

March 2024 Member News Clips

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- Local officials go to Washington to talk public power

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Plymouth

- City defends need, benefits of new electrical substation
- Objections to proposed power line route voiced

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- Job Fair attracts 550 students, 41 exhibitors

WPPI Energy

- Community spirit, service to members drives WPPI employees



BRFMU commission approves simplified rate increase, grant assistance services

By Garrett Aleckson

The Black River Falls Municipal Utility (BRFMU) Commission met for its regular meeting Monday, Feb. 26.

BRFMU general manager Casey Engebretson discussed a simplified rate increase for water rates.

“The PSCW (Public Service Commission of Wisconsin) set the simplified rate case increase factor at 4.1% for the period of March 1, 2024, to Feb. 28, 2025,” said Engebretson. “I’m not sure if they authorize the simplified rate case if they will automatically use that 4.1% increase. The residential customer typically has a five-eighths meter and the average usage is about 600 cubic feet per month. The three charges that a residential customer gets on their monthly bill are the monthly fixed meter service charge, the monthly volume charge and the public fire protection charge. The average charges would be about an increase of \$1.81 per month.”

“That being said, with the possibility of a new well here in a couple of years, we’ll likely need to do a conventional rate case for that,” Engebretson continued. “I just think it would be prudent to do the simplified rate case here in 2024.”

Engebretson added that PSCW will do its calculations and let BRFMU know what PSCW will authorize for an

increase.

“You say ‘rate’ and that makes me think along the lines of usage,” said BRFMU commissioner Jay Eddy.

“When they do rate increases, they do each specific charge by that stated percentage,” Engebretson explained.

The commission approved a motion to approve the simplified rate case authorization.

In additional business, the commission discussed a proposal for grant assistance services.

“This is namely for the voltage conversion project,” said Engebretson. “This is a proposal from Ruckert Mielke. The proposal is for \$4,020 and that included a kickoff meeting where we discuss any desired projects that we’re looking to get grants for. They will identify any federal, state or local grant opportunities that align with the project that we are doing. They will identify any filing deadlines and will continue to look for any new or existing grant opportunities and provide us with quarterly reports. If we wanted to have them complete grant applications, that would be additional services.”

“Do they itemize billing,” asked Eddy. “I think it’d be a good idea to get an idea of what costs what.”

“I’m sure we could request that,” Engebretson

replied.

In other business, Engebretson discussed energy assistance usage comparisons.

“I got a spreadsheet from WPPI (Wisconsin Public Power Inc.) and they track all 41 Wisconsin members,” explained Engebretson. “For each member Utility, they look at the number of customers, the number of customers that qualify for energy assistance and then the number of qualified households that actually get energy assistance. Black River Falls was second out of the 41 as far as the percentage of qualified customers that get energy assistance. It says a lot about Julie (Babcock, office manager), Cherie (Dugan, collections clerk) and Sandy (Anderson, billing clerk) in the office that they’re reaching out and trying to get help to the people that need help. And it says a lot about Lyn Gates and her staff at the Jackson County Health and Human Services. They do a very good job up there. Our staff have heard a lot of good things.”

In additional business, the commission approved community contribution requests. The approved requests were \$200 for the BRF Shooting Tigers, \$150 for the Boys and Girls Club of Jackson County and \$100 to the Karner Blue Garden Club.

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2024

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Florence Mining News - (1881-1894 & 2005-current)

ENERGY NEWS
Consumer Information

FLORENCE UTILITIES
A WPPI ENERGY COMMUNITY

MARCH 2024
SAFE DIGGING MONTH
As April marks the traditional start of digging season, Florence Utilities strongly encourages residents and professionals to stay safe by calling 8-1-1 at least three working days prior to any project that disturbs the soil in any way. If your outdoor projects include excavation (move, remove or displace earth, rock or other material in or on the ground), grade, trench, dig, drill, augur, tunnel, scrape, plow cable or pipe, state law requires that you notify Diggers Hotline. Diggers Hotline is Wisconsin's statewide one-call notification system. It gives excavators and the general public the ability to notify multiple owners of underground facilities with a single call so a locator will mark the approximate location of your underground lines, pipes and cables so you will know what is below and be able to dig safely. Plan ahead! Remember to allow three working

days (excluding weekends and holidays) before you dig. Stay safe by calling Diggers Hotline at 8-1-1. It is free. It is the law. For more information on Wisconsin's Digger's Hotline program, please visit www.diggershotline.com or call Florence Utilities at 715-528-3330.

MORATORIUM ENDS APRIL 15
The winter moratorium on residential service disconnection ends April 15. After April 15, utilities statewide may begin to disconnect service to customers who are past due on payment of their utility bills. Florence Utilities is advising customers who are behind on their bills to contact our office to discuss payment arrangements. Customers with outstanding balances are urged to call 715-528-3330 as soon as possible. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The utility will gladly discuss various payment options available to

customers, which includes accepting credit card payments. Any customer who fails to set up arrangements or pay the outstanding balance on their account will be issued a final disconnect notice prior to any action taking place.

NATURAL GAS SAFETY
Know Where to Dig – The best way to avoid disrupting utility service in your area or being injured is to know the location of buried natural gas pipelines. The depth of natural gas pipelines varies and there may be other utilities buried in the same area. The most common cause of underground natural gas leaks is damage from digging. Encourage your neighbors and contractors to "call before they dig" whenever they plan to landscape, install a fence, build a deck or do any other kind of excavating, anywhere. It's the law.

Before You Dig – Dial 811 – One easy phone call to 811 instantly begins the process of getting underground gas pipelines and other utilities marked on residential, public or commercial property. Diggers Hotline will contact the appropriate utility companies, who send crews out to mark the location of underground utilities within three days. The service is free of charge.

Detecting Leaks
Natural gas is one of the safest, most reliable and environmentally friendly fuels in use today, but leaks can occur. Look for blowing dirt, bubbling streams or ponds, dry spots in moist areas or dead vegetation surrounded by green, live plants may indicate a gas leak. Listen. An unusual hissing sound near gas lines or appliances is an indication of a natural gas leak. Smell. In its raw state, natural gas is colorless and odorless. Utility companies use a substance called mercaptan to create the familiar, rotten egg-like odor associated with natural gas. Take action even if you only detect a slight odor of natural gas.

If You Detect A Leak
– Leave. Leave the area immediately. Do not try to find or stop the leak. Don't Touch. Do not smoke; use a cell phone or a flashlight. Do not turn on or off any lights or appliances or operate any vehicle or equipment that could create a spark. Dial. Dial from a location away from the leak immediately call Florence Utilities and 911. Wait for professionals to arrive. Do not go back into any building where you smell gas. For more information regarding natural gas safety visit florenceutilitieswi.com.

BE AWARE OF POWER LINES
Florence Utilities reminds residents to take proper steps to ensure their safety when working near power lines. It is critical to always treat power lines and electrical equipment as if they are energized; and know that you don't have to touch a line to be seriously injured. Tools, tree limbs, ladders and other equipment can conduct electricity. This applies to power lines on utility poles as well as those entering your home or buildings.

Keep this in mind if you are planning to plant trees or bushes this summer. Make sure you are aware of power lines and other utility equipment in the area – both above and below the ground. A tree growing near a power line can cause a potential power outage or safety risk. A tree growing too close to overhead power lines gives electricity a path from the power lines to the tree which can result in electrical outages, fires and shock hazards. Be aware. Stay safe.

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Equal Opportunity Housing

What is Parkinson's disease?

What's been trending for hand stiffness or clasp of

what another person tries to

Washington Co. leaders in Washington D.C. to talk public power | By Brian Rhodes

By Judy Steffes | March 4, 2024

March 4, 2024 – Hartford, WI – Hartford Electric Utility Director Brian Rhodes and Slinger Village Trustee Dean Otte advocated on behalf of their locally-owned utilities and customers at the American Public Power Association’s 2024 Legislative Rally February 26 – 28.



Officials from Washington County, WI gathered to meet with legislators on the community's behalf during the American Public Power Association's 2024 Legislative Rally from Feb. 26-28 in Washington, D.C.

The annual event was held in Washington D.C. Rhodes and Otte met personally with Wisconsin Senators Tammy Baldwin (D) and Ron Johnson (R). They also met with staff from the offices of Reps. Scott Fitzgerald and Derrick Van Orden.

“Spending time talking with lawmakers provides a great opportunity to discuss the policies that impact our community,” said Rhodes. “Sitting down to discuss the topics that matter, like maintaining a safe, reliable and affordable power supply, was beneficial for both us and our legislators.”

Rhodes and Otte spoke during the meetings about the importance of ensuring utilities receive the help needed during a supply-chain crisis and that more onerous policies are not passed to worsen the problem.

They also discussed the need for streamlined federal permitting and siting rules to bolster infrastructure and maintain electric reliability, reducing the cost of investments in that infrastructure, a more secure energy grid, and providing responsible and reliable energy through a mix of sources — including natural gas.

“By meeting with our legislators, we can help ensure national policymakers keep public power customers in mind when they’re making proposals,” said Joseph Owen, director of government affairs for WPPI Energy. “Their choices have consequences in our local communities, so it is important to present our view. We are fortunate to have a congressional delegation that hears the issues from communities with locally owned, not-for-profit utilities and works to help however they can.”

Member-owned, not-for-profit WPPI Energy serves Hartford Electric, Slinger Utilities and 49 other locally owned electric utilities. Together, WPPI members have built a diverse, competitive, and responsible power supply. They share modern technologies and forward-thinking services, and they speak with a unified voice for effective energy policy advocacy.



Mar 07

2024 Page A04

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West Bend, Daily News



Local officials gathered to meet with legislators on their communities' behalf during the American Public Power Association's 2024 Legislative Rally from Feb. 26-28 in Washington, D.C. Hartford city documents

Local officials go to Washington to talk public power

HARTFORD — [Hartford Electric](#) Utility Director Brian Rhodes and Slinger Village Trustee Dean Otte advocated on behalf of their municipalities' locally-owned utilities and their customers at the American Public Power Association's 2024 Legislative Rally on Feb. 26-28.

According to the release, the annual event was held in Washington D.C. where Rhodes and Otte met personally with Wisconsin U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D) and Ron Johnson (R). They also met with staff from the offices of Reps. Scott Fitzgerald

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Joseph Owen, director of government affairs for WPPJ Energy, also made comments in the release regarding the importance of these meetings as well as that of

the information and perspectives exchanged in them.

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Local officials go to Washington to talk public power

Daily News Staff | Mar 7, 2024



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Title: LIHEAP-Winter Moratorium ends April 1

Author:

Size : 29 Inches Sq Independence,IA Circulation: 2029

Keywords: Independence Light & Power, Telecommunications



LIHEAP-Winter Moratorium ends April 1

BY SUBMITTED ARTICLE

INDEPENDENCE – The winter moratorium for Energy Assistance ends Monday, April 1, 2024. Your account must be brought up to date by 7:00am on April 1 to avoid disconnection of your account.

If you are eligible for a payment agreement with Independence Light & Power, Telecommunications you must make arrangements before 7 a.m. Monday, April 1. If you are already on a payment agreement, you are not eligible for a new one.

There will be no extensions past 7 a.m. on April 1, 2024.



INDEPENDENCE LIGHT & POWER TELECOMMUNICATIONS

If you need assistance, reach out to one of the three local resources here in Independence:

- County Relief (Buchanan County Courthouse) 319-334-4290
- One Another (Lutheran

Church-512 5th St NE) 319-332-1695

- Operation Threshold (1827 1st St W) 319-334-6081

Any questions, please give our office a call at 319-332-0100.



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Mr. Oppermann Goes to Washington

CONTRIBUTED

JEFFERSON — Jefferson Mayor Dale Oppermann advocated on behalf of the city of Jefferson, Jefferson Utilities and its customers at the American Public Power Association's 2024 Legislative Rally Feb. 26-28.

The annual event was held in Washington, D.C.

Oppermann met with Wisconsin Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson, and Rep. Scott Fitzgerald's staff.

"Spending time talking with lawmakers provides a great opportunity to discuss the policies that impact our community," Oppermann said. "Sitting down to discuss the topics that matter, like maintaining a safe, reliable and affordable power supply, was beneficial for both us and our legislators."

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Member-owned, not-for-profit WPPI Energy serves Jefferson Utilities and 50 other locally-owned electric utilities. Together, WPPI members have built a diverse, competitive and responsible power supply.

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2024
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Mr. Oppermann goes to Washington



CONTRIBUTED

Jefferson Mayor Dale Oppermann. Oppermann recently met with Wisconsin Senators Tammy Baldwin, Ron Johnson and Rep. Scott Fitzgerald's staff.

Local leaders go to Washington, D.C. to talk public power

city of Jefferson, Jefferson Utilities and its customers at the American Public Power Association's 2024 Legislative Rally Feb. 26-28.

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More WASHINGTON | A2



Mar 08

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From A01

Watertown Daily Times



Washington/ from A1

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Garage fire in Little Chute spread to attic of house, crews returned later after flames rekindled

by: Ben Newhouse

Updated: Mar 29, 2024 / 02:12 PM CDT

LITTLE CHUTE, Wis. (WFRV) – Firefighters in Little Chute worked to put out a fire at a home twice in the same day after a garage fire spread to the attic and rekindled hours later.

According to the Little Chute Fire Department, crews were sent to the 1300 block of Miami Circle around 3:20 p.m. on March 28 for reports of a fire in a detached garage that was quickly spreading to the adjacent home.

The first crews to arrive were met by heavy smoke and flames coming from the garage which had made its way to the attic area of the home next to it.

Eventually, crews were able to get a handle on the fire and were able to ventilate the structure, check for extension, and put out any hot spots.

It was noted that all residents of the home were safely out of the building.

Crews were called back to the home shortly before midnight the same day due to the “roof/attic area smoking and rekindling with flames visible.”

The cause of the fire is under investigation and there is no estimated damage amount at this time.

The Little Chute Fire Department was assisted by the:

- Fox Valley Metro Police Department
- Outagamie Sheriff's Department
- Combined Locks Fire/Rescue
- Kimberly Fire/Rescue
- City of Kaukauna Fire
- Vandebroek/Town of Kaukauna Fire
- Freedom Fire
- Gold Cross Ambulance
- Outagamie County CERT
- Kaukauna Utilities
- We Energies
- Outagamie County Communications Center – 911

No additional information was provided.



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2024
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Maplewood Middle School teacher Troy Wittmann performs as Menasha's first mayor, O. J. Hall, during the city's sesquicentennial celebration at the Menasha City Center. PHOTOS BY WM. GLASHEEN/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

Menasha marks 150th anniversary

City in midst of months-long celebration

Duke Behnke Appleton Post-Crescent | USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

The city's first mayor, O. J. Hall, emerged from a time machine Tuesday to recount what Menasha was like when he was in office 150 years ago, and what it has become today with its "pretty paved roads." • Hall, portrayed by historical reenactor Troy Wittmann, looked out the window of the Menasha City Center to see the Menasha Marina.

"How far our little city has come," Hall said. "I often joked that if I live a good life and an inspired life, and one day when I meet my maker, if I find out that heaven is not as nice as Menasha, I'm going to ask my creator to send me back."

"After all, what's a cloud when you have all these waterways."

Hall's appearance was a highlight of Menasha's ses-



Mayor Don Merkes starts Mr. Wittmann's time machine to bring back the first mayor of Menasha.

See ANNIVERSARY, Page 4A



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From A01

Appleton, Post-Crescent



Anniversary

Continued from Page 1A

quicentennial party, held in the Community Room at the City Center. About 200 people attended the festivities.

The event featured remarks by Mayor Don Merkes, a recognition of indigenous peoples, a video appearance by Gov. Tony Evers, a governor's certificate of commendation, performances by the Menasha High School band, presentations of birthday cards and songs by Menasha elementary students, and cake by Manderfield's Home Bakery.

Merkes said Menasha has been a home to innovative and ambitious people for generations. He praised the families and leaders "who had a vision that this location on the water could be a thriving community with ample water power and opportunity."

"And it turns out they were right," Merkes said. "Menasha is successful today, and we have 18,000 people who live here."

Following the gathering, Tight Barrel Distillery-Bare Bones Taproom held happy hours to celebrate the release of Gold Label Beer, one of the flagship brands of the former Walter Bros. Brewing Co.

Bare Bones Brewery of Oshkosh brewed 15 barrels of Gold Label Beer for Menasha's sesquicentennial. The beer is available on draft or in cans at 10 bars, pubs, taverns and restaurants in Menasha and Fox Crossing.

Menasha is in the middle of a year-long celebration

Menasha incorporated as a city on March 5, 1874, but it has been celebrating its sesquicentennial since January and will continue to do so in the coming

months.

The Great Button Hunt is underway and will last through December. Participants can purchase a Menasha sesquicentennial lanyard for \$1.50 and then collect buttons from participating Menasha businesses and organizations.

A trivia challenge was held in January, followed by a speed puzzle competition, a blood drive and a painting party in February.

In April, Menasha will plant 150 trees on Arbor Day. In May, the Menasha Sesquicentennial Committee will partner with the Menasha Historical Society to organize a hunt for historical houses in the city, and the Menasha Landmarks Commission will sponsor a downtown history walk.

'Celebrate Menasha' will be held June 21 and 22

The biggest event of the year will be

"Celebrate Menasha" on June 21 and 22. The gathering will feature bands, kayak races on the Fox River, an antique car show, a motorcade of Ford Model T cars and fireworks.

Many of the details still are being finalized.

Also in June, an art exhibition focused on Menasha's past, present and future will be unveiled at the Alyward Gallery at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Fox Cities campus, 1478 Midway Road.

Menasha plans to spend \$100,000 on its sesquicentennial, according to the city's 2024 budget. The city and Menasha Utilities each will provide \$10,000, and \$80,000 is anticipated in gifts and donations.

Contact Duke Behnke at 920-993-7176 or dbehnke@gannett.com. Follow him on Twitter at @DukeBehnke.



Mar 14

2024 Page 015

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New Glarus, Post Messenger Recorder

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2024

POST MESSENGER RECORDER

PAGE 15



Local officials gathered to meet with legislators on their community's behalf during the American Public Power Association's 2024 Legislative Rally from February 26-28, 2024, in Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy of Lauren Freeman

New Glarus Utilities Goes to Washington, D.C., to Talk Public Power

Line Foreman Kevin Funseth advocated on behalf of Village of New Glarus residents on supply chain issues, permitting reforms and energy infrastructure

Kevin Funseth, Electric Utility Line Foreman, advocated on behalf of New Glarus Utilities and its customers at the American Public Power Association's 2024 Legislative Rally, February 26-28, 2024. The annual event was held in Washington, D.C. Funseth met personally with Wisconsin Senators Tammy Baldwin (D) and Ron Johnson (R), as well as Representa-

tive Mark Pocan's (D) Chief of Staff.
"Spending time talking with lawmakers provides a great opportunity to discuss the policies that impact our community," said Funseth. "Sitting down to discuss the topics that matter, like maintaining a safe, reliable and affordable power supply, was beneficial for both us and our legislators." Funseth spoke during the

meetings about the importance of ensuring utilities receive the help they need during a supply chain crisis and that more onerous policies are not passed to worsen the problem. They also discussed the need for streamlined federal permitting and siting rules to bolster infrastructure and maintain electric reliability, reducing the cost of investments in that infrastructure, consequences in our local communities, so it is important to present our view. We are fortunate to have a congressional delegation that hears the issues from communities with locally owned, not-for-profit utilities and works to help how they can."
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Mar 15 2024 Page 001 Clip resized 95%

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City defends need, benefits of new electrical substation

by Ian Johanson
of The Review staff

PLYMOUTH – A Mar. 11 news release by City Administrator / Utilities Manager Tim Blakeslee detailed the background, cost and need for a new Plymouth Utilities electrical substation in the Town of Mitchell. The approximately \$6.75 million project, of which the city will pay just 3/11 of the cost, with the rest paid by natural gas company ANR Pipeline, was approved Mar. 4 by the Public Service Commission (PSC) of Wisconsin.

The informational update comes as numerous rural residents have voiced objections to separate plans by American Transmission Company (ATC) for a high-power transmission line to the substation at town and city public meetings (see story, pg.2) The line requires approval from the PSC, and is currently pending.

The release notes that “Several recent questions have asked why Plymouth Utilities is working to serve the ANR compressor facility.” Increased load from an upgrade to ANR Pipeline Company’s Kewaskum Compressor Station – the installation of high-power electric compressor motors – is part of the reason for the new substation. ANR is a current customer of Plymouth Utilities, which has its service territory regulated by the PSC.

However the release emphasizes that the new substation will improve reliability and meet increasing demand in the entire south-

See SUBSTATION/2

Gas plant just 'tipping point' for new substation need, city says

Mar
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SUBSTATION from 1

western Plymouth Utilities territory.

“Continued increases in electricity demand in the area over the years have been moving Plymouth Utilities closer to the point where a new substation would be required in the area. The request from ANR to shift to electric compression and increase capacity was the tipping point, but it was just a matter of time before one was needed,” the release says. “If there was an outage in the Town, fewer customers would be affected and Plymouth Utilities staff would be able to restore power faster.”

ANR is paying 100% of the cost for upgrades to the local line from the substation to their compressor facility, and 8/11 of the \$6.75 million substation. “These are costs that Plymouth Utility customers would otherwise incur,” the release says.

As for the transmission line, the release underlines that “Nei-

ther Plymouth Utilities nor ATC control the decision on which route is selected by the Public Service Commission.” “Plymouth Utilities highly recommends that concerned property owners provide feedback to the PSC.”

Construction of the substation is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2024. The approximately 5-acre location of the project is just west of the intersection of County Roads V and A in the Town of Mitchell.

More information about both projects is available by searching the docket numbers at the PSC website: <https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>

The transmission line docket number is 137-CE-205, with public input currently being accepted.

The substation docket number is 4740-CE-106.

The city’s full news release is also available at the city’s website plymouthgov.com under the “latest news” button.

Objections to proposed power line route voiced

by **Emmitt B. Feldner**
of The Review staff

PLYMOUTH – The City Council got an earful of opposition to a proposed transmission line through the towns of Mitchell and Lyndon at their meeting Tuesday.

More than a dozen town residents attended the meeting, with a number speaking during the public comment agenda item in opposition to the proposed American Transmission Co. power line to serve a planned new Plymouth Utilities substation in the township.

“I feel like we’re being railroaded on this,” town resident Jack Woodland told the council, which oversees the city-owned Plymouth Utilities.

The new substation would serve the expansion of an ANR Pipeline compressor station in Beechwood.

ATC presented two alternative routes for the power line to the state Public Service Commission, which has ultimate approval.

The common theme of the eight town residents who spoke was that they were not properly informed of the proposal ahead of time and the potential damage it could do to the town in general and their properties.



TOWN OF MITCHELL PLAN COMMISSION MEMBER James Jetzer speaks in opposition to the proposed route for a power transmission line to a new Plymouth Utilities electrical substation Tuesday. – Review photo by Emmitt Feldner

“This came upon just like out of the blue,” town resident Steven Schultz, whose house is within 100 feet of the proposed line, contended. “There was no preliminary surveys or questions, just this is what you’re getting, this is where we’re going.”

“There really was no communication,” added Kristie Sorenson. “The way we learned about it was a brochure that looked like junk mail.”

“I’ve never seen such a lack of transparency and involvement with affected landowners,” Woodland said.

“I’m not saying people are opposing progress, but it could

be handled better,” added Paul Schultz.

Chris Kestell singled out the city and Plymouth Utilities for not communicating with affected town residents.

“Never once was there offered information at Town Board meetings or the opportunity to discuss this with you,” Kestell told the council. “I think (you) could have been a little more forthcoming and given us a little input.”

“The due diligence that needed to be done on this project has not been done,” town resident Joanne Friedman agreed.

Kestell also expressed fear about the impact the proposed

line would have on the town. “This is going to do a lot of devastation to a lot of people’s property,” Kestell said. He charged that the power line would drop property values along its route by 10 to 40 percent.

Mitchell Town Plan Commission member James Jetzer urged consideration of an alternate route.

“You have an existing transmission corridor about half a mile away that already has easements and is clear-cut,” Jetzer said.

“Why are they coming this way,” Sorensen agreed.

She related that the proposed route passes directly over her house.

“What am I going to do, sleep with these wires buzzing over me,” she asked the council. “I don’t know what this is going to do to our house.”

Under its rules, the council did not respond to or discuss any items raised in the public comment agenda item.

Town residents who attended the meeting were able to meet with representatives of ATC and Plymouth Utilities in another room at City Hall while the council meeting continued to discuss the issue further.

Pay now to avoid utility disconnection

Wisconsin residents are reminded that the protective moratorium on late electricity bills ends April 15.

Reedsburg Utility Commission asks customers to explore their payment options before the moratorium ends. Otherwise, they risk having service disconnected.

It's important to note the moratorium applies to all companies, not just RUC. As such, those who are behind should contact their providers to make a payment or set up a payment plan.

"Working at the utility, we have a responsibility to do our best to collect unpaid bills and keep costs in check for all of our customers," said Brett Schuppner, general manager, in a statement. "We never want to disconnect customers. It's only done as a last resort. We encourage customers struggling with their electric bills to reach out to us here at the utility and to contact assistance programs like WHEAP."

The Wisconsin Home

Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) provides bill pay assistance to help income-eligible residents with heating costs, electric costs and energy crises. Residents at risk of disconnection may be eligible for crisis assistance even if they have already received a benefit from WHEAP. For more information, including eligibility criteria, customers can call 1-800-506-5596 or visit energybenefit.wi.gov to connect with their local energy assistance agency. The deadline to apply for WHEAP's regular benefits is May 15.

In the event the utility must limit service, staff will issue a final 24-hour disconnection notice. To learn more about payment options, call RUC at (608) 524-4381 between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m.

"We want everyone in the community to know there is help," said Schuppner. "If you're struggling with paying your bill, please give us a call so we can figure it out together."

City of Stoughton

Swadley, Weiss participate in Washington, D.C. legislative rally

American Public Power Association event focused on safe, affordable power

March 18, 2024



Stoughton Mayor Tim Swadley and Stoughton Utilities Director Weiss participated in last month's American Public Power Association's 2024 Legislative Rally in Washington D.C.

City of Stoughton Mayor Tim Swadley and Stoughton Utilities Director Weiss joined 14 mayors and 50 locally owned electric utilities at the American Public Power Association's 2024 Legislative Rally, held Feb. 24-26 in Washington D.C.

The group met with Wisconsin Senators Tammy Baldwin (D), Ron Johnson (R) as well as Congressman Mark Pocan's (D) staff. Discussing issues like maintaining a safe, reliable and affordable power supply, was beneficial for our communities and our legislators.

In an email to the Hub last week, Swadley said the group collectively spoke during the meetings about the importance of ensuring utilities receive the help they need during a supply chain crisis and that more onerous policies are not passed to worsen the problem. They also discussed the need for streamlined federal permitting and siting rules to bolster infrastructure and maintain electric reliability, reducing the cost of

investments in that infrastructure, a more secure energy grid, and providing responsible and reliable energy through a mix of sources, including natural gas.

By meeting with our legislators, we can help ensure national policymakers keep public power customers in mind when they're making proposals," said Joseph Owen, director of government affairs for WPPI Energy said in a news release. "Their choices have consequences in our local communities, so it is important to present our view. We are fortunate to have a congressional delegation that hears the issues from communities with locally owned, not-for-profit utilities and works to help however they can."

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Job Fair Attracts 550 Students, 41 Exhibitors

By Craig Sterrett, March 7th, 2024

Stone Harbor Resort was bustling with activity Wednesday as 550 students learned about 41 businesses, organizations and services at the Door County Economic Development Corporation's (DCEDC) third annual job fair.

Sturgeon Bay, Sevastopol, Algoma and Washington Island high schools brought sophomores, juniors and a few select undecided seniors to the fair in Sturgeon Bay between 8:30 and 11 am, and Southern Door students arrived for late-morning and early afternoon visits.

Gibraltar High School has a separate job fair planned next month to spotlight opportunities in northern Door County and beyond.

Many business operators were looking for immediate part-time help as well as finding long-term employees. Some exhibitors teamed up to provide information on training, wages and tuition-assistance programs, such as Synergy Heating and Cooling owner Derrick Ellefson and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College's HVAC instructor Leon Charnetski, for example.

Employers promoting training programs or Youth Apprenticeships were not all industrial in nature. Jan Mills at Door County Massage discussed a combination academy and once-weekly hands-on training program; Kris Meissner from Meissner Landscape had three full-time apprenticeships available and two part-time; Kerry Johnson discussed combination service and citizen-science (summer) jobs at Evergreen Miniature Golf; Kayla Lehman from the new Children First Development Center on Egg Harbor Road promoted Youth Apprenticeship opportunities; and sheriff's department Capt. Carl Waterstreet discussed professions in law enforcement as well as the non-sworn-reserve-deputy program that has some duties available for 17-year-olds and slightly more opportunities for young men and women older than 18.

Not all exhibitors were there seeking employees or trainees. Evonne LaCrosse from Door-Tran distributed information on a loan program for vehicle purchases and providing vouchers or rides for commutes to work and training programs for students and adults.

A complete listing of exhibitors appeared on the DCEDC page at facebook.com/DCEDC.

Student vignettes

This reporter listened to goals and interests of 19 students who attended the fair (3 of 19 snapshot):



Left: Gabi Tjernagel, a Sturgeon Bay junior who enjoys English, already has a Youth Apprenticeship in marketing with the Door County Economic Development Corporation. She is considering a psychology or marketing major in college. Center: Hannah Benson, a Sturgeon Bay junior, said she's interested in veterinary medicine. She spent time with representatives from the Plum Loco Animal Farm and the Sheriff's K-9 unit. Right (photo by Sarah Paye): Eli Jaden, a Southern Door sophomore interested in being a lineman, said he enjoys math, science and history and visited with Veolia, [Sturgeon Bay Utilities](#) and Marine Travel Lift personnel. Photo courtesy of Sarah Paye.

NO. 1 | WPPI ENERGY

Spirit of community, service to members drives WPPI employees

DENNIS CHAPTMAN Special to the State Journal

Mar 22, 2024



WPPI Energy team members helped Sun Prairie West High School students learn to manage expenses during their Reality Rocks event. The company is part of the Sun Prairie Business and Education Partnership.

Ann Langel

DENNIS CHAPTMAN Special to the State Journal

An ethic of committed community service runs through the workplace at Sun Prairie-based WPPI Energy.

That shouldn't be too surprising, since WPPI — which serves 51 primarily small-town electric utilities with electric supply, utility technologies and services — deals with its member utilities every day.

“Our mission statement is about helping member utilities working together to be better places to work, live and play,” said Mike Peters, WPPI’s president and CEO. “We emphasize service respect, service collaboration. It’s what we preach, and when we interview potential employees, that’s part of the interview process.”

WPPI, this year's top-ranked midsize company, stresses community involvement at home, too. It provides funding and outreach to each of its member communities for scholarships, charitable organizations and community events.

Closer to home, WPPI and its employees team up with the Sun Prairie Business and Education Partnership, volunteer for local home meal delivery, donate time and fundraising support to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County, and provide holiday gifts through the Spirit of Giving program.

"We're here to serve," Peters said. "We serve member communities. It's not the other way around."

Employees responding to the Top Workplaces survey echoed the theme of community services and stressed that the organization values new ideas and supports and respects its staff. Said one: "I work with smart, respectful people who are always helpful and open to hearing new ideas."

WPPI boosted paid time off for employee this year, revamped its bereavement policy to be more inclusive of various family structures and strengthened its employee assistance program. It also offers paid parental leave, educational reimbursement, professional development and wellness programs.

Employees seem to respond to the culture and benefits offered, and employee turnover remains low, Peters said.

"We have a number of employees who have 30 years, 25 years of service. Twenty years is not unusual," Peters said. "It's about treating people fairly."