



RATES GOING DOWN!

It is not often in today's day and age that you get to read such a headline. Effective with the January billing cycle, the base charge for all main meters will be going down \$5. This means that the monthly base charge, which is currently \$41 for main residential meters, will be reduced to \$36.

We all painfully remember the need to raise the rate to \$51 per month in order to cover the debt service for repair and replacement of the submarine cable. As has been well documented in this magazine and on our website, due to the work we have done, the support that we have

received, and the application of the disaster aid and budgetary aid to our debt, we are happy to say that we have been able to get out of this mess with a net increase of only \$5 per month from where the rate was prior to the disaster. This is your cooperative and its board of directors being true to our word and following through on our promises. Increasing rates, even with extremely good reason, is never an easy decision. The patience and understanding of our members during this time, as well as the support we have received, are greatly appreciated.

We hope this reduction holds for a

good while; however, as we found out in June of 2018, the unexpected can reach out and grab you.

In addition, at this time, we do not anticipate the need for an increase on the rates associated with usage. It is important to note, however, that the cost of purchased power is mostly dependent upon the cost of the fuel used to generate that power, and the cost of that fuel is subject not only to the uncertainty of winter weather, but to the direction of political winds. Those winds look to be blowing pretty hard right now, so we will keep our fingers crossed.

ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY FOR ISLAND BUSINESSES

Stay tuned for more information on how Island businesses can participate in an advertisement that not only promotes their business, but also Washington Island in general to the 150,000 readers of this magazine who are cooperative members across the state.



We are working with WECON on two pages that could potentially be included in the magazine in early spring.

They could be a combination of a business directory or a divided page of display ads.

If you have an interest in getting more information, contact Robert Cornell to discuss what we are looking at helping with.

BILLING CHANGES COMING IN JANUARY

New system means more bill-paying options

In conjunction with the rates going down in January, we are also on track to roll out our system (as has been discussed here numerous times) through Payment Services Network/Invoice Cloud. Watch for more information about how to enroll over the course of the month. You will be able to receive your bill in multiple formats, traditionally by mail, by text, or by email notice to access the customer portal. You will also be able to pay your bill using not only traditional cash and check, but credit/debit card, ACH, and we should be able to set up budget billing. This has taken a significant effort and has been a long time coming, but we think it will satisfy a need that many of our members have been asking for for years.

Effective with the January billing cycle, as a reminder, all seasonal members will now be billed monthly. December will be your last seasonal billing. As we move into the heating season, this should be an advantage for those members using electric heat as your billing usage will indicate whether or not you left things as you thought! Often we have members who have forgotten to turn down thermostats and are surprised by a large bill in May.



We ended up with a fair number of entries for our photo contest and would like to pick them all, but unfortunately we can't! We are happy to announce that the winners of the photo contest are (and yes, we decided to have more than three):

- **Pam Goodlet**, who followed the original theme of “busy summers of the past” with her photo (*published in the October magazine*) of a busy American Legion Fish Boil
- **Dick Purinton**, with his photo (also published in the *October magazine*) of kayakers
- **Jennifer Emmert** with her photo of a monarch caterpillar (*published in the November magazine*)
- **Ann Miller** with her photo of Gabe Miller and his small-mouth bass catch (*published in the September magazine*)
- **Gloria Small** with the photo of her grandchildren, Wesley Small and Adler Zwiebel, enjoying a summer root beer float, published below



We have a special prize for each of the winners. Please call the cooperative at 920-847-2541 and make arrangements to pick it up at your convenience!

As noted, we ended up with a fair number of entries and want to post as many as we can in these pages.

Joel Gunnlaugsson submitted this photo of a summer sunrise of Detroit Island.



Tyler McGrane submitted this photo of his daughter Nia during a busy summer day of boating and swimming.

WASHINGTON ISLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

We are continuing our perusal of board meeting minutes throughout the years.

1975 Engine Number 6 bent a connecting rod and had to be repaired. The old connecting rod was repaired to be kept as a spare.

The three-phase station power transformer was replaced at a cost of \$2,500. In addition, the wet cell batteries used as backup power for the engine switch gear were replaced. The batteries that were being replaced had been in place since 1945 and were actually purchased used along with the first generator. As a side note, this set of batteries was replaced in 2008. Wouldn't it be nice if all batteries had a 30+ year life cycle?

Oliver Bjarnarson, Norbert O'Connell, Jack Cornell, Steve Ellefson, Kirby Cornell, John Herschberger, and Arni Richter were elected to the board of directors at the annual meeting this year.

A cost-of-service study was initiated to confirm what was already known; rising fuel costs were pushing the cooperative into the red in spite of a rate increase the previous year. It was expected that rates would increase in 1976 after this study was done and REA approval was obtained.

The cooperative began to offer a retirement/security program through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Meter testing equipment was purchased from Carl Crane so that the testing could be done in house.

1976 Oliver Bjarnarson, Norbert O'Connell, Jack Cornell, Howard Young Jr, Kirby Cornell, John Herschberger, and Arni Richter were elected to the board of directors at the annual meeting this year.

The cooperative purchased three 500KVA transformers for the substation from Sturgeon Bay Municipal Utility.

Directors fees were raised from \$6 per meeting to \$8 per

meeting effective with the August meeting. Of note, your directors are currently paid \$10 per meeting.

This being the nation's bicentennial, it was decided that the cooperative should enter a float in the Parade at the Lion's Club Island Fair.



Lineman Larry Young pulls Board President Oliver Bjarnarson dressed as Ben Franklin performing his famous lightning/kite experiment complete with a lightbulb. (Bob Bell photo)

Two-way radio communication especially for use during outages was discussed extensively, with the board deciding that radios would not be purchased at this time.



ONE LAST PLUG FOR THE VETERANS MEMORIAL!

Please refer to the November magazine's Veterans Day special articles and, if you are able, contribute to the restoration/preservation of this important Island monument.

Send your donations noting the Veterans Memorial to:

American Legion
Gislason-Richter Post 402
P.O. Box 143
Washington Island, WI 54246



FIBER UPDATE

By the time you read this, NSight's grant application to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin including the Washington Island Electric Cooperative as a partner will have been submitted. You will remember that the application sent earlier this year was unsuccessful. This application has been revised to note the extensive contribution to the project that is part of the underground project that will take place on Lobdell Point Road as well as the cooperative's participation in installation and our pilot fiber to the home project.

Door County has committed significant funds to the project as well and we have the support of the town, Door County Emergency Management, Door County Medical Center, Door County Economic Development, and local businesses. If successful, and our grant application should score well, we will be passing an initial 213 homes and businesses as well as key anchor institutions on the Island.

This "second phase" (the first being installation of fiber with the new cable) is expected to take up to two years to complete, but certainly could happen quicker. Once it is complete we will move forward with engineering and plans to serve EVERY cooperative member. This project will take time and money, but our goal, as it always has been, will be to improve service for everyone on the Island.



*Merry
Christmas and
Happy New
Year to all our
Members*

In closing this last center spread of the year, our first year sending you this magazine, we would like to wish all our members the best in the coming year. We hope you have enjoyed receiving this magazine and have found the information in its pages both interesting and useful. The employees of the cooperative and its board of directors want you to know that it has been a pleasure serving you over the last year and we look forward to many years to come. We all hope for better things in 2021 and have been impressed with the perseverance of our members during trying times. We hope to see you all in the New Year!

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.

