



3,000 feet of cable in conduit that we waited almost a year for!

# SUPPLY CHAIN DELAYS

**A**lmost every section of our industry and others as well have been dramatically affected by supply chain issues, not to mention rising costs. We ordered a semi-load of transformers back in October that is not expected to get here until July. We ordered 600-volt cable in conduit in April of 2021 that only just arrived nearly a year later.

Due to these long lead times, much of what we order is “subject to escalation/de-escalation” when it is finally invoiced. This is generally due to the unknown cost of raw materials required to produce what we are ordering. Wire and cable orders that are outside of normal stock have almost always been subject to cost changes due to the price of the commodities (aluminum, copper, resin) that go into them, but we are seeing more and more of these rising costs. We feel the same pain at the pump as you do and the same inflationary pressures as you do, but likely on a larger scale.

Headend routers for the fiber project are currently at 265 days out. We are working (as is NRTC) to figure this out and come up with alternatives. Other material that we ordered for the fiber project continues to trickle in. In some cases it has been a relief that Nsight and WPS have slowed us down.

Lead times for replacement meters and the componentry associated with them are also painful. Our meter reading system (and what we use for outage management as well)

is dependent on two main collectors, one here at the cooperative office and one out on Jackson Harbor Road. All information is routed to the management software through them. The collector at the office malfunctioned, forcing all the information to have to be routed back to the Jackson Harbor Road unit. This causes delays in outage reporting and makes it a bit more difficult to do things such as immediate reads or reconfigure new meters. A replacement is 36 weeks lead time, and even an RMA to repair (or attempt to repair) the original is now running into its 10th week with no updates available.

As you all know, Door County is going to be here through the month of May paving not only county roads, but also town roads. We had hoped that we would be able to accomplish some additional underground work during this project and make our mess at the same time the county is making theirs. Due to long material lead times, when we started planning the projects mid last year, it became painfully obvious that the material we needed to accomplish the work would never get here in time for the paving project, so we made the decision that we would wait.

When you combine the long lead times with the fact that there are not enough hours in the day to get it all done (kind of counterintuitive), it is probably a good thing to put some of these projects on the back burner.

# RESCO

## OUR KEY SUPPLIER AND PARTNER

You have heard us mention RESCO, the Rural Electric Supply Cooperative, many times over the years, not only in this magazine, but at annual meetings. We highlighted them numerous times during our cable crisis and replacement because of the critical role they played not only in getting us supplies, but in helping coordinate the repair and also in standing with us when the cable supplier did not want to honor their cost concession agreement when they delivered one reel of the cable substantially late.

Doug Booher was practically a WIEC employee during the whole process. Knowing that they had our back made it so much easier to just worry about getting the job done.

Matt Brandrup and Doug Booher are presented with a plaque for all their help on the cable project.



**From the RESCO website:** Rural Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO) is a member-owned, not-for-profit electrical wholesaling business. Our members and customers are rural electric cooperatives, public power districts, municipal electric utilities and investor-owned utilities in the Upper Midwest, extending from Michigan to Montana. We assist our members and other customers with the procurement of their distribution and transmission electrical material supply needs at very competitive prices due to our not-for-profit business model.

First incorporated in 1936 as Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (WEC), we became Rural Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO) in 1972 to reflect an expansion into multiple states and our more active role as an electrical distributor.

Today, RESCO is one of the largest full-line distributors of high voltage electrical products in the Midwest, supplying power cable, transformers, utility pole hardware and all other material our utility customers need to operate. Our seven fully-stocked, strategically-located warehouses exceed 125,000 square feet of inventory storage space and can ship products 24/7, promptly responding to any emergency.

**Another Cooperative First** Along with this magazine and Federated Rural Insurance (our carrier), you will note that RESCO is another Wisconsin cooperative first.

As a member-owner of RESCO, we earn capital patronage based on our purchases and in addition to low markups on material, we get some of that back each year.

### RESCO

SUPPLYING THE COOPERATIVE ADVANTAGE

WASHINGTON ISLAND ELECTRIC

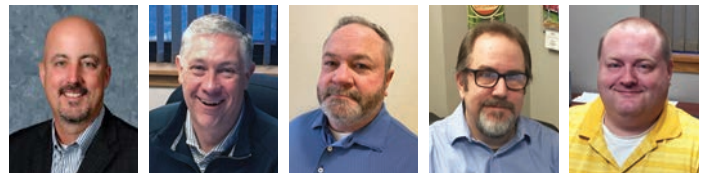
RESCO 10-Year Patronage Refund Allocation History

	Total Purchases	Total Allocation	
2021	539,195	11,494	2.1% of total purchases
2020	195,508	4,929	2.5% of total purchases
2019	(200,082)	2,602	-1.3% of total purchases
2018	2,379,080	14,350	0.6% of total purchases
2017	32,910	362	1.1% of total purchases
2016	87,819	590	0.7% of total purchases
2015	22,335	296	1.3% of total purchases
2014	12,309	326	2.6% of total purchases
2013	17,842	560	3.1% of total purchases
2012	29,237	1,324	4.5% of total purchases
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,116,152</b>	<b>36,833</b>	<b>1.2% of total purchases</b>

(If you are wondering what happened in 2019—we returned the reels that the cable came on which, as you will note, had a significant deposit value!)

**Teammates** RESCO is not our only supplier; however, they are certainly the largest and while we have good relationships with all our suppliers, we can tell you that RESCO tops them all. Virtually everything you see when you are driving down the road, from poles, transformers, conductor, wire, insulators and the associated hardware to hold it up to the meter socket on your home, comes to us through RESCO.

The key folks we deal with (some of whom are regularly here on the Island) are:



Matt Brandrup, President and CEO

Doug Booher, VP of Sales and Manufacturer Relations

Dennis Gaffney, Outside Sales

Tony Ciebell, Inside Sales

Travis Kasemodel, Inside Sales

While Tony and Dennis are the ones who have to put up with me the most (which might be why Dennis isn't smiling in his picture), all the rest are regular contributors to the cooperative's success and we wanted to take a moment to recognize their work. One of these days Tony and Travis might show up here! In the meantime, they will be fighting the supply chain battle right along with us.

It is likely you see many of the contractors/suppliers who come here to work on equipment, but we wanted to highlight RESCO as they really do represent the cooperative and are part of the team.



# GRANTS PAY DIVIDENDS BEYOND FIBER

**Y**ou have probably seen (and we have pictured them in this magazine) some of the equipment the cooperative has purchased as part of the grant awarded for the fiber project. When we laid out the project, we had specific needs to do things like trenching, handle wire, etc. However, we did not want to spend the hard-fought money on something that was simply for a single purpose.

For instance, we budgeted for a trencher, and using that part of the budget, we purchased a Caterpillar Skid Steer along with a trenching attachment, bucket, utility bucket, grapple, forks, auger head, crane attachment, and a rock-hound landscape rake. While we have certainly done some trenching for the fiber project, coupled with Mike Jorgenson’s brush cutter, we made some serious work in some of our cross-country rights-of-way. With this equipment, we can now access them with the bucket truck to get some of the overhanging branches removed. What would have taken weeks of work has literally been accomplished in a matter of a few days.

Even with improved right-of-way

trimming, we still get snagged with trees across the lines that we either didn’t expect or were well off the right-of-way. During the last major storm in late March, one outage was caused by trees that were well off the right-of-way. So even though there are many who hate to see us trim, and the trimming is a huge benefit, it will never eliminate situations like the one pictured at right.

In addition, while working with the town crew in preparation for the paving project, we used our grapple to load brush to be hauled to the stump dump, which saved a huge amount of time and labor chipping.

We also purchased an equipment trailer. This was budgeted in the grant as a reel trailer for handling reels of fiber, etc. Once again, rather than purchase a job specific piece of equipment, we purchased the trailer and various steel stock such that we could build removable reel stands for the trailer as well as a reel handler for the skid steer.

And, we have already used the mini-excavator we purchased with the rock breaker to install a pole on Jackson Harbor Road that, in the past, would



Steve Fisco took this photo of some tall spruces that went across the lines on Wilcox Road.

have meant hours of grinding with the digger derrick or blasting.

We are trying to make every penny of the grant count such that when we are done with the fiber project, we have valuable equipment that makes the rest of our job easier.



Rights-of-way behind town and between Main and Gudmunson that were cleared with the help of equipment purchased as part of our fiber project.

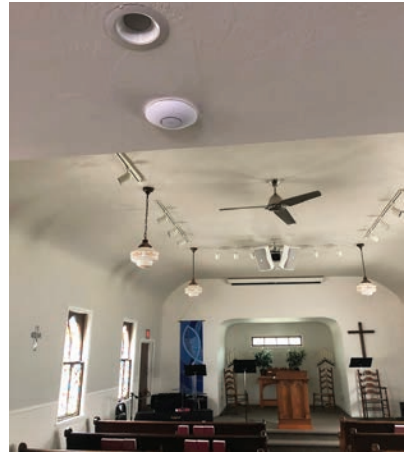


# STILL MAKING FIBER PROGRESS

We continue to hang strand and hardware while we wait for WPS and Nsight and for head-end equipment. We are also continuing our work on anchor institutions, and Bethel Church is the latest to benefit from the project. You will note that we used the trencher as the grant intended to link the parsonage and the church so they can operate with one service. This work has immediate benefits but also sets us up to easily transition to fiber once it is here. The Quantum guys like to say, “We are taking the poor internet that you currently have and spreading it everywhere!”



Chris Wilson of Quantum pulls network cables and an installed wireless access point in the church proper.



Your crew and Quantum working together to install conduit for a fiber link between the Bethel Church and parsonage.

## LAST BUT MOST DEFINITELY NOT LEAST!

Since we started distributing the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* to our members, we have had many compliments. We greatly appreciate them. Our hope when doing this was to keep the membership abreast of what we are doing and how things are going (as well as hopefully give you an occasional laugh).

We want to, however, recognize the actual reason our center pages (and the rest of the magazine) look so good. Yes, we write the articles, take (and occasionally steal) the pho-



Dana Kelroy



Mary Erickson

tographs. and attempt to put something informative together each month for our members, but it is actually Mary Erickson and Dana Kelroy who are responsible for the way the magazine looks. Both are employees of the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association and we think they do one heckuva (we will see if Mary edits the spelling of that!) job.

Personally, I would like to thank Mary Erickson for her efforts to make it look as if I know what I am doing with these pages. I know that I am a great stress to her as I am always past the deadline! My guess is that, with this month’s pages, she has about as much hair left as I do, waiting for me!

Mary is also responsible for the fantastic article documenting Dick Sheehy’s WWII experience.

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