



Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



**By Jay A. Porter,
PE, Chief Executive
Officer**

EMBRACING CHANGE TO BETTER SERVE YOU

As I approach my two-year anniversary as your CEO of Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative, I reflect on the current status of the co-op. My staff and I have made our best attempts to find ways to keep the financial status strong

without major rate increases.

As a leader, I tried to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the cooperative. Admittedly, it's easier to look at something from the outside and come up with solutions and innovations to current practices. Most of us have had experiences where we have become amerced in a specific way we carry out a task until someone asks, "Why don't you just do it this way?" As you know, this can go one of two ways: We can be happy someone has pointed out this time-saving or cost-saving suggestion, or we can upset the apple cart with the suggestion.

When my journey at ACEC began, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the employees were ready and accepting of change. I encouraged employees to bring their ideas and suggestions to me, and we have implemented many of these with new policies and updates within the office.

Several items have also had a direct impact for you, the member. These items mainly revolve around one central topic—energy cost... your electric bill. Cooperatives were founded to bring their members the best possible product for the lowest possible cost. As CEO of ACEC, this is my goal. There are certain things that will always be out of my hands—like inflation and the rising cost of wholesale power. However, we have done several things in-house to

try to combat the rise of your electric bill. These measures have been successful enough that the majority of our members did not see a rate increase in 2017.

In the last two years, these are some of the changes that have been implemented:

- Evaluation of our fleet vehicles and eliminating those that see the least usage per year. An auction, available to the general public, was recently held for these vehicles.
- Within the last year we have had four employees retire. Some positions have been filled by new employees but others have not, with the job duties of the former employees redistributed amongst current staff. Technology has streamlined many processes.
- Management was asked to review the current software, organizations, and monthly dues that are paid. We have made cutbacks amounting to significant savings.
- And lastly, as you know from past issues of *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*, I have led the purchase of our portion of ownership of the West Riverside Energy Center. This will hopefully stabilize our future wholesale power costs.

As your CEO, I plan to continue with an "open-door" policy and encourage you to bring any questions, concerns, or greetings my way. For those of you outside the Friendship area, my Discussion Days are always posted on our website and the calendar portion of your *Connections* newsletter found in your electric bill each month.

A special thank you to all who attended our annual meeting on May 15 this year, and those who took advantage of our new eVote option. Look for an annual meeting recap in next month's *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* issue.

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UNDERSTANDING THE FACILITY CHARGE

What is a facility charge?

Take a look at your monthly bills. Whether it's electricity, natural gas, cable television, or cell phones, every service we use in our home has some kind of monthly charge to cover the cost of providing the service. It might be called a service charge, basic charge, fixed charge or monthly minimum charge. For Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative members, this monthly fee is called a facility charge.

This fixed monthly charge represents the costs of making sure electricity is available and can be delivered to you. It also covers the meter and a portion of the poles, wires, lines, and transformer serving you.

What does the facility charge cover?

Simply put, poles, wire, transformers, and substations are not cheap, and all of these items are critical to providing electricity. The average cost to install one mile of electrical services is over \$41,000!

Why should I pay a facility charge if I don't use any electricity?

The cost to build the line, maintain the system, and deliver electricity to a member who doesn't turn on the lights all month vs. someone who keeps the lights on 24/7 is exactly the same. Even if you don't use much electricity, when you do use it, you count on it to be there when you

flip a switch. Regular maintenance must be done on wires, poles, substations, and other items to ensure that power is safe and reliable.

I have been a member for a long time, shouldn't my services be paid for by now?

If you have been a member for a long time, chances are equipment has been replaced at least once, or even several times. In addition to weather and varmint damage, equipment needs to be maintained or upgraded just like a cell phone or a computer.



Hey High School Sophomores and Juniors!



YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

---> JULY 25-27

Make new friends and beef up your college applications!



Youth Leadership Congress, YLC, is a by-teens, for-teens cooperative leadership conference that is planned and developed by a youth board elected at the previous year's event. Attending YLC will give you real-world skills that you can use in everyday life. You will learn about co-ops, leadership, careers and interviewing skills, listen to great motivational speakers, and meet new people. And don't forget, it's a great resume builder and looks fantastic on your college application.

SIGN UP

Visit our website, www.acecwi.com and fill out the application. The deadline to apply is Friday, June 8, 2018.



WE GIVE WHERE WE LIVE

Cooperatives are guided by seven principles that they base their everyday operations on. One of those is *Concern for Community*.

ACEC employees genuinely enjoy being involved in the communities they live and work in. This principle is not something they have to be told to do. They actively seek out ways to better their communities.

Employees engage in after-hours service commitments like highway garbage pick-up, donating goods for events like Stuff the Bus School Supply Drive, Easter basket donations and delivery, diaper drives, and annual toy drives. They donate their time and help raise funds for causes that affect friends, neighbors, and loved ones. You can usually spot an ACEC employee at events supporting causes like MS and cancer research.

ACEC also has donation programs like Operation Round-Up and Federated Youth Foundation. Operation Round-Up money comes from members rounding their electric bills up to the next dollar. A board of directors accepts applications and decides who qualifies for donations. In the past, donations have been made for things like new LED lights for the Neshkoro Fire Trucks, furniture in the Children's Room at the Lester Public Library, and camp funds for Easter Seals Wisconsin. Federated Youth Foundation money comes entirely from unclaimed patronage capital retirements. Each year educational scholarships are awarded to qualified applicants. This year, we awarded 100 scholarships at \$1,000 each.

ACEC is proud of the difference employees make in their communities.



Every year ACEC employees participate in three local roadside clean-up events.



We distribute donated toys throughout our service territory. Pictured is ACEC's donation along with other toy collections at Green Lake County for their Angel Tree program.



ACEC staff and members brought in thousands of school supplies to donate for the 2017 Stuff the Bus program. This year's school supplies drive will be coming soon.



Lester Public Library in Rome applied for Operation Round-Up funding for new furniture in their children's area. Pictured are Karlie, Kyra, and Owen enjoying library time.



First-grade students, along with a local Marine, shopped for children in need with money they raised from a penny war in December 2017.



SUMMER SEASON IS STORM SEASON

No one knows electrical safety better than the experts who practice it every single day. Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative encourages you to practice safety with these reminders—during and after a summer storm:

Avoid wires and water — When lightning strikes a home during a storm, the electrical charge can surge through pipes and utility wires. That means you can get zapped if you're touching water or any device that's plugged in, whether it's a landline phone or toaster.

Skip the makeshift shelter — During a storm, it's tempting to take cover under a picnic gazebo or golf cart, but in open-sided structures with no conductors to channel strikes, a bolt's path of least resistance to the ground could be you. On top of that, these structures raise your risk of a lightning strike because of their height. Keep moving toward suitable shelter.

Portable generators — Take special care when operating portable generators. They are a good source of power, but if improperly installed, they can become deadly. Do not connect generators directly to household wiring. Power from generators can back-feed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including co-op line workers making repairs. It's best to hire a qualified, licensed electrician to install your generator and ensure that it meets local electrical codes.


Flooded areas — Stay away from downed power lines and avoid walking through flooded areas. Power lines could be submerged and still be live with electricity. Report any downed lines you see to ACEC by calling our emergency line at (888) 928-2232 immediately.

Electrical equipment — Never use electrical equipment that is wet, especially outdoor electrical equipment, which could be a potential danger after a summer storm. Water can damage electrical equipment and parts, posing a shock or fire hazard.

Safety is our number one concern. We encourage you to share these safety tips with your friends, family, and neighbors. Have a fun and safe summer.



Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Customer Service & Billing 800-831-8629
Power Outage Reporting 888-928-2232
Diggers Hotline 800-242-8511

**To make a payment anytime 24/7,
please call 1-844-219-1223.**

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Friendship Service Center

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Friendship, WI 53934-0070

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:30 – 4:00

www.acecwi.com

The Friendship Service Center is located in the Village of Friendship, in Adams County. From Highway 13, travel east three blocks on East Lake Street. Lake Street is also marked as County Highway J.

Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative maintains operations facilities in Pardeeville and Wautoma. These facilities are not open for general business; however, drive-up payment stations are available at both locations. ACEC employees will meet with cooperative members in Pardeeville and Wautoma by prearranged appointment only.