

CVEC AND DAIRYLAND POWER ASSIST CORNELL AREA FIRE DEPARTMENT IN OPENING SATELLITE STATION IN LAKE HOLCOMBE



Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) in partnership with Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) recently provided a low-interest loan to the Cornell Area Fire Department (CAFD). The loan helped to make it feasible for the department to open a satellite station in Lake Holcombe.

“Lower interest rates mean lower borrowing costs over time,” shared Matt Boulding, Fire Chief of CAFD. “At the end of the day, the loan we were able to secure through CVEC and DPC made this project viable for our department and the community.”

The satellite station is located on 270th and will significantly improve response time, potentially saving lives and property, and may even lower home insurance rates for area residents. Before the additional station was built, firefighters would need to respond to Cornell, then head to the scene of

the fire—even if they both lived in Holcombe and the fire was in Holcombe.

“Now they can respond to the Holcombe station, get the needed equipment and be enroute to the emergency. Saving a significant amount of time,” shared Matt Boulding, fire chief.

On average the CAFD responds to around 100 fires/ emergencies annually. The department has seven members who live in the Holcombe area. In the summer months with seasonal owners, the number of responders increases to 11.



Both CVEC and DPC are committed to helping organizations in their service area that are striving to improve safety and/or assist with economic development efforts.

“Concern for the communities we serve is a guiding light in everything we do,” shared Russ Falkenberg, CEO of CVEC. “We want to be a part of the reason our area thrives.”

CVEC is proud to be a part of this collaboration.



HELPING OTHERS IS THE COOPERATIVE WAY

Wisconsin was met with another late season ice storm this year. Thanks to the line maintenance work our crews prioritize, we experienced no outages on our system due to the ice storm in early April.

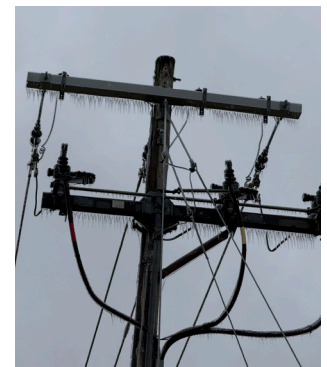
However, our friends at Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative weren’t as fortunate. Trevin and Quentin traveled to the neighboring co-op in early April to help with a high number of outages due to wind and ice.

A big benefit of being a part of a cooperative is our mutual assistance program known as ROPE—Restoration of Power in an Emergency. Cooperatives serve their members most effectively when they work together. When possible, we provide mutual aid to

neighboring regions during large power outages. In return, neighboring cooperatives would help our crew out if large outages occur in our service area.

Thank you to Trevin and Quentin and

both of their families for their dedication to keeping the lights on close to home and for our friends at our neighboring cooperatives.



Left: Trevin and Quentin traveled to Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative last month to assist with outages following the ice storm. **Right:** A late-season ice storm coated lines across Wisconsin in early April.



89 YEARS STRONG

CVEC HOLDS 89TH ANNUAL MEETING

Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperativeh hosted its 89th Annual Meeting on Thursday, March 26 at the co-op's headquarters.

Board Chair John Petska presided over the meeting and Vice-Chair Kevin Meistad presented the board report.

"The demand on the electric grid is evolving rapidly. Homes and businesses today use more electricity than ever before from mobile devices, smart thermostats, advanced HVAC systems, electric vehicles, and our world today requires power to function," Meistad said. "As continued advancements take hold, our local electric grid must be capable of supporting the increased demand while maintaining the reliability our members have come to expect."

Meistad talked about the job of maintaining and updating aging infrastructure and how the work done at the co-op has helped it achieve one of the lowest outage rates per member in the state. He said the co-op has worked hard to absorb increased costs.

"Despite these efforts, we have been forced to implement slight rate increases over the last several years to continue meeting the needs of our members. Please note that the decision to make any changes to your rate is never taken lightly

"They weren't
just building
infrastructure —
they were making
a promise."

by this board and we continue to remain committed to finding cost-saving measures wherever possible," he said.

Meistad said he is proud of the new ventures taken on by CVEC, including rural internet service through Ntera and Chippewa Valley Connected, the co-op's construction affiliate, which ensures underground contractors are available when needed.



Manager of Finance and Accounting, Jaimie Wilk, with long-time CVEC Board member and her grandfather, Tubby Flater.



In his report, CEO Russ Falkenberg reflected on the co-op's history of almost nine decades.

"Eighty-nine years. Think about that for a moment. When the founders of this cooperative hung the first lines across Chippewa County, they weren't just wiring up lines. They were making a promise. A promise to show up, to keep the lights on, and to put members first every single year since 1937. That promise is still true today," he said.

Falkenberg said the co-op's reliability performance rate was 99.99% in 2025. "That doesn't happen by accident. It happens because our line crews are out there before the storm hits and back in the field before most people are even awake. Resiliency isn't just about bouncing back from outages. It's about building a system that can withstand the increasing pressures on the grid."

"Resiliency isn't just about bouncing back from outages — it's about building a system that can withstand the increasing pressures on the grid."

Falkenberg said he is proud of the hard work done by the team to cut costs and keep rates low. He said the co-op has a team of 22 employees serving more than 8,000 member accounts which responded to 413 outages, completed four capital improvement projects,



Donald McCann was the winner of the Smart TV.

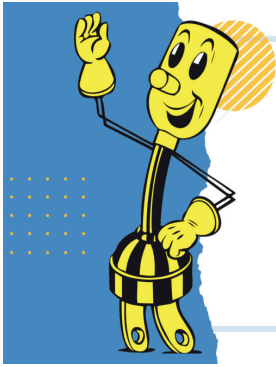
connected 74 new services, and expanded the fiber network by 25 miles.

"That is a lot of work to be done by a small team, and they do it with pride," he said.

In board elections, incumbents Frank Draxler (District 3) and Joe Melville (District 5) were re-elected. All four proposed bylaw amendments passed.



All member families in attendance received an ice cream scoop along with ice cream from Klemish Creamery, one of our member businesses.



Your Cooperative **CVEC** Powering Your Future

Sparks CO-OP NEWS

CELEBRATING OUR CO-OP COMMUNITY!

Save the Date—Member Appreciation Picnic



CVEC invites you to attend our 2026 Member Appreciation Picnic on Thursday, June 11 from 10:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m. The event will be held at the co-op headquarters located at 317 S. 8th St., Cornell. As always, great food, games and prizes for the kids, and time to connect with other members and co-op staff will be provided.

Back by popular demand: Balloon Artist and Juggler, Kevin Schwartz, will provide entertainment at the event. We hope to see you there!

Office Closed for Memorial Day

Our office will be closed on Monday, May 25.

Youth Leadership Conference

The annual Youth Leadership Conference (YLC) will be held at UW-Stout on July 14-16. 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 CVEC are eligible to request an application.

To request an application, please contact CVEC at cvec@cve.coop or call 715.239.6800.

Applications are due to CVEC by June 13, 2026.



May is Electrical Safety Month

- Assume all power lines are energized and dangerous. Even lines that are de-energized could become re-energized at any time.
- Never touch a downed power line! And never touch a person or object that is touching a power line.
- If a power line falls across your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside until help arrives.
- Call 911 immediately to report a downed power line and then call your electric cooperative.



Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative

317 S. 8th St., P.O. Box 575

Cornell, WI 54732

715.239.6800 • 1.800.300.6800

www.cvecoop.com • email: cvec@cve.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Board of Directors

District 1 – Sue Frei

District 2 – Dr. Eugene Buchner

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

Monday — Thursday: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Rebecca Pehlke, Editor