



Your Cooperative **CVEC** Powering Your Future
Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative

ANNUAL MEETING FILLED WITH FIRSTS

A wintry mix of snow and ice wasn't enough to keep members of Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) from attending the annual meeting Tuesday, March 26. Despite the inclement weather, about 300 members and guests ventured out to gather at the co-op's headquarters in Cornell for what Board Chairman John Petska termed a "milestone meeting."

Veering from its traditional Saturday-morning format, CVEC held its first-ever evening annual meeting, preceded by a casual sandwich dinner served by cooperative employees and featuring a streamlined program. Petska explained the changes were made to attract a more diverse crowd.

In addition, this was the first annual meeting of Russ Falkenberg's tenure as CVEC's president/CEO. Falkenberg assumed the president/CEO role last spring following the retirement of Dean Ortmann.

Special guests at the event included State Senator Jesse James and State Representative Rob Summerfield, both of whom addressed the crowd regarding the recent closures of health care in the Chippewa Valley and remained at the meeting all evening, talking with members afterward.

Summerfield also thanked CVEC for everything it's done to bring high-speed internet service to the area through Ntera, the co-op's joint venture with Citizens Connected. Ntera installed its 2,000th customer at the start of the year and continues to expand.

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Cornell eighth-grader Lauryn Sime presented a handcrafted wooden cutting board to Sen. Jesse James, left, and Rep. Rob Summerfield, right. Lauryn is among the Cornell Middle and High School tech ed. students who made the cutting boards as attendance gifts for annual meeting participants.

Petska's chairman's report reflected the annual meeting's theme, "7 Strong," based on the seven cooperative principles. He reviewed many highlights of the past year which exemplified the co-op principles, particularly the seventh—Concern for Community. He noted this key principle was on full display in 2023, culminating with the co-op, along with Dairyland Power Cooperative, providing financial support for a new helicopter landing pad in northern Chippewa County

Petska's chairman's report reflected the annual meeting's theme, "7 Strong," based on the seven cooperative principles.

as well as assisting the Cornell Area Fire Department with a low-interest loan for a new fire truck.

Petska also discussed changes in the electric utility industry that are impacting costs, focusing on the rising cost of

wholesale power. He explained that wholesale power rates have increased for the co-op 6.6% over the past two years, and material costs continue to rise. He added that Chippewa Valley Electric doesn't have large industrial loads to help absorb those costs, relying instead on mostly residential and seasonal loads. Petska discussed measures taken by the co-op to limit the impact of these cost increases on members, enabling the co-op to hold a residential rate increase to just 3%, with no changes to the facility charge.

The bottom line, he said, is "Your co-op remains financially strong, stable, and sound."

Members who attended received a special gift upon the meeting's adjournment: cherry and maple cutting boards engraved with the co-op's logo, handcrafted by Cornell Middle School and High School students under the direction of Tech Ed. teacher Mr. Jaenke.



ELECTIONS RESULT IN BOARD CHANGES

Sue Frei Welcomed Back as District 1 Director



Sue grew up on a dairy farm and from a young age was taught responsibility and the value of a strong work ethic. Farmers face hard challenges, especially when the power goes out and there is lost revenue and time. Sue looks forward to representing members, farmers, and residential and business owners, to continue efforts to keep electric service reliable and affordable, while promoting the cooperative as a leader in the community.

Sue and her late husband have been members of CVEC since 1999. Living in a rural area, Sue feels it's important to get involved and help make the community a great place to live. She works as a voter inspector for the Town of Lake Holcombe Election Board overseeing the verification of Lake Holcombe voters and addresses. She is also involved with the Lake Holcombe Improvement Association and assists with Lake Fest each year.

Through her husband's service to the board of directors she saw the role a director of CVEC plays in helping the membership keep rates stable and the cooperative productive in the community. In 2020, Sue represented District 1 as a board member. We look forward to welcoming her back to serve District 1.

Thank you to Dan Liske for his Service



Over the past three years Dan has been a part of CVEC, executing on projects such as helping to create the medivac pad in Holcombe, establishing a solar field on the west side of Stanley to provide clean energy for 600 homes, establishing a shovel-ready site for future businesses also on the west side of Stanley, creating an electric vehicle charging station at River Country Plaza in Cadott, and donation of a solar field to the Stanley Boyd High School this spring. CVEC wishes to extend gratitude to Dan Liske for his service to members and employees.



Above left: Coloring books kept the youngest members entertained. Above right: Cornell eighth-grader Lauryn Sime explains the cutting boards her classmates made to Board Vice Chairman Kevin Meistad, Sen. Jesse James, and Rep. Rob Summerfield. Left: Board Chairman John Petska presents the early-bird prize of a smart TV to Gretchen Grape. Below left: Work Order Clerk/Operations Assistant Janet Brandli was presented with a bouquet of flowers in honor of her 30-year career at CVEC, which will end in June due to a relocation. Left to right are Director of Member Services Nicole Whipp-Sime, President & CEO Russ Falkenberg, Brandli, and Operations Manager Nic Alberson. Below middle: Sen. Jesse James chats with Della Kent, daughter of former CVEC General Manager Ray Guthman. Below right: Ntera representatives were on hand to answer questions about high-speed broadband service.





Your Cooperative **CVEEC** Powering Your Future
CO-OP NEWS Sparks
CELEBRATING OUR CO-OP COMMUNITY!

Youth Leadership Conference

The annual Youth Leadership Conference (YLC) will be at UW-Stout on July 16-18, 2024. The YLC is a dynamic three-day event for high school students across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning about the purpose, operation, and scope of cooperative business. High school sophomores and juniors with family members who belong to CVEEC are eligible to request an application. To apply, please contact CVEEC at cvec@cve.coop or call 715.239.6800. Applications are due to CVEEC by June 14, 2024.



May is Electrical Safety Month

Electricity powers our lives, but it can also be dangerous if not treated with care. May is National Electrical Safety Month—a time to focus on the importance of electrical safety and the steps we can take to prevent accidents. Here are a few tips to help keep you safe as you head outdoors this spring:

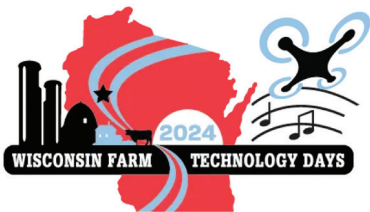


- Look up and keep yourself and any objects at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.
- Always use extension cords marked for outdoor use when plugging in outdoor power equipment.
- Make sure all outdoor outlets are GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) protected.
- Keep kites, toys, and drones far away from overhead power lines. If a toy or drone gets caught in power lines, never attempt to retrieve it yourself.

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days

Save the Date: August 13-15, 2024. Hosted at Close Farms and Chippewa Valley Music Fest grounds. CVEEC is sponsoring this event and will be there with the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon and our live high voltage safety demonstration. As the largest outdoor agricultural event in the state, Wisconsin Farm Technology Days annually welcomes more than 45,000 attendees, with more than 500 commercial and education vendors. You won't want to miss it!

If you are interested in volunteering for this extraordinary community event, please contact Barb Close at closebj5@gmail.com or Cheryl Scheidler at cl_petska@yahoo.com.



Rate Adjustment

Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEEC) is committed to providing dependable and reliable electricity safely to its members while at the same time using our members' resources as wisely as possible. The continued goal of your cooperative's board of directors and management team is to keep rates and outage times low and service levels high.

Research states that since the start of 2021, food prices have gone up by 33.7%, shelter costs went up by 18.7%, and energy prices increased by 32.8%. As no surprise, wholesale power prices have increased through our supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative, and a rate increase is necessary. Thankfully, CVEEC is in a strong financial position and your board of directors can hold the rate adjustment at a 3% increase. This increase is for energy only, meaning the facility charge will not change. This adjustment will take effect on the billing statement members receive in May.



Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Board of Directors

- District 1 – Sue Frei
- District 2 – Steve Johnson
- District 3 – Frank Draxler
- District 4 – Kevin Meistad
- District 5 – Joe Melville
- District 6 – Steve Wall
- District 7 – John Petska

Russ Falkenberg, President/CEO



Follow us on Facebook Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:30–4 p.m.

Rebecca Pehlke, Editor