

## November 2023 Member News Clips

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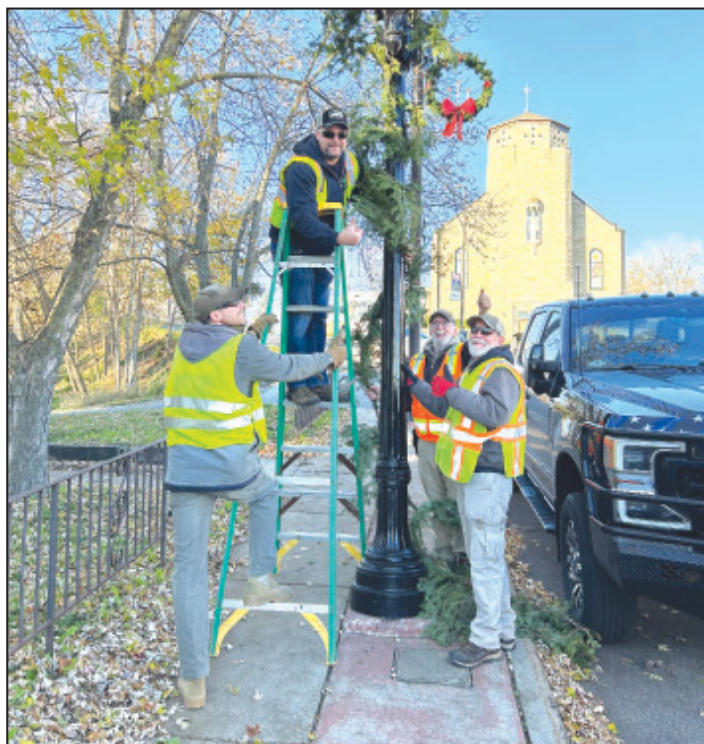
- Waunakee Utilities explain summer outages

### Whitehall

- Members of the Whitehall Electric Utility decorating the community Christmas tree

Black River Falls, Banner Journal (1926-2005; & 2005-current)

# Christmas arrived in Black River Falls



Contributed photos

With the holidays fast approaching, the Black River Falls (BRF) City Municipal [Utilities](#), BRF Street Department and BRF Parks and Recreation took to the streets to put up greenery, lights and wreaths Nov. 13. Mitch Ammann, a City Municipal [Utilities](#) employee, embraced the festivities by dressing up as Santa Claus (right).



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# Boscobel Utilities donates to the Boscobel Police Department

The Boscobel Police Department is raising funds to replace their retired K-9, Bosco and Boscobel Utilities is happy to help and give back to the community.

“Our locally owned, not-for-profit utility exists for the benefit of the community. It’s important for us to support our neighbors by giving back, especially for such an important asset,” said Mike Reynolds, Director of Public Works. The \$1,500 donation was made possible through community relations funding provided by the utility’s not-for-profit power supplier, WPPI Energy.

“The K-9 program makes

such a positive difference in the community, and we are really happy to support them,” said Reynolds.

*About Boscobel Utilities Boscobel Utilities is a locally owned, not-for-profit electric, water and wastewater utility, serving more than 1,700 customers in Boscobel and the surrounding area. Boscobel Utilities strives to provide low-cost, reliable electricity and superior customer service. Boscobel Utilities is one of 51 public power utilities that are member-owners of wholesale power provider and joint action agency WPPI Energy.*

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## *Traditional change-over*

With Veterans Day in the rearview, [Eagle River Light and Water](#) worked the morning of Nov. 13 to take down the flags that have lined the streets throughout the summer months. In the coming days it is anticipated that the traditional holiday garb will begin to grace the lampposts throughout the town. —Staff Photo By STEPHANIE DYE





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## *Holiday trimmings*

[Eagle River Light](#) and Water employees braved last week's chilly temperatures to get the town's Christmas decorations put up ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. Wreaths were hung on light posts on North Railroad Street and light-up snowflakes were installed downtown. Here, Cole Sanborn strings lights on a tree behind the historical Railroad Depot.

—Staff Photo By MICHELLE DREW

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**ENERGY NEWS**  
*Consumer Information*  
**FLORENCE UTILITIES**  
A WPPI ENERGY COMMUNITY

NOVEMBER 2023

**HEATING ASSISTANCE**

Energy Services for Florence County has been selected as the new organization for administering the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) throughout Florence County. There are two simple ways to apply for WHEAP energy assistance. Call 800-506-5596 or 715-609-2274 for questions, to schedule an appointment or complete a WHEAP application by phone and you may now also apply online at HEAT.HELP. If you are worried about how you will pay to heat your home this winter, make the call or complete the online application to find out if you qualify for WHEAP assistance

**PREVENT POISONING FROM CO**

What is CO? CO is carbon monoxide which is a gas that can't be seen or smelled and is made when fuels - like gas, kerosene, propane or wood - are burned. It's the most common cause of deadly poisoning. Simple steps can be taken to protect your family from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. 1. Make sure you have working CO detectors. All homes in Wisconsin are required to have detectors on every level, including the basement, but not the attic or storage areas. Detectors can be purchased for approximately \$20-\$30. 2. Have your fur-

nace or wood-burning stove inspected annually. Hire a professional to make sure it works and vents properly outside the home. 3. Never run a gasoline or propane heater or a grill (gas or charcoal) inside your home. Any heating system that burns fuel produces carbon monoxide. Use a battery-powered detector where you have fuel-burning devices but no electric outlets, such as in tents, ice shanties, tree stands, cabins, trailers, and boats with enclosed cabins. Never use a gas stove or oven to heat your home. 4. Never run a car in an enclosed space. Even with a door or window open, carbon monoxide levels can still build up to an unsafe level. 5. Always run generators outside. Never use a generator in the home or garage, or right next to windows, vents or doors. Keep generators at least 20 feet from your home, camper, tent, etc., with exhaust hoses pointing away from people and structures. Know the signs and symptoms of CO poisoning. Symptoms of overexposure to CO include headaches, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea, and confusion. At high levels, carbon monoxide can cause death within minutes. Take action by going to fresh air immediately if you see the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning or if your alarm sounds. Call 911 and stay in the fresh air until the building has been declared safe. Source:

dhs.wisconsin.gov/  
environmental

**PIPELINE PURPOSE AND RELIABILITY**

Pipelines are the safest and most efficient means of transporting natural gas and petroleum products, according to National Transportation Safety Board statistics. The federal government sets minimum safety standards for all pipelines. The federal government also makes and enforces rules for interstate gas pipelines. However in Wisconsin, the Public Service Commission (PSC) makes and enforces rules for intrastate (within our state) pipelines. State and federal engineers work together to achieve the goal of public safety. The PSC's safety program uses a team of engineers. These engineers spend months in training on gas pipeline safety. They advise gas pipeline operators about gas safety and inspect the gas system and company records. They monitor pipeline construction, operations and maintenance activities. If it is not exactly right, they make sure it's corrected. Their job is to keep the public safe by enforcing the pipeline safety code. Additional roles of the pipeline safety engineer include: responding to customer complaints; conducting field inspections; complete a comprehensive inspection of every gas utility at least once every three years; review all gas utility's maintenance records every year; review all gas utility construction standards for compliance with applicable safety standards; work with the US Department of Transportation on interstate pipeline projects in Wisconsin; make unscheduled inspections of utility construction projects;

and advise gas operators about pipeline safety. The Florence Utility Commission prides itself on the safe operation of its natural gas delivery system. Additional information regarding natural gas pipeline safety in Wisconsin can be found at <http://psc.wi.gov>

**OUTDOOR DECORATION SAFETY TIPS**

Take steps to protect your home and family from electrical and fire hazards related to outdoor holiday decorations with these quick tips from ESFI:

- Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations used for outdoor decorating are marked for outdoor use.
- Match power needs (amperage) of electrical products with amperage rating of extension cords.
- Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If circuits are not GFCI-protected, portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold and require no special knowledge or equipment to install.
- Inspect all lights, decorations, and extension cords for damage before using.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, the house, or other firm supports to protect them from wind damage, but take care not to attach the lights in a way that could damage the cord's insulation.
- Keep all extension cords and light strings clear of snow and standing water.
- Make sure spotlights used to illuminate decorations are well-ventilated, protected from weather, and a safe distance from flammable items.

- Use wooden or fiberglass ladders when decorating outdoors. Metal ladders conduct electricity.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.
- Make sure that cords are not pinched in doors, windows, or under heavy furniture,

- which could damage the cord's insulation.
- Do not mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.
- Always unplug electrical decorations before replacing bulbs or fuses.
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.

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**ADRC**  
Aging & Disability Resource Center of Florence County

The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Florence County is a source of information for all aspects of adults aging or living with a disability. The ADRC is a friendly, welcoming place where anyone - individuals, concerned families or friends, or professionals working with issues related to aging or disabilities - can go for information tailored to their situation.

The ADRC of Florence Co. offers:

- Transportation
- Nutritious, Healthy Meals
- Disability Benefits Counseling
- Caregiver Support
- Elder Benefits Counseling
- Assistive Technology

For more information or to talk with someone about your aging-related concerns, contact the ADRC  
Monday-Friday 8:30am - 4 pm.  
**715-528-4890 or Toll-free: 1-855-528-ADRC(2372)**

Sponsored by the ADRC of Florence Co. 501 Lake Avenue, Rm. 125, Lower Level of the Courthouse



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# Hartford Utilities creates online reporting for street light outages

HARTFORD — Hartford Utilities recently announced that they have created a new online service for customers and residents to notify them of street light outages.

According to a Facebook post from Hartford, the department has added a “Report A Street Light Outage” link at the bottom of their website, hartfordutilities.org.

“You will see a map of Hartford with all the street lights marked. You can zoom in and out to find the exact location of the faulty light and click on it,” said the post. “Then, fill out a simple form with your contact details and the problem description.”

A crew will be sent out to fix the issue in a timely manner, according to the post.



# Lake Mills groups partner for toy drive

Nov 27, 2023 Updated Nov 28, 2023

The Lake Mills Fire Department, Lake Mills Light and Water Department, and Lake Mills Optimist Club are partnering for their annual Holiday Toy Drive.

“This is a very important program that brings holiday joy to children and families in our community that are struggling this time of year,” the Lake Mills Fire Department wrote on Facebook.

New, unwrapped toys can be donated at 155 S. Industrial Drive, Lake Mills. Bring new and unwrapped toys for children ages one to 18 and receive one or two strings of LED holiday lights. Donations are accepted from Nov. 27 to Dec. 15, from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



## TREE RAISING

Maquoketa Sentinel-Press  
Maquoketa, Iowa, United States

Wednesday, November 22, 2023  
Page 1,2,3, Section: Newspaper  
177 words, 15in<sup>2</sup> in size  
3,879 circulation



# TREE RAISING

## Community Christmas tree ushers in the holidays



**(Above) Concrete donated** this year by Manatt's was poured to securely hold the community Christmas tree in place until it is dug back out when the ground unfreezes around February. **(Right) Brandon Starr from Maquoketa Municipal Electric Utility** helps guide the auger truck to the "X" marking where to dig the 4- to 5-foot hole for the tree. This is the same spot as the year before.



**(Above) "Shake it"** was MMEU's Kelden McCombie's cue to offload the dirt into the Maquoketa Public Works' dump truck while in the greenspace last week. **(Left) Reid Keeney of Maquoketa Public Works** stands ready with a chainsaw to chop off limbs as needed for the tree to fit properly into the hole.







MSP photos by Brittany Nopar

**Matt Buck** from Maquoketa Public Works finishes digging the hole with a shovel as Kelden McCombie from MMEU raises the dirt-filled auger out of the ground. The crew was preparing the site to place the city's annual Christmas tree on Nov. 15.

# New Holstein Utilities employee honored

Published on Nov 1, 2023



New Holstein Utilities Business Manager Kathy Kovach received an award at a recent meeting in Sheboygan.

New Holstein Utilities, the community's locally owned, not-for-profit municipal electric utility, took part in the WPPI Energy annual meeting. The utility is a member-owner of WPPI Energy, a joint action agency and wholesale energy provider.

Kovach received the WPPI Energy Shining Star Award, which recognizes employees who show growth and leadership with proven dedication to strategic initiatives within a utility. "Kathy has extensive knowledge of every aspect of utilities operations with more than 20 years of experience," said Marc Stephanie, general manager of NHU. "Kathy is a great example of someone who wasn't

satisfied just doing the job. She is always seeking to better everyday operations."

New Holstein Utilities serves more than 2,600 customers. Founded in 1912, the utility is one of 51 member-owners of WPPI Energy.



**RECOGNITION**

# NHU employee honored

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**New** Holstein Utilities serves more than 2,600 customers. Founded in 1912, the utility is one of 51 member-owners of WPPI Energy.

# Pocket park, Antoinette sign upgrade recommended

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

PLYMOUTH – A downtown pocket park and a new sign for the repainted Antoinette the Cow were approved by the Redevelopment Authority at their Nov. 2 meeting.

If the City Council gives final approval, Otter Creek Landscaping will convert the vacant space that formerly housed the Strutz Financial building between Mill Street and the Mullet River into a park.

The group also recommended a carved composite material placed over the existing sign in front of the landmark cow on South Milwaukee Street.

The pocket park plan approved earlier by the RDA includes plantings, several benches, ground lighting, a small walking path, an area for future artwork and a picnic table.

The total cost of the project is \$35,486. City Administrator/Utilities Manager Tim Blakeslee told the group that **WPPI** Energy has agreed to give the city a \$5,000 grant toward the cost of the park.

“Otter Creek is going to start some of the work this month,” RDA Chair Lee Gentine told the group. That would include some of the hard surface work, with landscaping and other work to follow next spring.

Gentine said the city received three alternatives for upgrading Antoinette’s sign from Marshall Signs.

The options were to replace the sign entirely, the carved composite material to fit over the existing sign or a plastic-coated aluminum sign.

From years of exposure, the wood in the original sign is cracking, Gentine noted.

All three of the alternatives repeat the text and art on the original sign from 1977.



“We had talked about whether we should update the sign, but it was part of the original donation, so the feeling was we should keep it the same,” Gentine related.

Several RDA members expressed support for the composite overlay choice.

Ronna O’Toole said the composite material would last longer than the aluminum sign, based on her

See **ANTOINETTE/4**



## City's signature cow to get refurbished history sign

### Antoinette from 2

experience with signs at her business, Moxie.

Council RDA representative John Nelson noted that, over time, the plastic coating on aluminum signs cracks and peels. "I think the carved signs last longer," he said.

The RDA voted for the composite overlay at a cost of \$4,000.

Blakeslee informed the group that the RDA has a fund balance of around \$95,000, with \$70,000 of that available for projects such as the park and

the sign.

The city has made two loans from the revived revolving loan fund, which the RDA oversees, Blakeslee reported.

Plymouth Industries received the first loan of \$500,000 to add new machines. Klips and Tips Beauty Salon got the second loan of \$93,674.33 to help finance their purchase of and move to a new building on Eastern Avenue.

"Those two to start off the program was very strong," Blakeslee said of the loans

He said the city is working to

get word out on the availability of the loan fund. That has included contacting local bankers, putting information on the city's website and preparing a brochure on the program.

Gentine reported that there were no bids received on the vacant Plymouth National Guard Armory building when the state put it up for sale on a public auction in September.

He said state officials are considering lowering the minimum bid amount, which was \$525,000, and putting the armory up for auction again.

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# City Utilities receives recognition as Smart Energy Provider

City Utilities of Richland Center earned a Smart Energy Provider designation from the American Public Power Association. There are 2,000 communities across the nation powered by public power utilities, and 97 of them now hold this prestigious title.

The Smart Energy Provider designation, which lasts for two years, recognizes locally owned utilities for demonstrating a commitment to and proficiency in energy efficiency, distributed generation, and environmental initiatives that support the goal of providing safe, reliable, low-cost, and sustainable electric

service.

City Utilities is a member-owner of WPPI Energy, a not-for-profit wholesale power provider and joint action agency made up of 51 utilities. Including City Utilities, 27 WPPI Energy member utilities now hold the respected Smart Energy Provider designation.

“Our member utilities work hard to deliver cost-effective, reliable power and forward-looking programs and services to the customers they serve,” said Mike Peters, CEO of WPPI Energy. “It’s great to see them honored like this on a national level.”

“It’s exciting to be recognized as one of the best when it comes to smart energy,” said Scott Gald, Electric Superintendent. “We’re dedicated to offering programs that help our customers save money and support our community’s responsible energy use, and earning designation as a Smart Energy Provider really means something to us.”

This is the third time City Utilities has been named a Smart Energy Provider since the program’s initiation in 2019.



City utilities staff includes (left to right): Vanessa Mueller, Hunter Dischler, Angie Edwards, Scott Gald, Grant Bruckner, back row: Darren Mott, Gerald Klatt and Rowen Wipperfurth



# Waunakee Utilities explain summer outages

**ETHAN FERRELL**  
ethan.ferrell@apg-sw.com

**Waunakee Utilities** recently addressed the village's slew of power outages over the summer and provided a few explanations: growing pains, wildlife, and some bad luck.

"We take pride in what we do, we've just had an unfortunate series of a couple of incidents that have happened right after each other. Hopefully things are back to normal," Tim Herlitzka, **Waunakee Utilities** General Manager, said at the Oct. 16 Village Board meeting.

### UNPRECEDENTED STRAIN AND UNFORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCES

Due to a hot summer and a continually growing population, the village's electrical grid

experienced an all-time record peak for usage in late August. The number was 12% higher than the previous all-time high.

A majority of Waunakee's electrical system is underground. Herlitzka explained that this can cause wires to become excessively hot due strains from usage and a lack of moisture in the soil. Dry summers, like that of 2023, make it hard for underground wires to cool off and only continue to compound possible grid issues.

In August, electrical service was interrupted for about 700 customers by a squirrel that got into equipment at the Centennial Park substation. Herlitzka stated that the utilities commission has spent tens of thousands of dollars on preventing such instances, but that sometimes these events are

unavoidable.

Unforeseen equipment failures can be a contributing factor as well.

"During this recent spate of electric service interruptions we had new equipment that failed, we had old equipment that failed and we've just had a spate of bad luck, which is unfortunate," Herlitzka said.

### LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Herlitzka encouraged residents to utilize the

resources already available to them for tracking and reporting outages.

The **Waunakee Utilities** website contains an outage map for the village that displays affected areas and a number of customers impacted. The department's Facebook page is active with updates during outages

and throughout the week. Customers can also sign up for text service with live staff-generated update messages.

A new electric utility outage management system is on the horizon, which will provide a more in-depth interface for customers when they lose power.

When asked by Village Trustee Nyla Frye about the electrical capacity for future village growth, Herlitzka stated that there was already a lot of capacity built into the system. In the next five years, **Waunakee Utilities** plans to make significant upgrades to substations and transformers.

Many thanks to the numerous family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc. who helped us celebrate some milestone birthdays. Your generosity resulted in **641 pounds of food** donated to the **Waunakee Food Pantry** as well as **\$465 in cash and gift cards** so they can purchase specific and seasonal needs. *We feel truly blessed.*

**Leroy Adler & Duane Statz**



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Whitehall, Trempealeau County Times



### *It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like...*

It looked more like Christmas after an inch or so of snow fell throughout most portions of Trempealeau County over the weekend, but the transformation began last week in Whitehall. That's when members of the Whitehall Electric Utility began decorating the community Christmas tree in Fredrickson Park. This week, utility members put up decorations downtown in preparation for the annual Festival of Trees parade in the city this Friday.

(Times photograph by Andrew Dannehy)