

LIVELines

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Innovative approach creating cleaner energy

Wisconsin's largest municipal electric utility, Manitowoc Public Utilities (MPU), is leading the way toward a cleaner energy future by refueling its power plant boilers to burn 100% Wisconsin-recognized renewable biomass pellets, resulting in both



economic savings and environmental benefits. The pellets, made from local industrial non-hazardous secondary materials, offer a cost-effective, sustainable alternative to coal and petcoke. Rising fuel costs and global transportation disruptions were also factors in the utility's decision to transition.

MPU collaborated with the boiler manufacturers to optimize efficiency and achieve full capacity of both units. Currently, MPU runs its 23 MW boiler entirely on renewable fuel pellets and plans to expand pellet

production to power both boilers. The project aims to divert 18,000 tons of waste from landfills each month, reducing methane emissions while extending the life of its plants.

Since the 1990s, MPU has blended coal, petcoke, and biomass from local sources. Recognizing the potential of Wisconsin's paper industry waste, MPU partnered with local companies already producing pellets to increase their production. By burning these pellets, MPU even earns renewable fuel credits.

To further showcase its efforts, MPU is hosting a meeting of the American Public Power Association's (APPA) Demonstration of Energy & Efficiency Developments program (DEED) in early October. The DEED program has funded research, pilot projects, and education to improve the operations and services of public power utilities for more than 40 years.

In addition to this fuel innovation, MPU is a diamond-level Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) designation by APPA for its safety and operational excellence. The prestigious status reflects MPU's long-time commitment to best practices and continuous improvement in sustainable energy production.

APPA News Director Paul Ciampoli contributed to this article.

Operations Conference and Expo set for January

Registration opens Oct. 2 for the annual Electric Operations Conference & Expo (EOCE) in Wisconsin Dells.

Each year, municipal and electric cooperative employees come together to network and learn about important topics impacting utility operations. MEUW and the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) will hold EOCE 25 at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells on Jan. 15, 16 and 17. Employees at all levels are welcome and encouraged to attend this year's event. A preview of the event is available [here](#).

EOCE 25 will feature presentations on topics of interest to municipal utilities and a large trade show featuring utility suppliers showcasing the latest products and services for utility operations. This year's Expo is also expected to include "Supplier

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The change of seasons is often a time to look forward to what lies ahead. As the calendar turns to October and the daylight hours fade early, we know that autumn has arrived and the current year is winding down. As a new empty-nester, I'm feeling a bit more nostalgic than usual at this time of year, but also excited about the future.

Thinking back — at this time last year, we were gearing up for MEUW's 95th Anniversary events. Details were being finalized for what proved to be an exciting and memorable celebration of public power in Wisconsin. We definitely made a splash with our parade of more than 80 municipal utility vehicles around the Capitol Square. It's safe to say that folks who didn't know about public power had a chance to learn more and hear our members toot their own horns — literally.

Oct. 18, 2023, was a milestone day in the history of MEUW, and our work to achieve our mission to unify and strengthen public power utilities in Wisconsin continues.

In support of this mission, we have a few key things planned for this fall: We will be hosting five District Dialogue lunches across the state, aimed at bringing members together to discuss topics of interest to them. We will also be commemorating Public Power Week, ensuring our message continues

to be shared with customers, lawmakers, and the folks whose decisions impact us. We also tried something new this fall by raising awareness of public power with a younger audience through sponsorship of three "Nightfall Classic" cross-country meets under the lights, helping the student-athletes and their families

learn about career opportunities with municipal utilities. It's been a busy time.

The MEUW Board of Directors recently gathered for a strategic planning session. The meeting was a chance to reflect on MEUW's progress, work over the past five years, and to discuss critical needs and focus areas as we approach our 100th anniversary in 2028. While we are still assessing the outcome of the Board's work, the path we've paved is one we plan to continue — with some refinement. We'll share more details as the plan is updated.

The session itself was productive, and the discussions demonstrated a strong degree of alignment among our Board members as well as a commitment to MEUW's mission for the long term.

I wouldn't blame you if you've stopped watching TV because of all the political ads filling the airwaves across our "battleground" state. Even so, I hope you will take time to cast a ballot and make your vote count on

Nov. 5. Regardless of the outcome of the presidential election, we know change is coming to our state's Capitol. New legislative maps means there are sure to be new faces in both the Assembly and Senate when the new session starts in January. Those changes give us a great opportunity to share the public power story with both new and returning legislators. To that end, we have set 2/5/25 as the date for our next MEUW Day at the Capitol, and we hope you'll mark your calendars to join us in Madison. Watch for more details in MEUW communications as the date nears.

With 2025 fast approaching, we're deep into planning for a number of member-focused events, including the Electric Operations Conference & Expo in January (*see story on page 1*) as well as a second annual Foreman's Roundtable. After a successful gathering earlier this year, we've set Tuesday, March 19, 2025, for a gathering of crew leaders and line superintendents to "talk shop" and compare notes to enhance both communications and leadership among those managing line crews on a daily basis. Stay tuned for details.

The success of MEUW is a reflection of the engagement level among our members. We appreciate your ongoing feedback and suggestions to help improve the quality and types of services we provide. Thank you for your continued support of MEUW and our mission.



You can reach MEUW's President and CEO **Tim Heinrich** by phone at (608) 478-0998 or by email at theinrich@meuw.org



Municipal employees from Cumberland and Rice Lake posed outside the State Capitol during MEUW's 95th anniversary celebration in 2023. Another "Day at the Capitol" is planned for Feb. 5, 2025, to engage with Wisconsin lawmakers and share the public power story.

Dates set for 2025 professional development training classes

MEUW will offer another round of training in both the Fundamentals of Utility Management Series and Municipal Utility Leadership Certificate Program in the new year. The 2025 training calendar is [here](#).

EOCE 25 is Jan. 15-17 in Dells

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Showcase" demonstrations on a designated stage inside the Exhibit Hall, allowing exhibitors to lead hands-on discussions with show attendees.

The agenda is structured to offer more joint sessions for municipal and co-op attendees to hear about key industry topics, including grid resiliency, cybersecurity, and the importance of advocacy, among others. In addition to topical breakout sessions, there will be structured cohort discussions to enable deeper networking and idea sharing.



Brown

The keynote address will be delivered by Gilbert Brown, the Green Bay Packers Hall of Famer, who will share powerful insights about teamwork, inspiring others, overcoming adversity, and the importance of community. Brown played 125 games for the Packers in the 1990s and from 2001-03, earning a nickname as "The Gravedigger" for his defensive contributions, including 15 playoff games and Green Bay's win in Super Bowl XXXI in 1997.

Three types of registration passes — Kilowatt, Megawatt, and Gigawatt — are available to accommodate those who wish to

	Registration Options										Registration Fees	
	General Sessions	Networking Breaks	Welcome Reception	Breakfast and Lunch	Networking Breaks	General Sessions	Breakout Sessions	TRADE SHOW	Thursday Reception	GRADUATION BANQUET	Friday Breakfast	
Kilowatt Pass	✓	✓	✓								+\$55	\$175
Megawatt Pass				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		+\$55	\$250
Gigawatt Pass	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	+\$55	\$350
	Wednesday		Thursday									MEUW Members*
												General Public

*\$25 "early bird" discount for member registrations received on or before Dec. 1

attend only part of the three-day event (see table above). Those most interested in the Expo (trade show), for example, will want to purchase a Megawatt pass, which offers access to the Wednesday Welcome Reception and Thursday's confer-

Members' *NEWS*



Todd Weiler was named General Manager of Wisconsin Rapids Water Works and Lighting Commission (WRWW&LC) in September. He has been with the utility since 2008, and since 2014 worked as Director of Engineering & Electric Operations.



Scott Gald has been promoted to Utility Manager for City Utilities of Richland Center. He has been with the utility for 16 years and most recently held the title Electric Superintendent, a role he assumed in 2019.

Mason Senso started as an Apprentice Lineman at Sturgeon Bay Utilities in August.

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 to share your news.

ence sessions, meals, and the Expo. MEUW members who register as an "Early Bird" can get a Megawatt pass for \$225.

Full details about the conference, including the registration link, are available at www.meuw.org/eoce. There is a \$25 discount for all registrations received on or before Dec. 1. ●

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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

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An archive of past issues of *Live Lines* is available at www.issuu.com/meuw

Every October, Wisconsin's community-owned electric utilities join the nationwide celebration of **Public Power Week** to highlight what differentiates public power from other types of utilities — namely, being local, being not-for-profit, and offering reliable electric service that's second-to-none. Many of the 81 communities that own and operate their electric utility host events, offer giveaways, and engage with their customers to celebrate what makes public power special. ●



STATE of WISCONSIN



OFFICE of the GOVERNOR

Proclamation

WHEREAS, every day, individuals living and working across Wisconsin enjoy the benefits of being served by a municipal-owned electric utility; and

WHEREAS, public power utilities and their dedicated workers help to ensure thousands of Wisconsinites and their families have access to safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to power their homes and places of business; and

WHEREAS, most of Wisconsin's public power utilities have been in continuous operation for more than a century, helping to build strong communities and contributing to the quality of life in towns, villages, and cities across the state; and

WHEREAS, by operating as not-for-profits, public power utilities are able to focus primarily on providing quality service to their customers and neighbors and remain committed to working safely, maintaining essential services, keeping the public out of harm's way, and enhancing communities; and

WHEREAS, through the input of community members and local decision-making, the city councils, village boards, and utility commissions that oversee community-owned power companies can ensure that the local utility is financially stable, well-run, and responsive to the needs of the individuals who live and work there; and

WHEREAS, this week, the state of Wisconsin joins municipal utility communities along with dedicated advocates and organizations across the state in celebrating the unique operational advantages of municipal-owned public power utilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tony Evers, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, do hereby proclaim October 6 – 12, 2024, as

PUBLIC POWER WEEK

throughout the State of Wisconsin, and I commend this observance to all our state's residents.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Madison this 27th day of September 2024.

Tony Evers
TONY EVERS
GOVERNOR



By the Governor:

Sarah Godlewski
SARAH GODLEWSKI
Secretary of State

How did your community celebrate Public Power Week? Take time to tell us and send pictures to news@meuw.org

Watch for a wrap-up in the next LIVE LINES.

New Holstein: Making meaningful customer connections



Situated between Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan in Calumet County, New Holstein is a beautiful, tight-knit community of about 3,100 people. One of the many benefits of living in New Holstein is that

the community owns its own utilities, providing electric, water, wastewater, and water softening services.

“Being locally owned and operated, our utilities are deeply invested in the community,” said Marc Stephanie, General Manager of New Holstein Utilities (NHU). Stephanie joined NHU about three years ago, citing one of the primary reasons for his career move was the top-notch staff and the welcoming community.

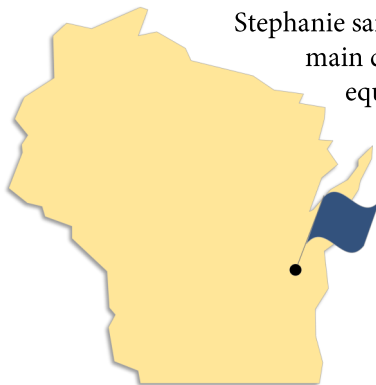
With a team of four journeymen linemen, one apprentice lineman, and four office employees, the electric utility serves about 2,200 residential electric customers and 450 commercial customers.

“Our employees are dedicated, well-trained, and focused on high-quality service and customer satisfaction,” Stephanie said. “We enjoy a great relationship with our customers, who are also our neighbors and friends.”

NHU Provides Exceptional Service

NHU provides electric service to the town of New Holstein as well as customers in the surrounding townships of Brothertown, Charlestown, Eaton, and Schleswig.

“Our service territory is among the largest of the municipal electric utilities in Wisconsin,” Stephanie said. The electric utility team is responsible for operating, maintaining, and rebuilding 25 miles of overhead and underground lines within the City of New Holstein and 123 miles of mostly overhead line in its rural territory. The electric utility also maintains two substations and has a capacity of more than 30 megawatts.



Stephanie said the electric utility team’s main current focus is updating equipment. In 2025, NHU will upgrade all electric meters to Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters to streamline processes and improve the customer service experience. All AMI meters will be installed by the end of

2025. “AMI meters are valuable for both customers and utilities — promoting cost savings, accuracy, and even environmental responsibility,” Stephanie said.

NHU, which was one of the founding members of WPPI Energy, continues to be a member today. “We know our customers want reliable power at an affordable cost,” Stephanie said. “To ensure our success, we share resources with other community-owned utilities.”

The electric utility has a good working relationship with Kiel Electric Utility and Plymouth Utilities. “While it hasn’t happened often, we know we can rely on each other during emergencies or unusual situations when we need assistance,” Stephanie said.

Customers Have Access to an Add-on Service

One unique benefit for NHU customers is that they also have the option to add on water softening services. Customers can rent a water softening system from NHU for a monthly fee, and the utility handles the installation and maintenance.



Marc Stephanie

According to Stephanie, NHU offers water softening services because the area has very hard water, which contains high levels of minerals that can decrease the lifespan of plumbing and appliances over time. The successful program — first launched in 1967 — has about 1,400 customers. “It’s a helpful, cost-effective service for our customers,” he said.

“We always get positive feedback on the program.”

History of New Holstein

New Holstein was first settled by German immigrants in 1848. Originally named Schleswig-Holstein after the region in Germany, the town was later renamed New Holstein. New Holstein was incorporated as a village in 1901 and later became a city in 1926.

On June 20, 1912, the residents of New Holstein voted to establish their own municipal utility to provide electric lights to the village. “It was a tight race,” Stephanie said. “The history books show that it only passed by one vote. But it proved to be successful, as we’ve been providing electric service to New Holstein for more than 112 years.”

Initially, the town was a farming community, producing crops such as potatoes, wheat, and barley. But as New Holstein grew, it saw the establishment of several manufacturing companies, such as Lauson Manufacturing Company (later to be known as Tecumseh Products Company). The Tecumseh

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New Holstein Utilities commemorated 2024 Public Power Week during a community-wide celebration on Sept. 24. The graphic here shows highlights of the activities the utility hosted to engage with its customers.

lenged the students at New Holstein Elementary School to help restock the local food pantry. If the students brought in five large bins of non-perishable items, then the principal would get a glimpse of what's it's really like to be a utility lineman by going up high in a NHU aerial truck.

"We decided to go bigger than a food drive in our lobby, and it was really successful," Kovach said. Through the generosity of our school kids and their parents, NHU was able to fill the shelves of our local food pantry ... and have a lot of fun.

"The kids met our challenge and loved seeing their principal harness up and be lifted above the school in our aerial," Kovach said. The students were also treated to story time with Electric Operations Supervisor Justin Schneider with help from Lineman Apprentice Mason Meyer. The kids also had the opportunity to ask questions and to see some of the equipment the utility owns. Lineman Nathan Boehnlein was there to demonstrate some of the tools used every day by NHU's electric crew.

"Our entire team is wonderful," said Kovach. "And so are our customers. New Holstein has a strong sense of community where everyone knows each other, which creates such a friendly environment. It's a great place to work and call home." ●

*The **Community Spotlight** is a regular feature of MEUW's LIVE LINES. Seventy Wisconsin communities that own and operate their own electric utility have been showcased since this column first appeared in the August 2018 edition.*

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plant in New Holstein shut down in 2007, when engine production operations moved overseas.

But today New Holstein continues to thrive, and NHU serves a diverse group of commercial customers. NHS still has many customers involved in agriculture, but it also serves manufacturers such as Metko, which specializes in metal fabrication, and NHU's biggest commercial customer, Buechel Stone Corp., which offers a wide range of stones for building and landscaping.

The town also has a variety of service-based businesses, including retail stores and restaurants. "We are a relatively quiet town," Stephanie said. "But we also have many thriving small businesses." It is home to Altona Supper Club, Honeymoon Acres (a massive greenhouse), and Hidden Hollow (a metal art retailer), which attract people from the surrounding areas.

Connecting with Customers

While NHU's main goals are to provide reliable and affordable power for its customers, the team also works hard to maintain meaningful connections with the community. "One of the ways we like to connect to customers is through events," said NHU's Business Manager Kathy Kovach. "Our team is involved in community events, such as the annual Christmas Parade, Firemen's Picnic, and Trunk and Treat."

NHU also typically recognizes Public Power Week with various community activities, including a food drive held in the lobby of the utility. Every year, the food is donated to the local food pantry. Kovach, who has been with the utility for more than 20 years, said that NHU decided to reach "higher" for Public Power Week this year.

This year's Public Power Week celebration was held on Tuesday, Sept. 24. According to Stephanie, NHU chal-

MEUW NEWS Monitor

Utility Accounting & Finance

class is Oct. 9: Understanding the various financial aspects associated with utility operations is essential for anyone in a management position. The next course in our four-part Fundamentals of Utility Management Training Series, Utility Accounting & Finance, will provide attendees the fundamentals of public utility accounting, a clear understanding of business operations, and how to review and effectively manage budgets. Register [here](#) today.

Friend of Public Power Dinner on Oct. 14 in Cuba City: At the Annual Conference earlier this year, MEUW

honored state Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) with the association's "Friend of Public Power Award" for 2024, for his legislative efforts to advocate for municipal utilities' ability to own and operate EV charging stations, among other issues.



Sen. Marklein

MEUW is holding a dinner on Monday, Oct. 14, in Cuba City to present Sen. Marklein with his award. All MEUW members are invited to attend the event at Red's Supper Club. Full details and registration information can be accessed [here](#).

Next class in Leadership series

set for Dec. 4: Collaborating is much more than just working with people — it also involves using influence and persuasion to drive high-performing teams. Leaders skilled in collaboration understand how individuals impact one another and how to foster creative thinking and effective problem-solving to drive results. This one-day class, part of our three-part Municipal Utility Leadership Certificate series, will give attendees practical ideas and skills they can bring back to their workplace. More information and registration are available [here](#).

Census Bureau seeking customer usage data

The U.S. Census Bureau is looking for public power utility partners willing to work with them to share account data about customer utility usage. This data can help the U.S. Census Bureau determine whether housing units are likely vacant, occupied, or nonresidential for the 2030 Census. The results of the decennial census will help determine how trillions of federal tax dollars are distributed to state and local governments. All data shared with the Census Bureau is confidential and protected under Title 13 of the U.S. Code. If your utility is interested in this opportunity or would like to learn more, please contact [Katherine Reeves](#) at the Census Bureau at (301) 763-7912.



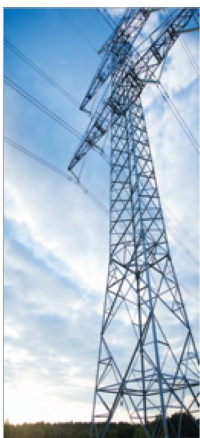
Thursday, Oct. 3
Richland Center

Tuesday, Oct. 15
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Thursday, Oct. 17
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Open meetings and public records promote transparency



By Jared Walker Smith

More than 75 citizens attended a July common council open meeting over the fate of the City of Richland Center utility commission. The substantial citizen response in support of the commission resulted in the common council postponing any decision in order to continue evaluating the issues. This process perfectly reflects the goal of Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law (OML) and the companion Public Records Law (PRL) to provide the greatest, fullest, and most complete information regarding the affairs of government in order to empower and inform the electorate. This objective of transparency in government extends to all forms of local government, including utility commissions and committees.

This article highlights utility-specific features of Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law (Wis. Stat. §§ 19.81-19.98) and Public Records Law (Wis. Stat. §§ 19.31-19.39). The scope of the laws are far too broad for a brief summary to do them justice. A thorough overview of both laws is available in the June 2024 edition of the League of Wisconsin Municipality's magazine, *The Municipality*,

or in the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Compliance Guides.

The OML applies to meetings of all local governmental bodies. These bodies include utility commissions and committees and any committee formed by those bodies. The basics of the OML require that a governmental body provide advance notice of the time, date, place, and subject matter of any meeting of the governmental body. The notice must have sufficient detail to reasonably inform the public of what will be discussed and acted upon at the meeting.

Public notice is typically required even when a quorum of one public body attends the meeting of another. For example, if a quorum of the utility commission attends the meeting of a subcommittee, the commission should properly notice its attendance as a meeting in the subcommittee's notice or as a separate notice. This is frequently referred to as a *Badke* notice, named for the Supreme Court case that clarified this issue.

Similarly, a meeting can be deemed to have occurred even when a quorum of members is not present in

one location at one time. This is the "walking quorum" trap. And this trap is easy to fall into with the proliferation of quick and easy ways to communicate. A walking quorum is when enough individual conversations and communications result in a tacit or explicit agreement to act uniformly in sufficient number to reach a quorum. Discussion, however, is supposed to take place in an open meeting. It is therefore a problem when a public body's members feel there is no need to discuss an

tion in Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1) to close the meeting.

The most common exemptions used by utilities to enter closed session include: par. (e), where competitive or bargaining reasons related to purchasing public properties, investing public funds, or conducting other public business require confidential discussion; par. (g), when conferring with legal counsel over strategy to be taken in pending or potential litigation, which includes contested cases before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin;

and pars. (b) and (c), relating to employment matters. Notably, par. (g) requires that the utility's attorney actually be present and rendering legal advice concerning litigation strategy.

With cybersecurity continuing to be a hot topic for utilities, utilities are also turning to par. (d) to discuss strategies to enhance cybersecurity measures. Paragraph

(d) provides that, except for certain matters involving the parole commission, closed session may be held for "considering specific applications of probation, extended supervision or parole, or **considering strategy for crime detection or prevention**" (the bolded portion being that cited by utilities). With the broader scope of par. (d) and its initial focus on persons



Former City Utilities of Richland Center Commissioner Marsha Machotka was one of more than two dozen concerned citizens who spoke at a July 2 public hearing addressing the future of the utility's governance.

Photo by Richland Observer. Used with permission.

agenda item because they have hashed out the issues outside of the meeting.

This presumption that all meetings must be open to the public is a key feature of the OML. The presumption holds unless any of the limited statutory exemptions to close a meeting apply. The OML requires that advance notice of the closed session be provided, along with the specific statutory authoriza-

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within the criminal justice system, it is recommended that a utility consult with its legal counsel when contemplating closing a session by reason of par. (d). Since closed session exemptions can also be used to support the denial of public records requests, it is important that there is no room to contest the validity of the closed session when cybersecurity is discussed.

Clearly, then, the OML and PRL are linked by a presumption of transparency. The PRL's presumption is of complete public access to records of a utility with denial to occur only in exceptional cases. Consequently, when a records request comes in, the utility's records custodian should analyze the request under a four-step process: (1) is the request for a record and, if so, does one exist; (2) if so, is the requester entitled to access the record by law; (3) if not, is the requester prohibited access by law; and (4) if not, is the public interest in disclosure outweighed by a competing public interest in non-disclosure (the "balancing test").

Unfortunately, knowing whether a statute or court case prohibits disclosure of all or a part of a record is not always straightforward. Unlike exemptions for closed session, no singular statute lists all the reasons why access can be prohibited. For a utility, however, one of the most common exemptions from disclosure under the PRL is for "customer information." Customer information is "any information received from customers which serves to identify customers individually by usage or account status." See Wis. Stat. § 196.137.

Except for statutorily identified persons, a utility is prohibited from releasing customer information, including under a PRL request. The statute specifically authorizes a utility to continue to utilize postcard billing statements.

The other portion of the PRL that is sometimes overlooked is the PRL notice requirements. The PRL requires that an "authority," which may include a utility commission or committee, adopt, prominently display, and make available for

inspection and copying at its offices, a notice about the utility's public records policies. The notice must contain specific information listed in Wis. Stat. § 19.34(1). Since municipal utilities are considered departments of their parent municipality from a legal standpoint, the municipality may have policies in place to be the one to prepare and provide these policies and notices. However, where a municipality grants its utility independence to act as its own "authority" (as defined in Wis. Stat. § 19.32(1)) with respect to public records, it would be on the utility to prepare and provide utility-specific public records policies and notices.

The OML and PRL provide transparency in government, which is the cornerstone of democracy. And, as was seen in Richland Center, compliance with the OML and PRL is not only the law but can have crucial implications for utility commissions. Consequently, it should be the practice of a utility that all members of its commission, committees, and administrative staff be intimately familiar with the requirements of both laws. ●

Jared Walker Smith is an attorney with Boardman Clark law firm and currently serves as Chair of the Public Utilities Section of the State Bar of Wisconsin.



2024 Membership Directory now complete

A printed copy of the new directory has been sent each member utility and associate member company. An online version is available [here](https://www.meuw.org) and from a link at the bottom of the home page at MEUW.org

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Wisconsin UTILITY NEWS Digest

President Biden visits Wisconsin to announce funding for clean energy grant that will benefit Wisconsin municipal utility customers

President Joe Biden made a visit to Westby, Wis., on Sept. 5 to award federal grants that support clean energy generation, including a \$579 million grant to Dairyland Power Cooperative. The funds are part of a \$7.3 billion grant program known as the New Empowering Rural America (New ERA) that was part of the federal government's Inflation Reduction Act. New ERA funds are available only to rural electric cooperatives, to help with the cost of new clean energy and storage projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"This is the most significant, transformative investment in electricity and electrification and clean energy for rural America since FDR's New Deal," President Biden said during an event hosted at Vernon Electric Cooperative against a backdrop of a vast solar array.

La Crosse-based Dairyland provides wholesale power to 24 distribution cooperatives and 27 municipal utilities across a four-state service area that includes Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. The company plans to use the grant award to add more than 1,000 megawatts (MW) of renewables, including 593 MW of wind, 427 MW of solar, and 60 MW of battery storage.

Dairyland President and CEO Brent Ridge said the funding will "[launch] the next chapter in Dairyland's 80-year history. It's a win, win, win ... for our members, the environment, and the farm economy. Yesterday we were at a crawl, today we're going to run."

The New ERA projects will help Dairyland reduce its carbon footprint by more than three million metric tons, or 70%, and will provide enough clean energy to power nearly 250,000 homes. Dairyland is among 16 electric cooperatives in 23 states to receive funding from the New ERA program.

Long-awaited transmission line connecting Iowa and Wisconsin is now fully energized

Co-owners ITC Midwest, ATC, and Dairyland Power Cooperative have announced completion the western half of the new 345,000-volt (345-kV) Cardinal-Hickory Creek transmission line. The project was first approved by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) in 2011 and received approval from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin in 2019 and the Iowa Utilities Board in 2020.

The entire 102-mile line was placed in service on Sept. 26, and will help to ensure lower-cost, renewable energy can move more freely along the transmission grid by having increased capacity and reducing congestion on the region's transmission system.

The newly-energized western segment of the line runs from the Hickory Creek Substation near New Vienna, Iowa, to the Hill Valley Substation near Montfort, Wis. The eastern segment, connecting Hill Valley to the Cardinal Substation near Middleton, Wis., became operational in December 2023.

Facts about public power in Wisconsin

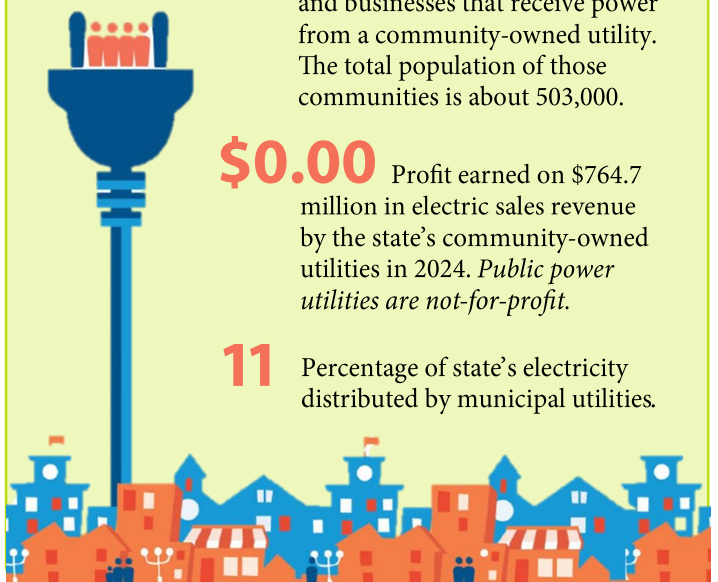
3,349 Median population of the 81 communities that operate their own electric utility.

Merrillan is the smallest with about 500 residents and Sun Prairie is the largest with a population of nearly 37,000.

305,696 Number of homes and businesses that receive power from a community-owned utility. The total population of those communities is about 503,000.

\$0.00 Profit earned on \$764.7 million in electric sales revenue by the state's community-owned utilities in 2024. *Public power utilities are not-for-profit.*

11 Percentage of state's electricity distributed by municipal utilities.





Monthly
Safety Call

Mark your calendar and join MEUW on the **1st Tuesday of every month** for a public power safety briefing

Public power biz customers earn Focus on Energy honors

Focus on Energy recently recognized three business customers of municipal electric utilities for their extraordinary commitment to energy efficiency.

Kaysun Corporation in Manitowoc and PMI Manufacturing in Bloomer were presented with the *2024 Energy Efficiency Excellence Award*. Badger State Lighting in Marshfield received the *2024 Trade Ally Contractor Excellence Award*.

Kaysun, a plastics custom-injection molding company and customer of Manitowoc Public Utilities (MPU) received the award for recognizing the environmental impact of their business



and the products it produces

and taking energy sustainability seriously. During the award presentation, MPU's Jeff Matzke credited Kaysun's leadership and employees. "Through their Green Team, (Kaysun has) been very proactive in achieving environmental goals, whether it has been through converting their plastic waste to pellets which fuel our power plants, or through installing energy efficiency equipment with the assistance of Focus on Energy."

In 2023, Kaysun completed a dryer-oven-conveyor project that will save 1.5 million kWh of electricity each year, more than doubling the amount of energy savings achieved from its

previous 20 energy-efficiency projects. PMI, a metal fabrication plant served by Bloomer Electric Utility, was selected for incorporating energy efficiency and sus-

tainable practices into every aspect of the business from replacing lighting fixtures with efficient LEDs to improving the efficiency of its compressed air and heat recovery systems. The company has completed 23 energy-efficiency projects since 2018. PMI has saved nearly 6 million kWh of electricity and 170,000 therms of natural gas with these projects, allowing the company to double the size of its facilities and employ more than 100 people.

State Senator Jesse James (R-Altoona) and Wisconsin Representative Rob Summerfield (R-Bloomer) attended the award presentation and congratulated PMI for its sustainability efforts and contributions to the community. "That is mind blowing ... when you hear about powering up 325,500,000 cell phones," from the energy PMI has saved, said Sen. James. Rep. Summerfield pointed to how PMI's energy sustainability efforts will benefit the community by keeping operating costs down, staying competitive and, "... employing our high school students, our neighbors, our friends, and immigrant community."



As a Focus on Energy Trade Ally, Badger State Lighting in Marshfield was recognized for helping businesses and schools throughout central Wisconsin install energy efficient lighting and secure financial incentives from Focus. Steve Zunker and his team at Badger State Lighting have helped customers with 659 lighting projects over the last seven years. In addition to the financial benefit of working with Badger State Lighting and Focus on Energy, customers appreciate the other attributes of energy efficient lighting. "We look more professional and also look better inside and outside," said Jenny Bring-Rockwood co-owner of Wisconsin Rapids-based Bring's Cycling & Fitness after Badger State overhauled the lighting in her store.

Presenting the award to Badger State Lighting, Public Service Commissioner Kristy Nieto noted how important Trade Allies are to the success of Focus on Energy.

She added that beyond reduced energy consumption and energy costs, these projects advance innovative technologies, create jobs, lower environmental impacts, increase the competitiveness of Wisconsin businesses, and reduce dependence on nonrenewable resources.

To learn more about the honorees, visit focusonenergy.com/success-stories. ●



Nieto



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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](#). Here are some current opportunities available:

Village of Pardeeville

[Journeyman Electric Line Worker \(Lead\)](#)

Menasha Utilities

[Apprentice or Journeyman Lineworker](#)

Black River Falls Municipal Utilities

[Office Manager](#)

Waunakee Utilities

[Electric Superintendent](#)

[Substation/Meter Technician](#)

When your utility is hiring, be sure to email the job posting to office@meuw.org.

Friends of Public Power making progress toward fundraising goal

— 2024 fundraising goal for Wisconsin candidates:

\$20,000



Raised to date:

\$9,350

Through Friends of Public Power, the political action committee and conduit managed by MEUW, the association directs financial resources to support in-state legislative candidates who have signaled their support for public power and the electric-utility industry. Many of the same politicians have shown a willingness to listen to and learn about the issues that matter to MEUW members. As with other trade associations, political giving and developing good relationships with lawmakers is important to advocacy.

MEUW set a goal to raise \$20,000 for the 2024 elections. The funds are directed to both Republican and Democrat candidates in races for the Wisconsin Assembly and State Senate.

To learn more about MEUW's political giving, please contact Director of Legislative and Regulatory Relations Tyler Vorpapel at (920) 265-7720 or visit www.meuw.org/fpp. ●

Showcase your hometown's autumn beauty

Capture the beauty of the changing leaves and send us a photo of a picturesque fall landscape where you live and work! We will feature the photos in upcoming communications. Email your best shots to news@meuw.org and let us know where and when you captured the image. ●



Photo from Eagle River Chamber of Commerce Facebook page



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