

Robert Cornell,  
Manager

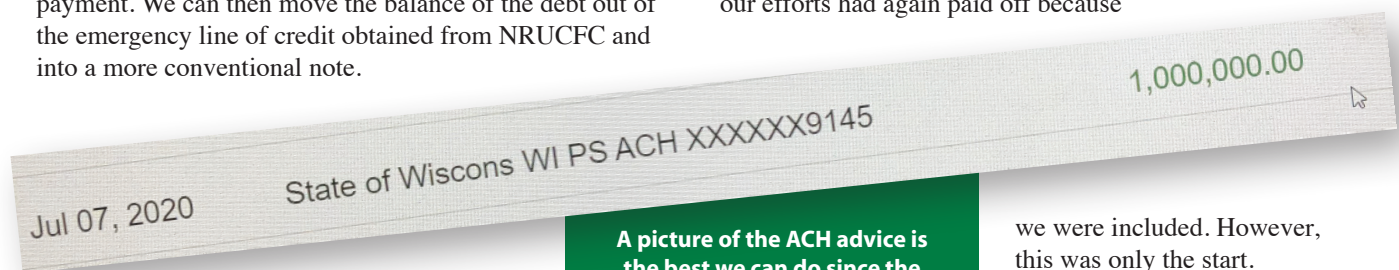
## THE CHECK IS IN THE MAIL

**T**hat old saying is only half true for the cooperative now! The first Wisconsin State Budget reimbursement towards the cost of replacing our submarine cable has been ACH deposited in our account and almost as quickly wired to

NRUCFC to apply against the debt incurred during this project. The second payment has been approved, but the money has not been released by the State of Wisconsin at the time of this writing. It is possible that we might not see that payment until the end of the fiscal year, which is June 2021. With some luck, it will show up before then and will be used to offset debt just as quickly as this first payment. We can then move the balance of the debt out of the emergency line of credit obtained from NRUCFC and into a more conventional note.

from finding a way. Other cooperatives, when struck by disasters such as tornadoes, worked it out in a similar fashion.

At the same time we were working on the disaster submittal, we were asking to be included in the state budget. Governor Walker and his staff were favorable, but when he lost the election to Governor Evers we were forced to start the process over. With the help of the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association and Dan Smith, the CEO of Cooperative Network, we were able to schedule a meeting with Governor Evers and his staff in February 2019. They were also favorable, but made no promises. State Representative Joel Kitchens and State Senator Andre Jacque supported our efforts and when Governor Evers presented his budget on March 1, 2019, our efforts had again paid off because



**A picture of the ACH advice is the best we can do since the payment was direct deposited!**

Most of you are aware that repairing the old cable and then replacing it with a new, rerouted cable cost the cooperative a total of approximately \$4.1 million. You can refresh your memory on the project by visiting our website, [www.wiecoop.com](http://www.wiecoop.com), and re-reading the communications and checking out the photos and video. We will rehash a bit of the financial portion here though. It has been a long haul.

Our first reimbursement came from the Wisconsin Disaster Fund. When Governor Walker declared a disaster for our situation, nothing was certain, because even though disaster funding was available, cooperatives, while eligible for federal disaster funds, were technically NOT eligible for state funding. We were able to figure out a way around this and make it work by having Door County Emergency Management sign off on our application as a co-applicant.

After a somewhat arduous (although worth the effort) process of verification of costs for the repair, we were approved for a Wisconsin Disaster Fund Payment from the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs in the amount of \$603,854.36 in June 2019. This check was immediately deposited and then wired to be applied toward the debt. We did not let our ineligibility for this funding stop us

we were included. However, this was only the start.

The governor's budget then went to the legislature and the Joint Finance

Committee began working on it and scheduling hearings. We testified at two of the four hearings and were again supported by WECA as well as other cooperative managers. Representative Joel Kitchens, Senator Andre Jacque, and Senator Howard Marklein played key roles in keeping us in the budget. You may remember the postcards we asked you to send to Joel and Andre in support of their efforts.

With the help of WECA, every electric cooperative in the state participated in a lobbying effort to not only keep us in the budget, but to get legislators to support the budget once it made it through the Joint Finance Committee process. Behind the scenes as well, an effort was made to make a policy provision that would make electric cooperatives eligible for State Disaster Aid directly in the future so that "work arounds" would no longer be necessary. Once again, our lobbying efforts were successful and both our \$2 million budget provision and the disaster aid eligibility made it through the legislative process and to the governor's desk. Because the Wisconsin governor has the most powerful veto pen



in the country, and a fair amount of political gamesmanship was in play, it still wasn't over.

We waited anxiously for the governor's final announcement and neither provision was affected by his veto pen. It is important to note that the change in disaster aid eligibility is

**We expect to reduce the monthly base charge again by an additional \$5 to \$36 per month in January 2021 due to the second \$1,000,000 payment.**

the only policy provision (non-budgetary item) to survive the budget process.

A similar process to the disaster claim was then undertaken and invoices, checks, timesheets, and the like were organized and compiled and sent to the Wisconsin Department of

Military Affairs, which was tasked with sorting out eligible and ineligible expenses. We received notice that our claim had been approved under the conditions of the state budget on June 30, 2020 (the last day of the state's fiscal year), and the project

completion acknowledgement form was signed on our part and returned the same day.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, Cooperative Network, and every electric cooperative in the state for their support in lobbying their legislators on our behalf. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Representative Joel Kitchens, Senator Andre Jacques, and Senator Howard Marklein (who shepherded our issues through the joint finance committee process). We also thank Governor Evers and his chief policy advisor Jenny Dye for including us in the budget and keeping us there.

As noted before, the cooperative reduced the monthly base charge from \$51 to \$41 in January 2020 due to payments received, under budget costs and in anticipation of the first \$1,000,000 payment. We expect to reduce the monthly base charge again by an additional \$5 to \$36 per month in January 2021 due to the second \$1,000,000 payment. The board and cooperative management would like to thank the members for their patience and understanding during this long ordeal!

## PHOTO CONTEST



Unfortunately, at the time of this writing we have not received any entries into the Photo Contest we announced in the June issue of this magazine, so we will extend the contest deadline until October 1 with entries and winners being published in the November and December Issues.

***Get us those photos of Island Summer!***





# WASHINGTON ISLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

We are continuing our perusal of board meeting minutes throughout the years.

## 1967

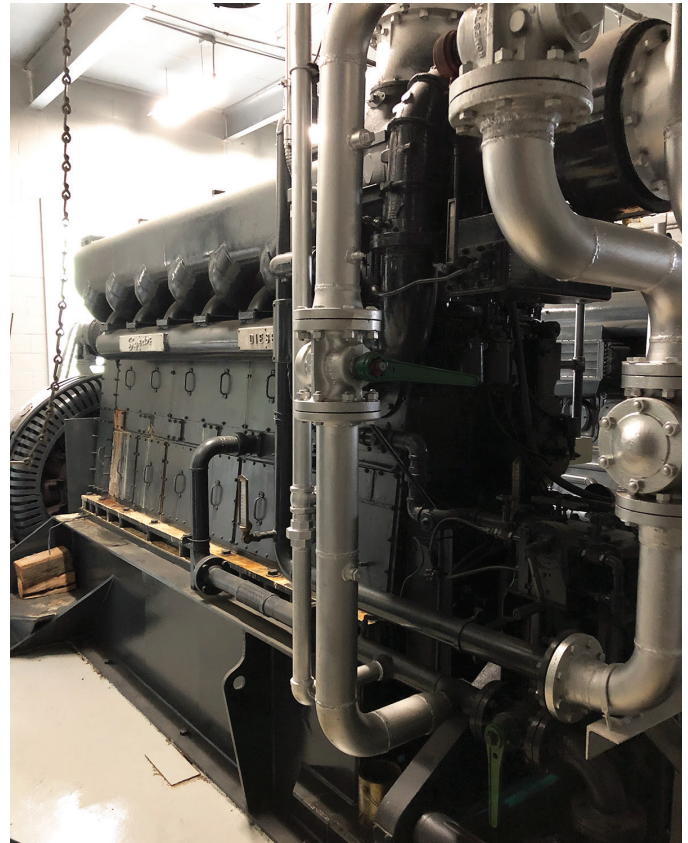
At the November 3 board meeting, the board authorized President Oliver Bjarnarson and Secretary Norbert O'Connell to sign the contract to purchase the 500KW Superior and to withdraw \$10,000 for a down payment. This used engine was purchased for \$50,500 and in December the board authorized the manager to withdraw \$5,000 to be applied towards an estimated \$13,000 building addition. The board amended our loan with REA and borrowed an additional \$76,000 to purchase the engine, build the addition, and cover the costs of building additional distribution lines.

## 1968

General Telephone became a member of the cooperative, having bought out the Washington Island Telephone Company.

The following directors were elected by the members at the 1968 annual meeting in April: Everett (Steve) Ellefson, Marvin Anderson, Kirby Cornell, Norbert (Okey) O'Connell (secretary/treasurer), Oliver Bjarnarson (president), Arni Richter (vice-president), and Russell Gunnlaugsson

The new (used) 1948 Superior Diesel, 500KW generator was put on line on June 26.



Engine #5 – 1948 Superior Diesel 500kW



## ANNUAL MEETING DATE SET

The board of directors has chosen **August 15, 2020**, for the date of our annual meeting. **The rain date will be August 22, 2020.** The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. and will be held in the parking lot of the Washington Island Electric Cooperative at 1157 Main Road.

With the town board's restrictions on use of the community center facilities, the board felt that having the meeting outdoors at the cooperative, where chairs can be set up to promote social distancing, was the best route. In order to do our best to adhere to CDC guidelines, there will not be a lunch served as in prior years and there will not be door prizes once the meeting is complete. It is recommended that attendees wear face masks as well. There will be a handout for each member in attendance. There is no election this year so the meeting should be a relatively short business-only meeting. Keep your fingers crossed for good weather and we hope to see you there!

A mailing notice will be sent once we get closer to the date.



## Meet Your Director

### Steve Fisco

Steve is the cooperative's newest board member, having been elected by the members in 2019.

Steve and his wife, Jan, moved here permanently in 2018 but have a long history on the Island. Steve's family has been vacationing on the Island for many years, since before Steve can remember. His dad and the rest of his family stayed with Jake and Lars Anderson and then later Harold and Edith Flath on the west side. His family purchased the north part of Flath's Resort back in 1979 and that is where they live now after rebuilding and remodeling the house and cabins.

Steve and Jan bought Jim VanRamshorst's garage and after thinking he had retired is now operating a small auto repair shop. Once you have grease in the cracks of your hands, the only way to deal with it is to add more grease!

Steve and Jan are still adjusting to Island life, but are enjoying it to the fullest.

When you see Steve, thank him for his service to the cooperative and the Island community.



Above: Steve's Grandma Fisco with Jeannine, Bruce, and John Fisco in front of what became Flath's resort in about 1946.



Left: Jake and Lars Anderson with Steve's Uncle John Fisco in the '40s.

**SAFETY  
CORNER**

## BE PREPARED BEFORE THE STORM

Summer storm season is in full swing. Are you ready, in case the weather knocks your power out?

- Prepare an emergency supply of nonperishable food, such as canned goods (don't forget a manual can opener), energy bars, and peanut butter; a first-aid kit; and a battery-operated flashlight and extra batteries; and a battery-powered radio. Keep the supply in an easily accessible location.
- If you have advanced warning of a severe storm, fully charge cell phones, laptops, and other devices so you have maximum power ahead of time.
- If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.



Source: Safe Electricity

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Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

