



# THE STORMS OF NOVEMBER (AND MID-OCTOBER)

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

The Board of Directors and the employees of the Washington Island Electric Cooperative, Inc. would like to wish all of our members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

While we think that this traditional Irish Blessing is appropriate for the season:

**May you have warm words on a cold evening, a full moon on a dark night and the road downhill all the way to your door!**

We would like to alter it slightly:

**May you have warm evenings with very little wind and no storms, a good night's sleep on a dark night and the road unfettered by fallen trees all the way to your door!**

Wind, wind, wind and yet a bit more wind! The last of the leaves on the trees did not stand a chance.

The storm that passed through in mid-October, according to the open lake buoy, brought northwest winds that peaked at 56 mph and were at or near 40 mph for longer than Hoyt Purinton can recall. The Ferry Line ran the first two boats on that Monday and then were done until Wednesday. We lost power from the mainland and were on engines for about six hours on Monday and our local outages were relatively a steady stream ahead of us until the end of the day late Tuesday, early Wednesday. At one point, we had the top of a tree cross all three phases on the cross-country line running south of Jackson Harbor Road from Main to Airport. This created quite a fireworks display behind Westbrooks' home that could be seen all the way to Detroit Harbor. We continued with some cleanup on Wednesday and Thursday.

The storm that passed through starting November 5 brought southwest winds and that same open lake buoy recorded winds of 47 mph with gusts up to 64. We were lucky that the leaves were not on the trees as much although we certainly had outages to deal with and worked until early Sunday morning restoring power in several locations.

Unfortunately, even though with today's phones, we all have a camera in our pocket, we were too busy getting the lines back up to take pictures even though there would have been some good ones.

During the first storm especially, we had lots of blinks and we had a couple members who were convinced this was a problem specific to their home. This creates an ideal time to talk about how the system works and what you may or may not be seeing when the power blinks. Even on our best trimmed lines, with sustained winds and even higher gusts, the trees and branches are moving and sometimes contacting the lines. Leaves are coming off the trees at an accelerated rate and sometimes will end up in a transformer lightning arrestor gap. Any contact of a branch or other thing that creates a path to ground could cause a blink if the fault current is not enough to trip a recloser. A recloser is the safety device on the lines (think of your home's circuit breakers)

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This tree was leaning against both the hot and neutral until the neutral finally broke. This meant the path to ground was through the tree and really not visible until where it broke at the stump started burning.



## FIBER UPDATE

# SOME MAJOR ISLAND ENTITIES ARE UP AND RUNNING

Since the fiber went live, you have probably been aware of loads of activity that continues. Michels has been here working on running main backbone/distribution fiber. Quantum is busy splicing. Karcz Utility has been running both overhead and underground drops and we continue to connect folks. As of the time of this writing, we have the school, rec center, archives, optometrist, and town office up and running with live drops awaiting network work at the library and clinic and extra drops available for the future.

We also expect to have the Lutheran Church up and running and services going west from there connected on Townline Road, and we hope to have begun connecting folks on Green Bay Road by the time you read this (there I go, making predictions again).

Door County, which was a participant in the Nsight/WIEC partnership grant, currently does not have the electronics to connect the EMS building to the county's dedicated ring, so we also expect that the drop we ran to the building will be connected by the time you read this.

We hope to have Michels long enough and the weather to hold long enough to finish the backbone run to Schoolhouse Beach so we can also begin making preparations for Nsight to install

a small cell at the location (providing cellular and more importantly 911 service) sometime in the spring. In the meantime, we will continue running drops and connecting members and businesses until the weather stops us. Of course, we have to keep the lights on as well and continue to connect new services as requested, but we will get there.

With the exception of some DC power plant issues that need to be addressed, the headend work is complete. There will be testing ongoing and at a certain point, while we will continue to run drops, we will likely pause actual connections so that Quantum and NRTC can verify the stability of the network. We promise that this pause will be brief.

For those of you who have gone for the winter and closed up your homes, we will not be passing you by! The drop will be run to the location of your electric



Rick Brooks (Nsight), Brighid Riordan (Nsight), Tom Nikolai (Washington Island School), Bob Webb (Nsight), and Robert Cornell talk about the school's new network.

meter and getting it into the home may have to wait until you are here, but it will get done. Stay tuned for the January issue as we will talk about packages, rates, and billing for the service at that time. We have already done this in previous issues, but time flies and we want to make sure you know what is coming. We also will begin discussing some of the educational services that we hope to offer with Quantum early next year with regards to things like internet security, streaming your TV (get rid of that dish!) and the like.



Above: Bob Webb (Nsight), Brighid Riordan (Nsight), Robert Cornell, and Rick Brooks (Nsight) in the WIEC headend room. Right: Steak dinner for the crew (we are suggesting that Martin might want to count his steers 😊)!





Michels running fiber on Green Bay Road (above) and over-lashing 96 strand fiber on Townline Road (right).



Left: Installing conduit on Lobdell Point Road and the best crop the Island ever raised—rock. Above center: Karcz Utility runs the first drops on Baypoint Road. Above right: Splitter cabinet fiber going into the splice trailer for splicing.



Above left: 40,000 feet of 96-strand fiber awaits testing (shown above center). Right: ONTs (fiber optic modems) being configured at the cooperative.

# DEALING WITH THE COST OF WHOLESALE ENERGY

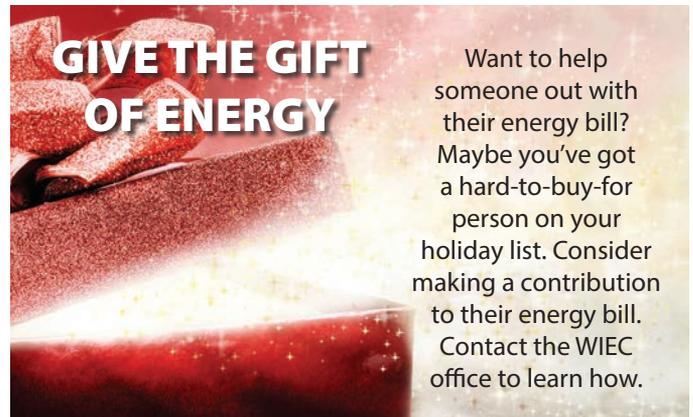
The wholesale cost of energy continues to fluctuate wildly with an upward trend. Economic interruptions are occurring where we never would have had them in years past. We don't have to rehash the discussions we have had in previous issues but the bottom line is that costs are going up. The board and management of the cooperative do not feel that we need to increase rates at this time; however, after the first of the year, we expect to be adding a Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) charge which will only occur for those times that economic interruptions warrant it.

If we have months in which the MISO market costs are driven higher for all the reasons we have discussed before, and we are not able to absorb those costs, you will see a PCA on your billing statement the following month based on your usage during the month that the costs were incurred. With any luck, you will not see one at all, but the cooperative cannot deal with too many months like we had in June, July and August of this year or with a situation like the one that occurred during the Texas crisis. If we do have to implement a PCA you can be assured that you will know every detail of why as we will publish it in these pages.

With the cost of everything skyrocketing, we know that day to day can be a struggle and there are resources out there for folks who qualify to get assistance. We can help point you in their direction.

## The Gift of Power

In addition, we have had a number of members who have stopped in the office wishing to anonymously donate to help pay someone's bill specifically. This is extremely generous and really exemplifies the small-town spirit of Washington Island that we all love. If you know someone is struggling, this might be a good holiday season to give the gift of energy. While this is an idea that we have seen and not one we came up with ourselves, it is something that you could do and remain anonymous.



## October/November Storms

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that will operate several times before locking open in an attempt to clear minor faults. Each operation results in a blink on the line for everyone on that phase.

Believe it or not, the same thing is going on down the county and we will see those same blinks due to minor and major faults that occur on the mainland here on the Island. Of course, if the fault takes down a phase coming to Northport, our recloser will open there and then we have to go on engines, as was the case on Monday, October 17.

With overhead primary lines, blinks occur. This does not mean you should

ignore them as it is possible that a tap that serves your home or primary lines has become loose. It could mean that you have a loose connection on your secondary 240v service and it could mean there is an issue in your home. We want you to report them. However, we also want you to understand that they may simply be part of the weather conditions during wind such as these and that, once we have investigated your particular situation and the blinks are continuing, we are probably out trying to deal with the tree or branch that crossed the lines on the other side of the Island.

During the storms, we had a couple cases where a tree went across the primary lines and the fault current was

not enough to trip the recloser, which results in arcing usually, but not always. If a tree is leaning against a live line, especially after all the rain we had, it may be creating a path to ground that results in smoke and even at times flames. If you see a situation like this, do not try and help us out by pushing the tree off the lines. Report it and stay away from it and if you are able, keep others away. Touching it might lead to some cleanup that would require a call to the coroner rather than a call to the electric cooperative. This goes for lines that are down as well. Even if you are absolutely convinced that they are dead, they may not be and you might be if you touch them.

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