric team is busy managing multiple projects. To date, eight miles of a three-phase conversion from overhead to underground is near completion, with ongoing work to convert an additional ten miles of single-phase overhead to underground lines.

"We service a large and varied territory with rolling hills, farms, rivers and streams, and wooded areas," said Reilley. "This work is time-consuming but key to our commitment to continuously upgrade infrastructure and adopt sustainable practices to meet all of our community's needs," Reilley added.



The team has replaced all voltage regulators and is nearly finished converting village-owned streetlights to LED lighting. Additionally, they are implementing a new Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping system to increase efficiency and shorten emergency response times.

BMU is currently undergoing a rate case with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC), filed on July 22, 2024. The decision is still pending with the PSC.

Reilley added that BMU had not requested a rate increase since 2012 but submitted one in 2021 to recover the costs of a new digger truck, to update failing infrastructure, and to realign the retail rates with the increased cost associated with wholesale purchase. The PSC has recommended that utilities shorten intervals between cases to reduce customer impact, so BMU was required to file again in 2024.

"We are fortunate to have a strong relationship with our customers, who acknowledge the need for additional investment to improve reliability long term," Reilley said. "Our customers recognize our guys' efforts and dedication, just as we value their support."



The Electric team at Bangor Municipal Utilities includes (from left): Linemen Brad Shea and Trevor Plomedahl; Utility Manager Pat Reilley; Utility Billing Clerk Melissa Justinger; Village Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer Jeri Wittmershaus; and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Carolyn Hoeth. (Lineman Tony Schuchardt is not pictured)

### Small town living with big city amenities

Downtown Bangor offers great shopping and dining at businesses including the Village Inn, Augie's Bar & Grill, Wales Mill Pub and Bistro, Highland Ridge Market, and Rural Sophisticate & Co. The area also has many beautiful parks, lakes, and trails. The La Crosse River State Trail is a popular spot for both hiking and biking and attracts many outdoor enthusiasts and visitors.

A good time to visit the Coulee Region is during Bangor's Annual Summer Daze, sponsored by the Bangor Lions, which will be held Aug. 8-10 in Bangor Village Park. Summer Daze activities include a parade, pancake breakfast, craft and vendor show, games, and live music.

But according to Jeri Lynne Wittmershaus, Village Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer, who has lived in the village for over 25 years, it's the people that make Bangor such a special place.

"Bangor is primarily recognized for its small-town charm and community focus," Wittmershaus said. "Whether it's a local fundraiser, school event, or family crisis, the community is always showing up to lend support or a helping hand."

Reilley reinforced that Bangor is a welcoming, strong community. "Whether you're interested in outdoor activities, community events, or local history, Bangor provides a lot ... and the people will make you want to come back again and again." ●

*Karen Whitmer is a regular contributor to LIVE LINES; she is freelance communicator based in the Fox Valley.*

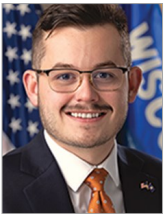


# Get to know a little about some Wisconsin lawmakers



*This regular feature helps readers get to know Wisconsin elected officials and better understand their views on policies that may impact municipal utilities.*

## Rep. Callahan serves on Energy Committee



Calvin Callahan (R-Tomahawk) has represented the 35th Assembly District in the

Wisconsin State Assembly since 2020. The 35th Assembly District of Wisconsin is in northern Wisconsin. It includes Lincoln and Langlade counties, as well as parts of Oconto, Shawano, Oneida, and Marathon counties. Some of the cities and villages within the district are Antigo, Merrill, Tomahawk, Mattoon, and White Lake.

In the Assembly, Callahan is a member of the Committee on Energy and Utilities. He also chairs the Committee on Consumer Protection, serves as the vice-chair of the Committee on Insurance, and is a member of the Committee on Forestry, Parks, and Outdoor Recreation.

Callahan was born in Wausau and grew up in Tomahawk. He attended Tomahawk High School in 2017. In 2017 and 2018, Callahan worked as an intern in the office of Congressman Sean Duffy. After graduat-

ing from high school, Callahan worked as a field organizer and regional field director for the state Republican Party.

Callahan was elected to the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors in April 2018, and was re-elected in 2020. Calvin also serves as a supervisor on his local town board in the Town of Wilson.

In 2020, Callahan announced his candidacy for the Wisconsin State Assembly. He won the election at the age of 21, becoming one of the youngest members of the Assembly. Callahan was successfully reelected in 2022.

In 2023, he enrolled in the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and completed his general education courses. He is currently a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studying kinesiology with a pre-physician assistant focus.

Callahan resides in rural Wilson in Lincoln County. In his free time, Calvin enjoys hiking, boating, and spending time outdoors. He is also active in the community and is a member of the National Rifle Association, Somo Fish and Game Club, the Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association, Wisconsin Trappers Association, and the Lincoln County Republican Party.

## Sen. Jesse James sits on Utilities Committee



Jesse James (R-Thorp) has represented the 23rd district in the Wisconsin State

Senate since 2023. Wisconsin's 23rd Senate District, in northwest Wisconsin, includes Barron, Clark, Price, Rusk, and Taylor counties and parts of Chippewa, Dunn, and Marathon counties. Key cities are Bloomer, Ladysmith, Medford, Neillsville, and Rice Lake.

James is now a member of the Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism. He also chairs the Committee on Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Children and Families. Additionally, he serves as Vice-Chair of the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety and is a member of the Committee on Health.

Before joining the Wisconsin State Senate, he represented the 68th district in the Wisconsin State Assembly from 2019 to 2023.

James was born and raised in Eau Claire. He graduated from North High School in Eau Claire. In 1990, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. After honorably serving, he came back home and joined the U.S. Army Reserves as a medic, 397th Engineer Battalion in Eau Claire.

He then studied law enforcement at Chippewa Valley Technical College and began his career as a police officer. He eventually became the Police and Fire Chief of Altoona.

James is currently serving as a part-time police officer in the Village of Cadott, balancing his responsibilities as a law enforcement officer with his responsibilities as a state senator. According to James, staying on as a police officer allows him to stay connected to his

community while maintaining his commitment to public safety. James and his wife, Vicky, also own a coffee shop in Thorp.

He is a member of the Wisconsin State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and the Wisconsin Council on Military and State Relations.

James and his wife have four adult children and two grandchildren. They currently reside in Altoona.

## Rep. Fitzgerald is new to representing the 46th



Joan Fitzgerald (D-Fort Atkinson) was sworn in as a member of the Wisconsin State Assembly

in January 2025, representing the 46th Assembly district. The 46th is in southern Wisconsin and includes the western half of Jefferson County and parts of eastern Dane County. Some of the cities and villages within this district are Fort Atkinson, Lake Mills, Waterloo, Cambridge, Deerfield, Rockdale, Cottage Grove, and McFarland.

In the Assembly, Fitzgerald serves on the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Workforce Development, Labor, and Integrated Employment.

Fitzgerald was born and raised in Milwaukee and graduated from Greendale High School in 1982. She earned her bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

*Continued on page 10*

# Wisconsin UTILITY NEWS Digest

## New solar project now online in southern Wisconsin

The Darien Solar Energy Center, located in parts of Walworth and Rock counties, went into service in March. The new renewable energy facility has more than 600,000 solar panels, enough to power about 75,000 homes.

The project was developed by Chicago-based Invenergy, which bills itself as the largest privately held developer, owner, and operator of clean energy solutions. We Energies is the majority owner; Wisconsin Public Service Corp. and Madison Gas and Electric are also co-owners.

This is We Energies' second large scale solar project to power up in recent months. The Paris Solar Energy Center in Kenosha County went online in December.

## We Energies proposes special electric rate for data centers

According to a *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* report, Wisconsin's largest investor-owned utility, has proposed a new electric rate designed specifically for very large customers, primarily energy-intensive data centers, like a Microsoft facility proposed for Mount Pleasant.

In a March 31 filing with state regulators, We Energies requested a new electric rate that would have nine billing determinants. One of them is an administrative charge that includes a fixed cost of \$213,118 per billing period plus the variable cost of \$305 per megawatt of Maximum Customer Demand per billing period. The utility said the monthly charge is designed to cover the full personnel and overhead costs dedicated to serving any new VLC (very large customer).

Consumer groups called for a "robust analysis and a transparent process" to evaluate the proposal.

## Upcoming virtual seminar to explore best practices in email and text communications

The ability to craft clear, concise, and impactful emails and text messages is essential in today's fast-paced environment. Unfortunately, too many people simply don't know how to effectively use modern-day communications tools that are designed to help us all be more productive. As part of a virtual training series MEUW is offering this spring, participants will learn tips and tricks to master the art of clear and professional communication across email, text, and phone interactions. This course is designed to cover the essentials for communicating with both internal and external customers, including everyday phone skills such as active listening and gathering key information to ensure effective outcomes. The 90-minute training will also explore etiquette, policies, and legal considerations for written communication and how to write emails and texts that enhance customer service and reflect professionalism. Full details about the training — offered Thursday, May 22 — are available [here](#).

## Political Profiles *Continued from page 9*

She worked for 33 years as a high school math teacher in Jefferson's public schools before retiring in 2020. She was a founding member of the Whitewater Area Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and is also a member of the Jefferson Education Association and the Fort Atkinson Booster Club.

Rep. Fitzgerald's political career began in 2019 when she was appointed to the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors. She was elected to a full two-

year term in 2020 and re-elected without opposition in 2022.

Her political views are shaped by her background in education and community service. She is a strong advocate for public education and affordable and accessible healthcare for all. She has also said that she is dedicated to environmental conservation and supports policies aimed at combating climate change and promoting renewable energy.

She and her husband, Michael, live in Fort Atkinson and have two adult children. ●



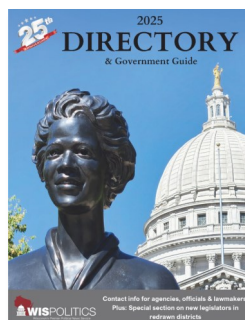
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## MEUW sponsors WisPolitics Directory



In an effort to elevate MEUW's profile, the association sponsored the 2025 Directory & Government Guide published by WisPolitics. The publication, which includes photos and contact information for state agencies, lawmakers, and other top officials, is a go-to resource widely used by those

working in state government and politics. To request a copy for yourself, please email [office@meuw.org](mailto:office@meuw.org).



## New energy-saving option for electric baseboard heating users

**F**ocus on Energy is now offering residential utility customers with electric baseboard heating a way to save energy and reduce heating costs. The [Online Marketplace](#) now features smart thermostats from Mysa for customers who use electric resistance baseboard heating. The [Mysa](#) and [Mysa LITE](#) are available to customers with a \$50 instant discount off retail price. These models offer households up to 26% in energy savings.

Electric baseboard heating systems are a type of zone heating that allow you to control the temperature in individual rooms. The baseboard unit, which runs along the bottom of the wall, uses a metal heating element to generate and slowly release heat into the room where it's placed, and it slowly rises from the floor to the ceiling to warm the room. Many baseboard heating systems are controlled with a basic thermostat, that turns on the heater if the indoor temperature is below the set temperature. When the indoor temperature reaches the set temperature, the heater turns off.

In Wisconsin, approximately 19% of homes are heated with electricity and baseboard heat is one of the most common sources of electric heat, typically found in rural or lower income housing. In 2021, a Focus [analysis](#) found that, of electrically heated single-family homes, around 40% (66,609) are income-eligible. Focus considers a customer income-eligible if their income is 80% or less of the Area Median Income, which varies by residence size.



Customers often choose electric baseboard heating because it usually costs less

and is easier to install than other heating systems that require ductwork or connection to a gas line. However, these systems have drawbacks as well. The placement of baseboard heaters near windows and exterior walls makes them inefficient. If the thermostat senses cold nearby, such as drafts from old windows, the system works harder to keep the room warm. This constant battling of cold drafts increases heating costs, especially during the coldest months of winter.

One of the primary ways Mysa helps users save energy is through its smart control capabilities. Traditional electric

baseboard thermostats often require manual adjustments, leading to inefficient heating and higher energy consumption. In contrast, Mysa allows users to control their heating systems remotely via a smartphone app. This means homeowners can adjust their thermostat settings from anywhere, ensuring their home is only heated when necessary.

Additionally, Mysa's scheduling feature enables users to create customized heating schedules based on their daily routines. By automatically lowering the temperature when the house is unoccupied or during nighttime hours, Mysa reduces unnecessary energy usage. This level of automation ensures that the baseboard heater operates more efficiently, leading to significant energy savings over time.

The Mysa app displays detailed information about energy consumption, allowing users to monitor their heating patterns and identify areas where they can improve efficiency. By understanding their energy usage, homeowners can make informed decisions about how to adjust their heating settings to maximize savings.

The combination of smart control, real-time energy insights, and integration with smart home systems, like Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, and Apple HomeKit, translates to significant cost savings on utility bills. By optimizing heating schedules and reducing unnecessary energy usage, Mysa helps homeowners with baseboard heating lower their monthly energy expenses. Over time, these savings can offset the initial investment in the smart thermostat, making it a cost-effective solution for energy-conscious consumers. Focus is only offering the Mysa smart thermostat through the [Online Marketplace](#) at this time. Customers can learn more about the Mysa thermostat, in addition to other energy-saving products, by visiting [focusonenergymarketplace.com](https://focusonenergymarketplace.com). ●



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## Spring is perfect time to ensure your mutual aid plans are ready

Every MEUW utility has access to a customized guidebook to help prepare for and manage a mutual aid event when it's needed. The Mutual Aid Community Resource Guide is available [here](#) (member login is required).

The Resource Guide was developed based on lessons learned and feedback from past mutual aid events and includes various tools necessary for a well-coordinated mutual aid response, including roles and responsibilities, key contacts, and pre-planning details for critical facilities, lodging and meals. The guidebook is a Microsoft Excel document with multiple tabs, which allows for everything to be kept in a single location and makes it easy to update. The guidebook's comprehensive Table of Contents is linked to each form for quick access, and each tab is formatted for simplified printing. ●

## LIVELines Classifieds

MEUW is pleased to promote job openings with its member utilities across Wisconsin. New positions are regularly added to our website — check them out [here](#) or use your smartphone to scan the QR code below. Here are some current opportunities available:

**City of Whitehall** — [City Administrator](#)

**Kiel Utilities** — [Electrical Lineman A / Electric Lineman Apprentice](#)

**Waunakee Utilities** — [Limited Term Employee - Electric Department](#)

When your utility is hiring, be sure to email the job posting to [office@meuw.org](mailto:office@meuw.org).



## Have you gotten a MEUW cap? Show it off!



Those attending the MEUW Foreman's Roundtable in March received a stylish new cap from MEUW, along with a supply to take back and give to their line crews. We want to thank our municipal utility crews and feature them as we celebrate National Lineman Appreciation Day this month, and we'd love to see you in your new caps.

Take a selfie or a group photo (wearing the hat of course) and email it to [news@meuw.org](mailto:news@meuw.org) or text it to (608) 220-8625 by noon on Monday, April 14. You may see yourselves on MEUW's social media pages, website, and in the next edition of *LIVE LINES*. If no one from your utility attended the Roundtable, the caps are also being given away at other MEUW training events this spring and summer.




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