



Robert Cornell,
Manager

COMMUNICATION

Welcome to the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*

It is important that the cooperative communicates with its members. We think we do a pretty good job, but many times we fall short. The submarine cable failure was the impetus to start

working on our website, www.wiecoop.com, and to begin a Facebook presence. Our participation in this magazine is one way we hope to improve our communication with you, the member. You will be receiving it every month moving forward.

The *Wisconsin Electric Cooperative News* was the first electric cooperative publication in the country. It not only provides four pages of local content for each participating

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cooperative, but it includes pertinent and important information and communication about our sector of the utility industry as a whole.

The Washington Island Electric Co-

operative sends out somewhere between five and six communications to the members each year, including our annual meeting notice. Sending out these communications involves printing them, collating them, folding them, stuffing envelopes, and labeling and affixing postage to those envelopes. This typically means several days of work for Mary and at least a day of folding and stuffing for all four of us. A multiple-page communication, in addition to the cost of material and labor, usually costs \$0.70 in postage. For the annual meeting mailer, it can cost as much as \$1.00.

Believe it or not, this magazine is costing us \$0.55 to send to each member. So, not only do we improve and increase communication, we will be doing it at a significant

savings. We hope you will enjoy reading not only the four center pages dedicated Washington Island, but also the industry and Wisconsin related content.

As we move forward with the magazine, in addition to cooperative news, we expect to include such things in our pages as director profiles, employee profiles, member photo contests (start taking and saving photos for us!) and cooperative history.

We are kicking off the initial few issues with Ray Krause's history of the cooperative, "How Electricity Came to Washington Island," which was first printed in the 1974 *Washington Island Forum* (predecessor to the *Observer*) in installments.





CABLE PROJECT UPDATE

Cooperative effort brings some financial assistance

As you all know, we have been receiving electricity through the new cable since February 8, 2019. The old cable is still energized, but is parked in insulated standoffs at Lobdell Point, much like an extension cord plugged into the wall with nothing plugged into the other end. It is important that it stay energized for as long as it is viable as its general longevity and the ability to have it in reserve as a back-up is improved if it remains energized. We still have a bit of cleanup to do on Plum Island, at Northport, and here on our own property at Lobdell Point, but for the most part, the project is complete.

This still leaves the very important issue of paying for the cable repair and replacement on the table. Hopefully you have read the important notice that was sent out in December regarding this. To recap, because we received \$608,000 in disaster aid towards the repair of the cable, and because Roen Salvage came in \$200,000 under budget, and because we received our full \$200,000 in reel deposits because Tom Jordan was able to return those monster reels to Connecticut intact and on time, we have been able to reduce our expected debt by \$1,000,000.

In addition to this, we expect to



Don Sarter at the helm of the Stephen M Asher during the cable laying project.

receive the first \$1,000,000 in Wisconsin budget appropriations early in the year. This means a reduction in expected debt of \$2,000,000 (half of the entire project) and the board, true to its word, voted to reduce the base charge on all main meters by \$10 per month. When we receive the second \$1,000,000 of appropriations sometime towards the end of the year, the board will again reduce base charges by a proportionate amount.

The only caveat here is whether or not the federal government corrects a mistake in the 2017 tax law that may cause us to lose our tax-exempt status by accepting these funds. At the time of this writing, there is serious bipartisan support for legislation that corrects the mistake in the House Ways and Means

committee, but we do not know whether it will be acted on or not in time.

All of this funding that we are receiving and the efforts to correct the tax issue are the result of extreme efforts on the part of this cooperative, the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, and serious lobbying support from all the electric cooperatives in the State of Wisconsin. It is a perfect example of the 6th Cooperative Principle – Cooperation Among Cooperatives. We also have our local legislators and the governor to thank for their efforts. A future article in these pages will detail this support.

In any case, we hope you enjoy reading this magazine and the local pages, and we hope you will participate in them once we get to that point!



A plaque recognizing the efforts of Roen Salvage was presented to their leadership team. L to R: John Asher, Barry Kuzay, Robert Cornell, Tom Drager, and Dave Schanock.

Missing from the photo is Don Sarter, who was tragically lost at sea this fall during an accident on Lake Superior.

HOW ELECTRICITY CAME TO WASHINGTON ISLAND

By Ray Krause, as printed in the *Washington Island Forum*

Installment 1

I have been asked many times to write an article on how electricity came to Washington Island. I don't want anyone to think I am trying to be a braggart, but the older persons on Washington Island will remember that I was mainly responsible for getting electricity here in spite of all the criticism and opposition. You will see "I" written numerous times, not for me to boast, but that is the way it was.

In the early days (the '20s) when I came to Washington Island, there were only four places that had electricity: Hotel Washington, West Harbor Resort and Jule Hagen with Fairbanks Morse gasoline driven generators and Tom Nelsen with a Delco. These were all 32 volt machines with 16 cell large glass batteries to store the electricity. A short time later, Tom replaced his 32 volt Delco with a 110 volt automatic Kohler.

This kept on until there were 96 of these machines here. I kept track of these as I sold many of them and did some repair work on all of them. I also wired many of the homes and business places (my home was the first one), the biggest job being the present Mann's Store. This was done mostly after school hours, evenings and weekends. I always had a helper for these jobs; those that I can remember were Conrad A. Anderson, Orville Jess Sr., Wayne Boshka, Wallace Jensen, Harvey Jensen, Dave Foss, Victor Cornell, etc. I can't remember any more.

In the early '30s I realized that we should have something better here as we couldn't use electric ranges, water heaters, pressure systems, large motors, T.V., etc., so I tried to find out how it could be done. This took several years as most people thought that such a large and expensive project was impossible here. Many trips I took at my own expense to get advice,



Above: Manager Ray Krause and Lineman Leonard Jorgenson in the early 1960s. Right: Sue Ellen Lindsey draws for door prizes during an early annual meeting at the island's first Community Center. Manager Ray Krause and Director Norbert (Okie) O'Connell are also pictured.



information, etc. The Kohler Co. was very helpful and made available to me their engineers, electricians and experts at no charge. This was most likely because I was selling their generators for several years.

I read in the papers that Orlando Loomis was appointed "Rural Electrification Coordinator." I contacted him and he came to Washington Island and gave an address at Tom's Hall after the four annual school meetings. I remember this as I believe it was the hottest night we had on Washington Island.

I later contacted him at Madison and I believe Conrad A. Anderson was along on one of these trips. Loomis was later elected Governor of Wisconsin, but died before he took office.

We tried the Public Service Corporation at Green Bay, and they sent up James Johnson to make a survey. He didn't give us much satisfaction. Later

Mr. Goedjen and Mr. Pulliam sent letters stating that a submarine cable to Washington Island was not at all feasible, and that the Public Service Corporation would not install diesel generators here.

I later read in the paper that Robert Merrill was appointed "Chief of

Wisconsin Rural Electrification." I had him come to Washington Island and spent considerable time with him. I found out that he was an officer in the 32nd Division 128th Infantry of World War I. He knew Sergeant Charles Gislason well and was not far away from him when he got killed. He also knew Walter Miller, Clarence Anderson and Christian Anderson.

Mr. Merrill suggested that we bond the Town and install a diesel plant. After meeting with the town board and other interested citizens like George O. Mann, Tom Nelsen, Harry Hanson, Ted Gudmundsen, Arni Richter, Charles O. Hanson, Leon Cornell, Ernie Boucsein, Oliver Bjarnarson, etc., we dropped this plan.



SAFETY CORNER



Staying safe during winter storms

Winter can bring thoughts of gently falling snow or sparkling ice, but it can also bring unpredictable weather with high winds, whiteouts, and ice storms. This can cause hazardous roads and prolonged power outages.

When the forecast calls for a severe winter storm, take steps ahead of time so you're ready for anything.

Before the Storm

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, water, and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap, and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages, and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener, and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Fully charge your cell phone, laptops, and other devices so you have maximum power to communicate with friends and neighbors and follow restoration updates.

During a Prolonged Outage

- Turn off appliances, TVs, computers, and other sensitive electronic equipment. This will help avert damage from a power surge, and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. Leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.
- When using an alternative heat source, follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards, and be sure to properly ventilate. Always keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby, and know how to use it.
- Keep your home as warm as possible by placing draft blocks at the bottom of doors, closing off unneeded rooms, and covering windows at night.

After the Outage

- Avoid downed power lines and be alert to electric equipment that might be buried in the snow. Allow ample room for the Washington Island Electric crew to safely perform their jobs—including on your property.

You can find more tips for staying safe during and after a storm at safeelectricity.org.

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