

# Watt's New

May 2024



## Vernon Electric Cooperative

*"Information for our member-owners."*

## Monthly Co-op



### April Trivia:

What tree species are typically used for power poles?

**Answer:** Southern Yellow Pine, Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar are the most popular tree species used for power poles.

### May Trivia:

Last month, the last building and stack of the Genoa G-3 powerplant was demolished. In what year was the plant brought online?

*(See next month's newsletter for answer.)*

## The Importance of Calling Before You Dig

Whether you're planning to plant a tree, build a deck, or install a new fence, any digging project can potentially pose risks to both you and the infrastructure below ground. That's why it's essential to call 811, also known as Digger's Hotline. This free service is crucial in protecting your safety, the safety of others, and the integrity of the underground utility infrastructure.

### Why Call Before You Dig?

**Safety First:** Underground utility lines such as natural gas, water, electrical, and telecommunications cables can be hazardous if hit. Calling 811 ensures that you avoid these dangers and prevent potential accidents. Keep in mind that Digger's Hotline will only locate UTILITY lines and will not locate your personal lines, such as a wire between your home and a meter on a pedestal or pole.

**Prevention of Service Interruptions:** Damaging utility lines can lead to service interruptions for you and your neighbors. Calling 811 helps avoid these disruptions and maintains essential services.

**Protecting Infrastructure:** Underground utilities are a vital part of community infrastructure. Calling 811 helps preserve these utilities and prevent costly repairs.

**Peace of Mind:** Knowing that you are aware of and avoiding underground lines provides peace of mind as you work on your project.

When can I begin my digging project?

**Wait for the mark! Utilities will mark their buried lines on your dig site.**

State laws vary, but generally, utility companies have a few days to respond to your request. Utilities will send out locators who will come to your dig site to mark the approximate location of buried utilities with paint or flags so that you can avoid them. Each utility type corresponds to a specific color of paint or flag. In addition to waiting for marks, you must use the info on your ticket to confirm that ALL utilities have responded before you dig. Typically, within 3 days.

**The four most common colors include:**

- **Yellow** – Gas lines
- **Red** – Electric lines
- **Orange** – Communications lines (fiber, phone, television)
- **Blue** – Potable water lines.

**Dial 811 or visit [call811.com](http://call811.com) to learn more.**



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**



# VEC Supports New K9 Officer

Vernon Electric Cooperative has once again demonstrated its commitment to the safety and well-being of the local community by donating \$500 to support the Vernon County Sheriff K9 program. This generous contribution will go a long way in strengthening law enforcement's efforts to keep Vernon County safe. The donation was especially timely as it coincided with the swearing-in of the department's new K9 officer, Kota.



The funds provided by Vernon Electric Cooperative will aid in covering expenses related to Kota's care, training, and ongoing needs, including essential equipment and supplies. Such support from local organizations like Vernon Electric Cooperative not only helps maintain the K9 program but also



*Pictured L to R: Vernon Electric MSR Kendra Arneson, Lieutenant Jason Crume, VEC Director Orlan Bakkum, VEC Board Chair Bernadine Hornby, Deputy Mark Bellacero & K9 Officer Dax.*

strengthens the collaborative relationship between the community and law enforcement.

# Energy Assistance Available for Qualifying Members



The heating season is almost over. It's important for you to make every attempt to keep current on your electric bill. We understand that things do happen that put financial burdens on people. Certain government organizations can offer assistance or point you toward a group that can help.

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) program provides help with different types of energy assistance during the heating season. This program is based on income and other qualifications.

**Heating Assistance** – This is a one-time payment during the heating season (**October 1-May 15**). The funding pays a portion of the heating costs, but the payment is not intended to cover the entire cost of heating a residence. The amount of energy assistance benefit varies depending on a variety of factors, including the household's size, income, and energy costs. In most cases, the energy assistance benefit is paid directly to the household energy supplier.

**Electric Assistance** - This is a one-time benefit payment during the heating season (**October 1-May 15**) based on program qualifications. The funding pays a portion of the household's electrical cost but is not intended to cover the entirety of the non-heating costs. In most cases, the non-heating assistance benefit is paid directly to the household energy supplier.

**Crisis Assistance** - A household may be eligible for crisis assistance if you have no heat, have received a disconnect notice from the heating vendor, or are nearly out of fuel and do not have the money to purchase more. WHEAP crisis assistance provides both emergency and proactive services.

**Weatherization** - is a program to help households save on their energy burden by making your place of living more energy efficient. If you are eligible for WHEAP, your application information will be referred to the local weatherization agency who goes through a selection process and contacts those households for potential weatherization services.

## Services include:

- Insulation of attics, walls, and floors
- Insulation or replacement of the water heater
- Reducing air leakage
- General health and safety inspections
- Providing information about maintenance and energy conservation.

## For more information and application details, please contact your local office:

- Vernon County – 608-637-5210
- La Crosse - 608-784-4357
- Monroe County – 608-487-9356
- Crawford County – 608-326-0248
- Richland County – 608-647-8821
- Sauk County – 608-356-8887
- Juneau County – 608-847-5988
- First Call for Help – dial 211 or 877-947-2211 (a resource that will help you to find other agencies in your area that may be able to assist you with payment toward your electric bill).

You may be eligible for weatherization services if your gross income for the last month is equal to or less than 60 percent of Wisconsin's state median income (SMI) for your family size (see chart below).

## WHEAP Income Guidelines for the October 2023 through September 2024

### 60 Percent of State Median Income Guidelines

Household Size	One-Month Income	Annual Income
1	\$2,820.67	\$33,848
2	\$3,688.58	\$44,263
3	\$4,556.50	\$54,678
4	\$5,424.50	\$65,094
5	\$6,292.42	\$75,509
6	\$7,160.33	\$85,924
7	\$7,323.00	\$87,876
8	\$7,485.75	\$89,829