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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

July 2023

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FROM PROBLEM TO PROSPERITY

CATASTROPHE CREATES OPPORTUNITY FOR
FIBER INTERNET ON WASHINGTON ISLAND

CHERRY RECIPES





EV CHARGING PILOT PROGRAM BALANCES COST WITH DEMAND

by Craig Buross, CEO & General Manager

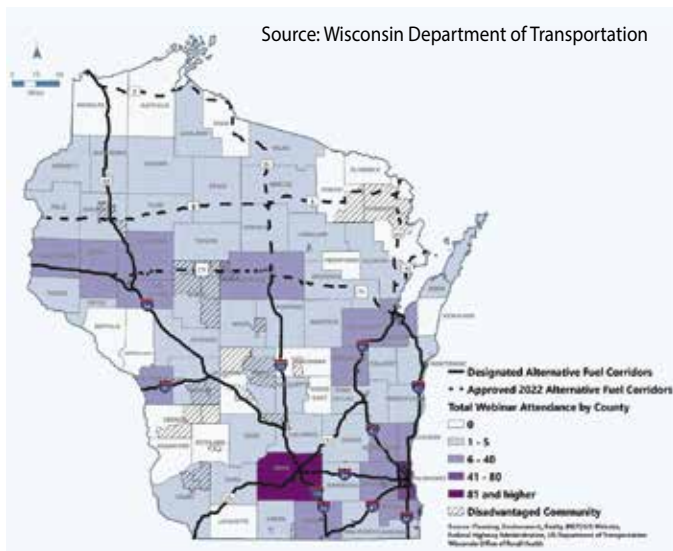


If you have driven by a car dealership, you may have noticed a scarcity of vehicles on the lots. Is this another shortage like the one in 2021, or is it due to the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) by automakers? EVs, along with renewables and decommissioning of coal-fired power plants, have been a hot topic in the electric industry in recent years.

Range anxiety, the fear of running out of charge, is a common concern when it comes to owning an EV. This fear is justified, given the lack of charging infrastructure. However, it's worth considering how often people travel over 300 miles at a time. If they do, there's a high chance of finding a charger along the way, especially along the interstate corridor, often near convenience stores or restaurants. Unfortunately, charging EVs does take more time than filling your car with gas, hence why chargers are in those areas.

At Vernon Electric, we closely monitor the trends developing in the EV industry and how they will affect us and our members. There is little doubt EVs are here to stay, given the substantial research and development efforts by auto manufacturers and the government subsidies for these large-scale projects.

Wisconsin has received approval from the U.S. Federal Highway Administration for its plan to expand electric vehicle charging stations under the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. The program plan, approved in 2022, makes Wisconsin eligible to receive approximately \$78 million in NEVI funds over the next five years. The goal is to have level 2 or level 3 chargers no more than 50 miles apart along major highways or interstates, as shown in the map below.



While reviewing the map, you may notice that U.S. Highway 14 from Madison to La Crosse was not included in the alternative fuel corridors. However, this does not mean there are no chargers along this route. In fact, Vernon Electric has installed five EV chargers, including three level 3 fast chargers and two level 2 chargers, along this route. In today's fast-paced world, even level 3 chargers may take more time than we would prefer to fully charge your vehicle, even more so with level 2 chargers. Perhaps electric vehicles will compel us to slow down and appreciate the opportunity to visit new restaurants or take more breaks during long trips.

The expectation is electric vehicle owners will charge their vehicles just enough to make it home. They will not want to spend more time at the charger or pay more than they must, especially if they can receive a better rate at home. Who can argue with that logic? Unfortunately, most electric vehicles only provide a 120-volt charger (Level 1), which can be plugged into a standard outlet and is by far the slowest charging option.

We want to encourage EV owners to take advantage of low-cost energy during times that have the least impact on the electric grid.

We have had numerous discussions among ourselves and with other electric cooperatives studying the trends of the EV market and the impact on our electric distribution grid. Currently, the demand for electricity during the late-night and early-morning hours is minimal, and the cost of energy is at its lowest. We want to encourage EV owners to take advantage of low-cost energy during times that have the least impact on the electric grid. This has led us to develop an EV charging pilot program that not only suits our members but aligns with the

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EV CHARGING RATES



On Peak Charging	25 Cents per kWh	1:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m
Off-Peak Charging	8 cents per kWh	6:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Super Off-Peak charging	5.7 cents per kWh	9:30 p.m. – 6:30 a.m.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace: THE VERNON COUNTY CHAPTER



By Leah Call

Vernon Electric Cooperative member Wayne Sherry has an altruistic goal. “I want to find all those kids who are sleeping on the floor in Vernon County and give them a free bed!”

As president of the newly formed Vernon County chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace, he is on his way to accomplishing that goal.

Retired after 35 years in education, this former Viroqua School District superintendent wanted to find something he could do to continue making a difference. After reading about

Sleep in Heavenly Peace one morning last summer, he found it.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace is a national non-profit created around the belief that a bed is a basic need for every child for physical, emotional, and mental stability.

“I immediately sent an email and three days later got a phone call asking if I was interested in starting a chapter,” explained Sherry.

Before agreeing, he wanted to observe another Wisconsin chapter building beds. A few weeks later, Sherry and his wife, Karen, attended a bed build in Marshfield. “There we saw 65 volunteers, cutting, pounding, and sanding. Every one of them had a job,” said Sherry.

Though impressed by a community working together for a worthy cause, it was the delivery of the bed that sealed the deal for Sherry. Entering the home with the delivery crew, he noted a thin pad and couch pillow on the floor where a 12-year-old girl slept. “We put the bed together, and that little girl was so happy,” recalled Sherry. “It grabbed our hearts. It was an incredible experience.”

It was decided. Sherry would start the 319th chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

Launching a New Chapter

After committing to lead the Vernon County chapter, Sherry went through training in Utah. Once back in Viroqua,



Wayne Sherry, president of the Vernon County Chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace, with his wife, Karen.



Along with the bed, Sleep in Heavenly Peace recipients receive new bedding and a homemade quilt.

he assembled and trained a core team of 12 people. Then he and vice president Marilyn Kiel organized the first core team build. “We are required to provide all our own tools, all of our own wood, everything we need for a bed build day,” he noted.

Despite numerous challenges, the team managed to complete five beds. Since that first build, the Vernon County chapter has held two additional builds resulting in 92 completed beds. Thirty-eight beds have been delivered to children who no longer sleep on the floor.

“This program is very demanding, but it is so rewarding. It is worth every piece of energy I put into it,” said Sherry.

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—Wayne Sherry

Community Strong

For Sherry, the joy of providing a bed to a child without one is coupled with a sense of gratitude and pride in the community he loves. Once he spread the word about the program, people wanted to help. The area Power of 100 organization selected Sleep in Heavenly Peace as a recipient of \$11,000, and churches and organizations generously donated their time and dollars. “We are completely, totally a volunteer group,” noted Sherry.

In April, some 76 volunteers of all ages showed up to build 40 beds at the truck center at Sleepy Hollow in Viroqua. “Sleepy Hollow has donated that space to us for all of our builds,” said Sherry. “They clear everything out, and we have the whole center for our bed builds.”

The next bed build will take place in July. “We train

volunteers on all the different things we do. Nobody has to have any kind of special skills at all,” noted Sherry. “What we need are people who are willing to give of their time. It’s all from the heart.”

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep

With an inventory of beds, the task now is to raise awareness among those needing a bed for their child. Though each bed costs \$250 to build, they are completely free for children, ages 3–17, who don’t currently have a bed. Delivered beds include the frame, mattress, mattress pad, pillow, pillowcase, sheets, blanket, and a homemade quilt.

The application process is simple. After a parent requests a bed at shpbeds.org, they receive a call from the local chapter to arrange a delivery time. “We have a delivery team that takes the bed parts to the home and assembles it there. They put the mattress and pad and bedding on and leave,” explained Sherry.

Beds and bedding can be a hefty expense for struggling parents. Sherry tells parents not to be shy about requesting a bed for their child. “If they take the initiative to apply for a bed, we do not show any judgment. Circumstances in life sometimes require some assistance. This program is needed in Vernon County by many, many families. Don’t feel that you are alone.”

One mother who recently requested a bed for her 3-year-old daughter told Sherry her daughter sleeps on her bed every night, and, for the first time, is sleeping through the night. “What better payment can you get than that?” asked Sherry.



Volunteers are taught a task necessary to build a bed; no special skills are required to participate.

FREE & EASY ways to save energy

(Spoiler Alert: Your clothes and dishes won't know the difference)

Major home appliances account for approximately 16% of an average home's energy consumption.

16%



1. Run full loads of laundry instead of several smaller ones.
2. Use cold water to wash your clothes.

3. Keep your refrigerator at 35° to 38°F and your freezer at 0°F.
4. Regularly defrost manual-defrost freezers and refrigerators.



5. Skip the heat-dry setting on your dishwasher.
6. Fully load your dishwasher before washing.

7. When buying new appliances, consider Energy Star versions.
8. Unplug appliances you're not using.



Time to replace that old appliance? Replacing older versions with energy-efficient models can save the average household more than \$500 per year.

Sources: National Resources Defense Council,
U.S. Energy Information Administration

Safe
Electricity.org

EV Charging Pilot Program

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needs of the electric industry. If you have or are considering an EV, I encourage you to take advantage of this new EV charging opportunity.

Our program is designed to assist members while focusing on the overall energy demand. You'll notice the pricing varies based on the time the vehicle is charging. For example, the on-peak charging fee is 25 cents per kilowatt-hour, reflecting the higher electricity demand during that period, while the super-off-peak rate is 5.7 cents when electricity demand is at its lowest. We will provide a level 2 Clipper Creek charger at no cost, but the installation will be the member's responsibility and there will be a \$5 per month facility cost for the EV charger.

One of the unique advantages of our chargers is the ability to schedule your charge. Through the ZEF Energy App, you can plug in your EV when you arrive home rather than risk forgetting to before you head to bed, and charging won't begin until the hours that you specify. This allows you to take full advantage of lower cost rates while not limiting the ability to charge at any time of the day.

If you or someone you know is interested in purchasing an electric vehicle but are concerned about charging, please look at our website or give us a call. The EV industry is still relatively new and there are many unanswered questions. However, the vehicle industry is moving in that direction, and by creating this pilot program, we hope to learn together with our members while expanding the services VEC can provide.

Craig Buros, CEO & General Manager

110 Saugstad Road, Westby, WI 54667

608-634-3121 • 608-447-5051

email: info@vernonelectric.org

website: www.vernonelectric.org

Trevor Clark, Editor

