



Robert Cornell,  
Manager

## THE NEW NORMAL? LET'S HOPE NOT!

**W**ith all that is going on in the world, we are certain that our members are getting tired of hearing all the ads on the television and radio stating “we are here for you in difficult times and under difficult circumstances.” We won’t dwell on the circumstances; however, we will let you know that it is (mostly) business as usual for your cooperative. As essential workers maintaining critical infrastructure (without us, you wouldn’t be able to see those ads on the TV), we continue to do our jobs and keep the lights on and we will continue to do so regardless of what is happening in the world or the country.

We have, however, made some adjustments to our operation. The office remains open; however, the door is locked and payments can be dropped in the night deposit box in the front hall. We are here to answer billing questions by phone during

**...we continue to do our jobs and keep the lights on and we will continue to do so regardless of what is happening in the world or in the country.**

normal business hours. As we go about doing our jobs to maintain the lines and respond to outages, you will see that your crew is driving separately and doing our best to follow CDC guidelines for social distancing. We have been in contact with WE/

WPS regularly and they are following essentially the same process to ensure that there is timely response to outages that affect the county.

Some of you may have seen that the cooperative purchased some additional fuel in early April. This was not done out of any fear that we would need to be on engines for an extended period, but rather to take advantage of price. Because of the crude oil argument between the Saudis and Russia and because of the low demand for fuel here in the United States, wholesale diesel prices have dropped to levels not seen for us since before the original cable was laid in 1981 and we felt it would be prudent to get a couple tanker loads before the argument is settled and before demand increases as the country gets back to business. We paid \$0.88 per gallon plus transportation and bought approximately 15,000 gallons.

The price of crude also brings a bit of uncertainty for the natural gas market, however, and we have been watching our wholesale power costs pretty closely as well. As operators here in the states shutter operations, it is possible that production capacity will drop. At this time, stored supplies are still strong and there is not an indication that there will be supply

constraints or dramatic price increases for natural gas. This is good news, as we buy our wholesale electricity based on a formula that in large part is dependent on fuel costs and as we have explained in the past, our interruptible status makes us subject to market prices when constraints on fuel availability take effect. At this point, under the circumstances, we are watching this situation closely, but as of now do not see a reason to be concerned.

In any case, we felt it was important that you know that, with everything else you need to deal with under the circumstances, we are still here and still keeping the lights on.

Under the circumstances, it is even more important that you notify us of your return to the Island if you have been gone. We know that our members’ plans have changed and we can’t necessarily depend on the post office for accurate forwarding address information. If you have an address change, a current email that you can share, or a current phone number, we need it for our records. Please call 920-847-2541 or email [info@wiecoop.com](mailto:info@wiecoop.com) with your latest contact information!



Your cooperative crew continues to work to make sure the lights stay on.

# HOW ELECTRICITY CAME TO WASHINGTON ISLAND

By Ray Krause, as printed in the *Washington Island Forum*, 1974

## Installment 5

**1945** We made plans to build a new generating building and started to build it. Andrew Justinger and Wm. Jacobsen were elected as directors. The Jackson Harbor line was the first to be completed, and on December 20, 1945, it was energized. The first member to be connected was the former high school, because the children would soon be the future citizens.



Lone Davison chooses a door prize at an early annual meeting.

**1946** We received only two bids for our new generating units: Buda @ 900 RPM for \$97858.00; Venn-Severin @ 600 RPM for \$66634.96. After much discussion and calls to REA we accepted the Venn-Severin bid because of the slow speed and \$31000.00 cheaper. In 1946 the manager's pay was increased to \$200.00 per month.

**1947** We purchased our International truck. It is still being used. This year the directors started to get paid. The new directors elected this year were Clarence Anderson, Claude Cornell and Nels C. Nelson. By this time our little power plant was getting overloaded. The exhaust manifold and a couple lengths

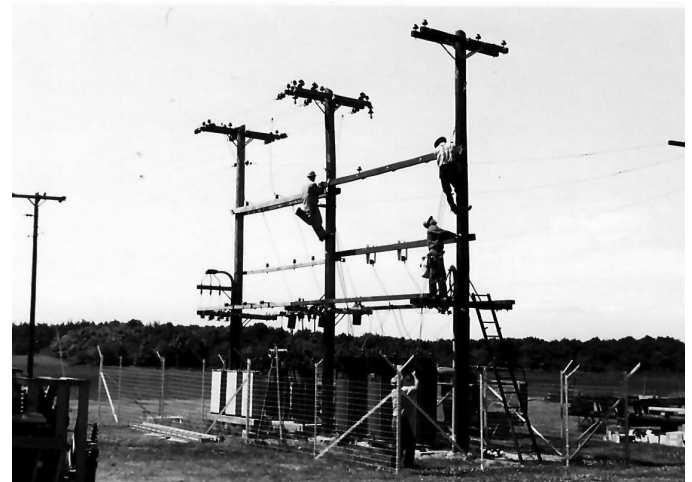
of pipe would get red hot every night and I was glad when about 9:30 P.M. came. We removed a large part of the roof, removed the bottom boards on the building to let air escape and allow cooler air to enter. We installed fans to keep the generator from burning up. We also tapped into the lube oil lines and put coils of copper tubing into vats of cold running water to keep the oil cooler. We kept working on the new building that would contain our new generating units. Because of the heating of our little power plant we sent letters to all members asking them to curtail power, especially in the evening until our new units could be connected. This year we adopted our present "Capital Credit Plan."

**1948** Our new building was now complete, the machinery installed and on July 1, 1948, the new power plant was started late in the afternoon. Before morning the coupling bolts started breaking and flying around the engine room. It was lucky no one got hurt. We obtained new bolts and for quite some time had to keep on replacing these bolts until new couplings were made and installed. We had much trouble with these Venn-Severin engines; in fact, so much that we decided in order to keep operating they would have to be replaced, which we did as soon as we could get other diesel engines to drive the generators. The costs of necessary items kept going up, and we were losing money every month. The more kilowatt hours we sold, the more we lost. For better efficiency, we reduced the number of board members from 11 to 7 members. One new board member was elected this year, Norbert O'Connell.

**1949** Herman Leasum and I figured out new rates and sent them to REA for approval. They revised them somewhat, and



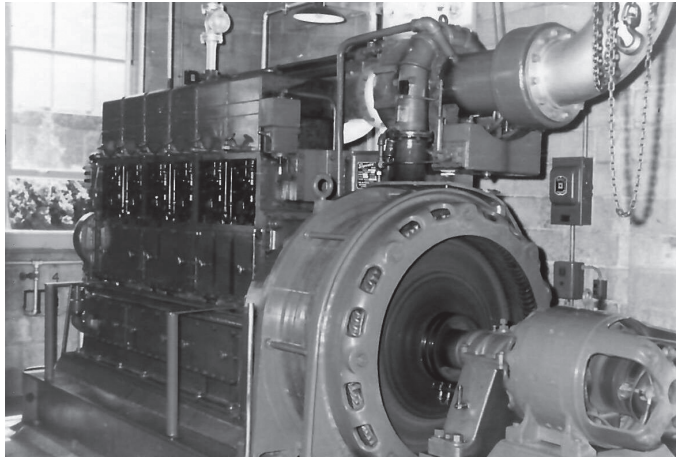
Substation construction showing the International truck (early 1960s).



Substation construction, early 1960s.



we put them into effect starting November 20, 1949. As it was difficult to pay REA on time, the attorney and I worked with REA and adjusted the original loan from 25 years to 35 years. At the time interest was reduced from 2 ½% to 2%. As we were still having trouble with the Venn-Severin engines, the Directors sent the attorney, president and myself to the Venn-Severin factory in Chicago to meet with the Venn-Severin officials. They tried faithfully to correct our difficulties but apparently could not. This company soon after went bankrupt and sold everything at auction. In the meantime we sent out specifications to several companies to bid on two new diesel engines to replace the Venn-Severin engines.

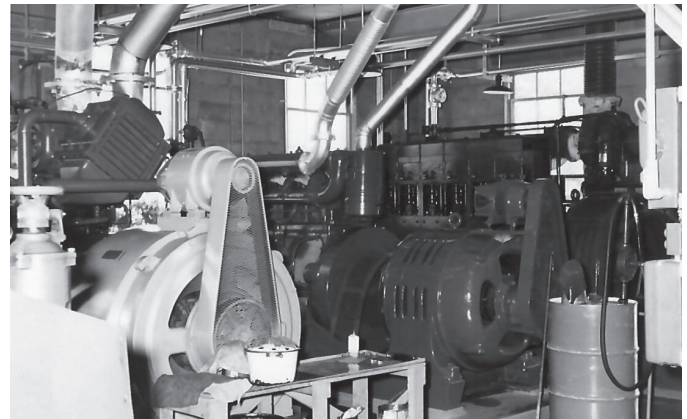


270 kW Superior

**1950** As we would soon need another generating unit, we advertised that we would accept bids on a complete new generating unit. We received eight bids for this new diesel generating unit. We chose the Superior, a 270 Kilowatt unit. When this unit was once put on line in April 1951, we didn't use the Venn-Severins any more.

**1951** The Board sent our attorney, president and myself to Washington D.C. to try to get enough money to purchase some other make of engine to replace the two Venn-Severins. These engines were to drive the same generators, etc., that the Venn-Severins did, so the speed would have to be exactly the same. Our new unit, the Superior was now installed and was started in April 1951. We received several bids for replacement of the Venn-Severins and accepted the Enterprise. We decided to sue the Killoren Electric Co. for recovery of money on the Venn-Severin engines. We had many meetings with the company officers, attorneys, etc., but Attorney Leasum presented such a good case that Killoren's attorneys didn't think they could win, so they settled out of court for \$16600.00. This year Arni Richter was elected as Director.

**1952** The Enterprise engines to replace the Venn-Severins were now here and being installed. They were tested and put on the line in May 1952. One of these Enterprise Engines is still the same and working excellently. The other one was up-rated from 100 K.W. to 250 K.W. in 1961. We received the \$16600.00 from Killoren in 1952.



Enterprise diesels

## Annual Meeting Scheduled

Per the bylaws, the board has selected Saturday, June 13, 2020, for the date of the annual meeting. It will be held at the Community Center Gym at 10 a.m. and will be followed by lunch. With everything that is going on, this date could change. The board will make a decision as we get further into May. With no election this year, it would be an easy thing to reschedule if necessary, and we will give the members as much notice of any change as possible; however, at this time, the meeting is planned to proceed as scheduled.





## Meet Your Director

### Jim Jorgenson

Jim Jorgenson was first elected to the board in 2003.

Jim's grandfather, Len, in addition to being the cooperative's first lineman, first came to the Island as a young boy in the early 1900s. Jim has owned and operated his own construction company here on the Island for over 23 years.



Jim has been a Lion's Club member for eight years, is a longtime member of the Washington Island Sportsman's Club, and has been involved in the Door County Baseball league for over 30 years. He started playing ball while still in high school and has managed the team on two different occasions for several years.

His wife, Kelly, occasionally gives Jim time off to hunt, fish, and garden.

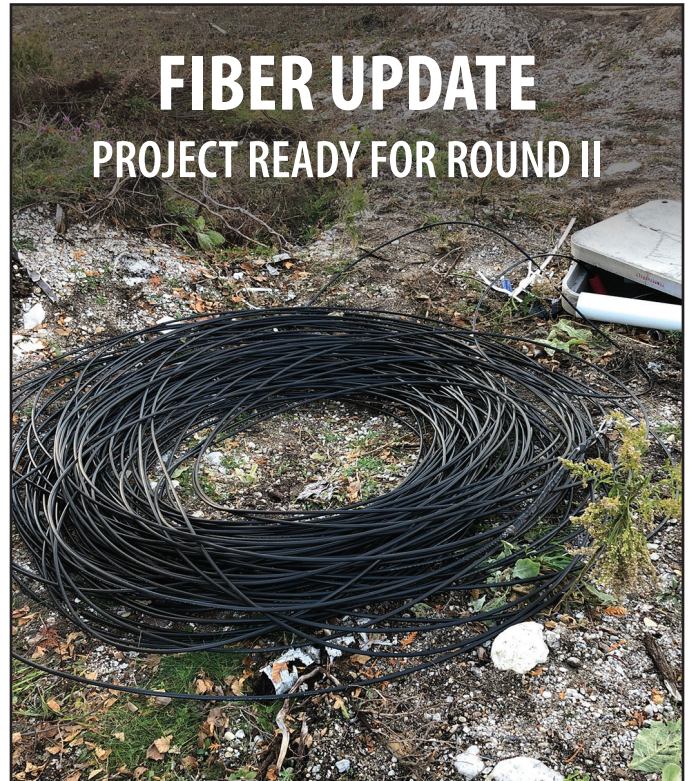
When you see Jim, thank him for his many years of service to the cooperative and the Island community.

## SPRING PROJECT UPDATE

### Pandemic causes temporary delay

As of this writing, all the primary poles have been set and the lines run along South Shore Drive to bypass the Sand Dunes Beach run. We expect to continue work to tie the homes along this route to the new primary lines and then will remove the poles and lines along the beach at a later date.

The work we had scheduled for early to mid-May to run along Lobdell Point Road has been postponed until fall due to the current situation and the need for outside crews to come to the Island and stay. All material has been ordered and will still arrive sometime this spring, so this is only a temporary delay.



*Fiber at Plum Island awaiting termination*

Unfortunately, in spite of all our and NSight's efforts, the Public Service Commission did not choose our project for grant funding. This does not mean it is dead! We are pursuing other opportunities as they open up, and one of Governor Evers' proposals to help deal with the current crisis is to open another round of funding. We have lobbied that rather than go through the whole process from scratch, that this new round, if approved by the legislature, circle back to the already submitted, evaluated, and ranked projects. If they follow this logic (since when is government logical?) current ranking puts our project in the approval column. Once again, as we have always said, nothing is guaranteed, but we ask you to keep your fingers crossed and we may know more by the time you are reading this article.

### Robert Cornell, Manager

1157 Main Road, Washington Island, WI 54246

920-847-2541

info@wiecoop.com

Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

