

FIBER UPDATE



NRTC Field Engineers Chad Holland and Kyle Hubbard escape Huntsville, Alabama, to document rapid collection data for our fiber project.

MY CO-OP

Preliminary engineering work continues with “rapid collection”

As you may recall reading in these pages, the cooperative is a member of the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC). This organization provides services to member cooperatives and has played a major role in projects such as ours at numerous other cooperatives. When your expertise is centered around keeping the lights on, it is pretty important that you develop relationships and take advantage of services offered from organizations such as NRTC that have expertise in projects like this.

You may have seen trucks with the NRTC logo on the door and you may have seen some strange faces doing what is called “rapid collection,” looking at our lines and poles. This rapid collection is done to help with the final engineering of the system. It will note where down guys need to be added and where clearance may become an issue, and help ensure that the installation of fiber on our poles does not become a safety issue for us or the public, or create a reliability issue in the years to come.

Rapid collection helps determine the location of slack spans (those horseshoe or snowshoe-looking things you might see on overhead fiber elsewhere) and splicing points. Obviously, this project only covers about 1/5 of the meters on our system, so you can expect to see NRTC personnel

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There are several recent developments regarding grant opportunities that we are pursuing so that we can move towards completion quicker. Nothing is cast in stone and there is no such thing as a sure thing; however,

the town board’s action to commit the American Recovery Plan Act money that they will be receiving will strengthen this activity by providing a demonstrable public/private partnership that will help our applications score higher.



The State of Wisconsin has announced a very fast-moving grant opportunity with a hard completion date that makes determining the scope of the project for which the grant is applied incredibly important. Since the typical grant provides funding in the form of a reimbursement for money spent, we need to be sure that, if we are successful, the scope of the project is such that it can be completed by that hard date.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has also announced a grant program this is also fast moving, although with a bit of flexibility when it comes to completion dates. This is a very involved application process, but we hope to move forward with an application for this grant as well.

It may be a stretch goal, but our hope is to complete this project without debt. It might not be possible, but that is the goal we are shooting for. Applying for grants and actually getting them are often very different things. We have been pretty lucky over the last few years with our applications and with other assistance and partnerships.

As the engineering for this pilot project nears completion,

you may be wondering when we start hanging fiber. The answer is, "As soon as it gets here." We ordered fiber in anticipation of the project very early in the year, with an expected delivery of the first reels to occur in June. Demand was expected to stretch out lead times and this turned out to be true; however, our own order was affected by a resin shortage that is affecting many industries. In our case, this resin is used in producing the jacket on the outside of the fiber optic cable. The manufacturer initially wanted to push out delivery until the end of October; however, with the help of our supplier, RESCO, this got moved up to mid-August.

You have likely also heard of the global shortage of semi-conductor chips. These chips are used in all sorts of electronic devices and in our case, the shortage may cause delays in the procurement of headend equipment. At this point we have not been told that this will happen, but it is something to be aware of.

In the near future, regardless of the status of fiber and headend equipment, you will begin to see your crew installing the hardware necessary to hang the fiber.

Congratulations, Graduates!



Photo Courtesy Washington Island School

The cooperative would like to congratulate this year's graduates!
Tara DeJardin – Valedictorian, **Julia Valentincic** – Salutatorian, **Max Ehrlich Johnson**,
Paige M. Gunnlaugsson, **Kayla Queene Ervin**, and **Caitlin Stults**.

All graduates were eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship provided by the cooperative.



COOPERATIVE LENDS A HAND IN ISLAND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Restoration work continues on Plum Island

As most of you are well aware, receiving an approved permit to cross Plum Island (Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge) for our cable replacement project was a major feat. As part of the cable project the cooperative installed transformers and meter pedestals, making power available if needed on the Island for the first time since the USCG vacated the Island in 1992. We ran power to the boathouse and assisted in making the well operational.

Major work is happening on Plum Island relating to the restoration of the range light system, windows in the Life Saving Station, and a new roof on the fog horn building. If you are not already a member of the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, join now and support these efforts: www.plumandpilot.org.

As part of this effort, the cooperative installed two temporary services, the same ones we use for the Lion's Club Fair, the Death's Door Barbecue, and that we loan out as part of home construction. We installed one at the Life Saving Station so that the restoration crew could have power for their



Installing temporary service at the 1896 rear range light.

Photo courtesy of David Bolin



Marking live lines at the front range light.

campers. We installed the other at the rear range light. It is likely you have noticed the scaffolding and plastic surrounding this 1896 structure on a trip across on the ferry. If not, go to the website above and you will see many photos. Having electricity available has certainly made this work a bit easier. In addition, for the safety of the restoration crews, we marked the still live but abandoned USCG lines that terminate at the front range light.

In addition, you may have noticed the Island baseball team's construction of a new concession stand at the ballpark. This has certainly been a community effort, with many donors and volunteers. The cooperative has installed a manual meter on this new facility in order to allow electricity to be used without stretching extension cords across the drive. This was necessary because the ball team is still using the old concession stand and both needed electricity. It has been great to see the flurry of volunteer activity at the building as many have donated their skill and ability to make a very attractive addition to the ballpark.

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL UPDATE

We noted in previous issues the successful fundraising efforts of the Gislason-Richter Post for restoration of the important memorial that was dedicated 100 years ago in 1921. Of course, fundraising was only the start. We have watched daily as Tom Jordan replaced the crumbling concrete steps and then David Llewellyn began the arduous task of tuck-pointing and restoration of the stonework. The bronze plaques have been sandblasted

and reinstalled and landscaping has occurred around the base of the monument. We understand that the legion intends to change the configuration on the top of the monument from a flower planter to perhaps an eagle. The work done is not done justice by a photograph and we recommend that everyone take a few moments to go take a look for themselves. The legion plans a July 4th rededication.



COOPERATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

We continue to peruse the minutes of past board meetings.

1980 and 1981 were the years that the Washington Island Energy Office and the first Submarine Cable Project were active. We will skim past these two items as we expect to do a feature on both before the year is over. This year (2021) will mark 40 years since the first submarine cable was laid.

1982 – The virtually new (just over 2 years old) substation transformer that was installed as part of the cable project failed. This failure occurred outside of the one-year warranty period. Unfortunately, due to delays in the installation of the cable, the transformer had actually been energized for less than a year. The transformer was drained, untanked, and shipped off for rewind and the cooperative had no recourse with Sierra Transformers. We were back on engines again.

The repair of the transformer was accomplished and while no direct cause was determined, it was decided that an electronic recloser should be installed at Northport in order to prevent our transformer and system from only receiving one or two phases during a fault on the mainland.

Hannes Andersen, Jacob Ellefson, Nathan Gunnlaugsson,

John Herschberger, Jerome Mann, Norbert O’Connell, and Robert Bjarnarson were elected to the board in 1982.

Since the engines were now only used as emergency back-up, the cooperative put its 30,000-gallon tank, located at the Standard Oil Dock, up for bids. Ray Hanson was the successful bidder.

1983 – Norbert “Okey” O’Connell made the decision that he would retire from the board and not run for re-election after serving the board and the community for 34 years. Hannes Andersen, Jacob Ellefson, Nathan Gunnlaugsson, John Herschberger, Jerome Mann, Howard Young Jr., and Robert Bjarnarson were elected at that year’s annual meeting.

The cooperative signed an agreement with the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association for Job Training and Safety Services.

Cathodic protection was installed on our main underground feeder lines as there were already indications that bare concentric neutrals were deteriorating due to acidic soil conditions.



Fireworks and the Fourth of July go hand-in-hand, and we want you to have a safe, fun-filled celebration! About two-thirds of all fireworks-related injuries occur between June 16 and July 16, so keep these safety tips in mind:

- ★ Never buy professional-grade fireworks. They are not designed for safe consumer use.
- ★ Keep small children a safe distance from all fireworks including sparklers, which can burn at temperatures in excess of 2,000 degrees.
- ★ Never reignite or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Keep a bucket of water or garden hose nearby to thoroughly soak duds before throwing them away.
- ★ Keep pets indoors and away from fireworks to avoid contact injuries or noise reactions.
- ★ Eliminate the potential for home safety hazards by leaving the fireworks to the professionals at a community display.

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Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

