



2021



Robert Cornell,
Manager

Happy New Year!

Your crew and board of directors would like to wish all our members a very Happy New Year! While some of the struggles that we have all faced during 2020 are certainly continuing, we hope that the skies at night at the close of 2020 are all red and that 2021 is the proverbial “sailor’s delight” for all our members.

There has been a flurry of activity at the cooperative since last month’s center pages were prepared. As noted in the December issue, the monthly base charge for all members is being reduced by \$5 on all main meters. This represents \$1,000,000 in debt service reduced by the second payment from the Wisconsin state budget. As we said, it is not often that we can give good news regarding rates, but due to our efforts, this is the second January we have been able to do so!

As in prior years, the cooperative has been working with the town crew to brush road rights-of-way. The combining of our crews works well for both the town and the cooperative and makes the work for both of us go smoother and faster. When you see either or both of our crews working along the roadside, please slow down and help us stay safe during this work.

JANUARY CHANGES

New payment system on track for next billing cycle

We are still on track for implementing the Payment Service Network/Invoice Cloud billing and payment system for the January billing cycle. By the time you read these pages we hope to have the last pieces in place and to have sent out a mailer to the membership explaining the signup procedure. As noted in prior communications, the member will have various options of how to receive their bill as well as how to pay it.

Installing submarine fiber from Washington Island to Plum Island on October 28, 2019, on Tom Jordan's Barge with the help of Roen Salvage.



FIBER UPDATE: Work continues as we await grant decision

NSight submitted the grant application that we have partnered with on December 1. We had an extensive conversation with personnel at the Public Service Commission prior to submittal and we believe the grant will score well when they make their decisions, which is likely to be late February. Of course, in any grant process, nothing is certain; however, we will continue to plan and work towards the goal with high hopes.

We have been working with our supplier, RESCO, and a company called Power & Tel as well as the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative, of which we are a member. They are helping with specification, engineering, and methodology once we have gotten past this first “middle mile” stage. The grant application specifies that as part of the grant, 25 members will be connected; however, we know that of the 200 that will be passed during this initial phase of “on Island” work, most will want service. Moving forward, our methodology for expansion will determine how many will be passed during each stage and how long it will take to make the service available to every member.

Regardless of the status of the grant application, you will see work towards

this project begin to commence in the spring as we will be installing underground along Lobdell Point Road, and this will include provisions for both NSight and WIEC-owned fiber.

In addition, just prior to Christmas, you probably saw our pole inspection contractor, Karcz Utility Services, out on our system. They are performing a system-wide mapping and survey project that will provide much more accurate mapping of both primary and secondary pole locations, service and meter locations, and where and how the service enters the member’s home. This information is not only critical for outage management, system improvement, and maintenance planning, but it also provides more accurate measurements required to estimate the cost of material required for the fiber project. In addition, part of their survey work inspects our lines for things like primary line strands and broken/cracked insulators that are outages waiting to happen.



Reels of cable in conduit and fiber duct (left) and system sectionalizing cabinets and fiber hand holes (right) awaiting installation on Lobdell Point Road.

WASHINGTON ISLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

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

1977 At the annual meeting this year, a special event occurred. The first mortgage note with REA having been paid in full was symbolically burned. This note was for \$91,000 and was originated in 1941. It was burned by Conrad A. Anderson, who was secretary of the cooperative at the time the money was borrowed.

Norbert O'Connell, Cecil Anderson, Arni Richter, Kirby Cornell, Nathan Gunnlaugsson, Jack Cornell, and Howard Young Jr. were elected to serve as the board of directors for the cooperative.

The cost of diesel fuel and transportation of the same were discussed at length during 1977 and these costs were expected to result in an operating loss in 1978, so a rate increase study was done. Investigations into truck transport of fuel as well as purchase of fuel at the Escanaba terminal were had and the decision was made to continue to contract with Anderson Transit for fuel purchased at the Green Bay Terminal for 1977. Fuel costs increased by more than 35% when compared to 1976 and the determination was made to increase rates for the second year running.

1978 This was a big year for our little operation. The cooperative purchased a one-ton truck cab and chassis from Boettcher-Nelson in Sturgeon Bay. A

utility truck body complete with outriggers was purchased from Pierce Manufacturing in Appleton.

The cooperative borrowed \$185,000 to offset increased operating costs and system improvements.

With fuel costs continuing to increase, serious investigation into engineering, purchasing, and installing a submarine cable to connect the Island to Wisconsin Public Service on the mainland occurred and was explained to the membership at the annual meeting this year.

Larry Young left his position as lineman with the cooperative to go into the construction business with his brothers. Numerous individuals were interviewed to replace him and each of these fell through, so the search continued and the cooperative crew remained Butch Jess and part-time employee Rich Reiss.

The gravel lot was causing issues with dust in the engine room and the intake filters on the engines and the cooperative had the lot blacktopped.

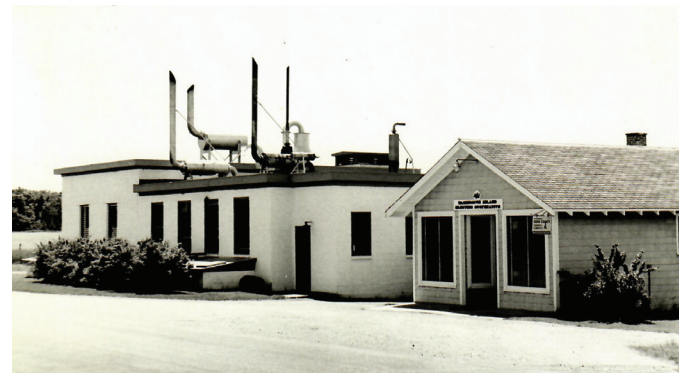
At the November board meeting, after much deliberation and an engineering study by Carl Crane, the decision was made and finalized that a submarine cable to the mainland, resulting in savings of over \$1,000,000 over 20 years in operating costs, was necessary. Approval and a loan based on estimated costs of nearly \$800,000 was sought with REA.

Kirby Cornell, Norbert O'Connell, Nathan Gunnlaugsson, Arni Richter, Cecil Anderson, Jacob Ellefson, and Howard Young Jr. were elected to the board of directors at the annual meeting this year.

Ray Krause

Of particular note in 1977, Ray Krause notified the board that he intended to retire. Having essentially founded the cooperative

and serving as its manager until 1962 and then retiring as manager and serving in various roles as consultant, he decided it was time to work on some things at home that he had been putting off during his 70 years of working. From the founding of the cooperative in 1939 and its official incorporation in 1940, Ray served the cooperative and the community for 38 years, longer if you include his time as a teacher and the time and effort spent investigating an electrical system for the Island. The decision was made to advertise for an office assistant and in February of 1978 Beverly Jensen was hired.



A couple of shots of the cooperative as it looked in the early '70s.
If anyone has a photo that includes the 1968 truck garage, we would love to get a copy!



UPCOMING PROJECTS WILL HELP IMPROVE RELIABILITY, SAFETY

As most of you are aware, rocks are probably the most successful crop the Island has ever grown and they make installation of poles and underground lines difficult at best. There are, however, areas where the digging is good enough to an appropriate depth that underground has been and could still be installed. We are evaluating several sections of cross country lines that have been problem areas for outages and hope to make decisions regarding replacing overhead primary lines with underground.

One such area is the cross country overhead lines that run from Sylvia Landin’s driveway to Sunset Resort and beyond. This is an area that has been the cause of many an outage and that is difficult to get our trucks in. It is also an area where the digging is relatively easy. Primary electric lines need to be buried to a depth of 3 to 4 feet, something not easily attainable in most areas of the Island. We are evaluating other areas as well. Unfortunately, some areas where solid rock is near surface and blasting was required for poles make this work, while not impossible, extremely expensive and impractical.

In addition, with the county and town planning to do some paving work in 2022, we expect to sleeve roads in several key locations during this work. You may or may not have seen the large black HTPE pipe on the pole rack behind the cooperative and this is the material we intend to use to sleeve the roads. This is the same pipe that Roen Salvage buried to a water depth of 20 feet to protect the new submarine cable. Installing these sleeves will alleviate the need to saw cut roads for any

future underground work that needs to be done.

When spring arrives and before things get too busy, the cooperative will be contracting with Eaton to service the main breakers in our switchgear as well as the vacuum breaker in the substation. This equipment is critical for the operation of our engines and the system in general. At the same time this work is being done, your crew will be installing three new voltage regulators in the substation and those removed will be sent out to be rebuilt.

Also upcoming is maintenance to our system reclosers. These are essentially the circuit breakers out on the primary line. When something causes a fault on the line, say a tree or branch or animal, you might see your lights blink. The way a recloser works is that it cycles the power off and on in an effort to clear the fault and then locks open if the fault is not cleared. In addition to being a safety device, they are also part of our troubleshooting methodology. We are able to narrow down where an outage has occurred by knowing which of these devices has tripped. The cooperative’s system has 54 of these reclosers. These are mechanical devices that require periodic inspection and repair. Approximately 20 of these devices have been ordered so the new ones can be exchanged with the old ones and the old ones can be sent out for service.

This is a lot of project work, in addition to fiber, for your crew to undertake when you consider that day-to-day operations must continue as well, but everything we do is in an effort to improve reliability and safety on our system.

SPACE HEATER SAFETY

Portable space heaters account for roughly 43 percent of home fires in the United States, according to the National Fire Protection Association. But these units are a safe way to provide added warmth to a room, as long as they’re used safely.

- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when leaving a room or sleeping.
- Never plug a space heater into an extension cord.
- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces on the ground.
- Never use a space heater or any appliance with a damaged cord.



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