

Watt's New April 2025



Vernon Electric Cooperative

"Information for our member-owners."

Monthly Co-op



January Trivia:

Do you know what the device is located near your home that transforms the 7,200-volt electricity from the distribution power line to 240 volts so your home appliances can safely run?

Answer: A Transformer

April Trivia:

Which organization, founded in 1942, serves as the national service organization for more than 900 electric cooperatives in the United States?

(See next month's newsletter for answer.)

Annual Meeting Recap

Vernon Electric Cooperative hosted 125 members for its 89th Annual Meeting at the co-op headquarters in Westby on Thursday, February 27.

Vernon Electric CEO and General Manager Craig Buros announced the co-op continues to be in a strong financial position, despite the challenge of inflation and increased costs, which he said appear to be stabilizing.

"Prices are not coming down, but they're not going up as high or as fast as they were, so that's a good sign," he said, referring to the cost of all equipment that goes into maintaining the distribution system. Buros also said the cost of wholesale power, which accounts for 57% of the co-op budget is stable and investments in the cooperative's distribution facilities totaled \$3.8 million.

Buros said the most recent change that went into effect in 2025, a \$1 facility charge increase, is minimal, especially compared to increases implemented by neighboring investor-owned utilities. Data shows Vernon Electric's average residential rate increased \$8 between 2022 and 2025, much less than total increases at some investor-owned utilities that ranged from \$25 to \$36 for the same time period. Also, Buros reported the co-ops average interruption time for 2024, or the average time in which members were without power, was 87 minutes, well below the U.S. five-year average.



Buros reported it has been one year since the launch of the co-op's innovative Bluff Prairie Solar Project, which offers "solar for all," a first-of-its-kind project in the state. Working with project partners, and with the help of state grant funds, Vernon Electric's Bluff Prairie project allows income eligible members to participate in the solar project at no cost.

NRECA's *RE Magazine* featured the forward-thinking and innovative project in its "Thinking Big" section of its May publication, giving the co-op national attention.

Vernon Electric is currently working with other Wisconsin & Minnesota co-ops and OneEnergy Renewables on another solar project. The array, known as Greenfield Solar, is part of a federal PACE grant which is intended to ease the increased cost of building a solar array.

Another event that put Vernon Electric in the spotlight in 2024 was the visit by then-President Joe Biden. His appearance at the co-op in September was the first time in history a sitting president held an official event at an electric co-op. During the visit, Biden presented Dairyland Power Cooperative with \$579 million in loans and grants for clean energy projects and also praised Vernon Electric for its innovation, forward-thinking, and environmental stewardship. "That recognition really goes a long way. It was an honor, not only for Vernon Electric, but for electric co-ops across the country," Buros said.

Buros also recognized Vernon Electric staff and directors for their continued contribution to the success of the cooperative. In board elections, four incumbent directors—Bernadine Hornby, Daniel Giese, James Goodman, and David Dregne—were all re-elected.

The co-op also presented \$13,000 worth of scholarships to area high school students.

Vernon Electric No-Lost Time Accident

Vernon Electric Cooperative has been recognized for its outstanding commitment to safety by receiving the prestigious No Lost Time Accident Award from Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange. This accolade is awarded to cooperatives that demonstrate exemplary safety practices and maintain a record of no lost time due to workplace accidents.

The award was presented at Vernon Electric Cooperative's headquarters, where the dedicated lineworkers and staff were commended for their vigilance and adherence to safety protocols. Troy Dahl, a

representative from Federated, presented the award to the cooperative.

"We are incredibly proud of our team for achieving this award," said Craig Buros, CEO of Vernon Electric Cooperative. "Safety is our top priority, and this recognition is a testament to the commitment and hard work of our employees. Their dedication ensures that we can continue to provide reliable service to our members while maintaining a safe working environment."



CALLING ALL THIRD-GRADERS:

You're invited to participate in the
Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association's

ELECTRICAL SAFETY POSTER CONTEST

Submit an original poster supporting electrical safety to your local electric cooperative by **April 30, 2025**, for a chance to win a **\$25 gift card!** The top three posters will be entered into the statewide poster contest for a chance to win one of three great prizes:

1st place – Chromebook

2nd place – \$100 Gift Card

3rd place – \$75 Gift Card

Posters should be at least 8.5x11 inches, but no larger than 11x14 inches.

Entries must include completed entry form and student's name on the back of the poster.

Contact your local electric cooperative or go to www.weca.coop for registration forms.

Vernon Electric Cooperative Donates \$2,000 to Readstown Library

Vernon Electric Cooperative is proud to announce a donation of \$2,000 to the Readstown Library, generously provided through their Federated Youth Funds. This contribution underscores the cooperative's commitment to supporting local educational resources and fostering community development.



**Watt's
New**

The information in this newsletter has been prepared for you by Trevor B. Clark, Manager of Communications & Member Relations. Comments or questions regarding information contained here should be directed to:
 VERNON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
 110 Saugstad Rd; Westby, WI 54667
 Call (608) 634-3121 or 1-800-447-5051.

www.vernonelectric.org • E-mail: info@vernonelectric.org
 This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

