

November Member Clips

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- Power outages reported in areas across UP due to strong winds

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- BRFMU Commission discussed public power fund contributions

Hartford

- Hartford Electric receives Smart Energy Provider Designation from American Public Power Association
- House fire on McKinley Avenue in Hartford, WI
- Hartford utilities celebrate debt-free status

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- Beginning to look a bit like Christmas

Kaukauna

- Kaukauna Utilities recognized for consistently operating with environmental sustainability
- Kaukauna Utilities Commission excited about upcoming microgrid project
- KU receives Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Award
- Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Award Winners

Muscoda

- Two men from Muscoda Utilities were among workers restoring power in Lakeland, FL

Oconomowoc

- Oconomowoc Utilities respond during an evacuation for gas leak

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- Fire call, power outage enliven council meeting

Plymouth

- Council approves purchase of relay panels

Sun Prairie

- Costumes galore at Sun Prairie's Trunk or Treat
- Sun Prairie Utilities recognized by APPA
- Sun Prairie Utilities recognized with National Customer Satisfaction Award
- Sun Prairie named national leader in renewable energy
- Sun Prairie utility workers help restore power in Lakeland, FL

Waupun

- Waupun Christmas tree goes up
- Waupun Utilities earns Smart Energy Provider Designation



Power outages reported in areas across UP due to strong winds



By TV6 (WLUC) News Team | Published: Nov. 11, 2024

UPPER MICHIGAN (WLUC)—Power outages are being reported across the Upper Peninsula due to strong winds on Monday.

[Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association's outage map](#)

[Cloverland Electric's outage map](#)

[Marquette Board of Light and Power's outage map](#)

[UPPCO's outage map](#)

[We Energies' outage map](#)

[Xcel Energy's outage map](#)

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

officer vacancy. replace the existing conces- already committed to rais- become city property and city ers for October totaling

BRFMU Commission discusses the process on finding a new well site

By Garrett Aleckson
 The Black River Falls Municipal Utility (BRFMU) Commission met for its regular meeting Monday, Nov. 18. BRFMU general manager Casey Engebretson updated the commission on potential future well sites.

“We did meet with SEH (Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc.) and the local DNR (Department of Natural Resources) engineer, and we went through the preliminary setback findings that we all reviewed at last month’s meeting,” explained Engebretson. “We relayed our concerns that, when you look at the setbacks for all potential well sites, there’s not a lot of options left. We did tell them where our preferred sites were—the one right next door here and the one back behind the hotel. He suggested that we move forward with submitting the report and application and let the DNR know in our report that these are our preferred sites. Then we’d have to wait to see what their reviewers say.”

“Your first choice is the site next door right,” asked commissioner Jeff Amo.

“Yep,” Engebretson replied. “We can set it between

the two setbacks, so we think it is a possibility. The only problem is the trouble Brockway is running into with their different wells. So, then if we do test the well and we don’t have good water quality or volume, that’s the only bad possibility about having a well in this area.”

“You did say something about a primary and secondary location,” added commissioner Justin Dougherty. “So, if they approve one or both and we have poor results on one, we can move to the second one and go from there.”

“That’s what the discussions was with what’s the best approach for filling the application,” said Engebretson. “Do you put a number of sites and rank them one through three, or do you do a single site and focus on that. My thought was, you do multiple sites because if they do a three-month review on one site and don’t like it, then you’re starting back over again.”

“Makes since because otherwise you’re starting over each time,” replied Dougherty.

“It’s already a three-year process too,” said Engebretson.

In additional business, Engebretson discussed infrastructure damage from a semi hitting a BRFMU power pole.

“A semi hit a power pole right across the street from the jail,” Engebretson shared. “Unfortunately, we had a main circuit going up there so there is a lot of stuff on that pole. They severed it right off. The guys were out for about eight hours that night and got everything switched over. Then, one of the guys noticed the power pole down where you turn off highway 54 to come up by D&S on the bridge side. There’s a big chunk from the pole that’s missing there too. Kevin (LaValley, BRFMU electric operations superintendent) talked to the police chief. The police chief was looking at cameras from different businesses and they suspect it might be the same semi. From all the different cameras, they can kind of see the route that they took. I did talk to the police chief last week and one of the banks might have a good camera, but he’s still looking into it. The person who could look back on the cameras wasn’t working that day. We did file it with the insurance company.”

“What was the total cost

of the damage,” asked Amo.

“We’re not done figuring that out yet,” said Engebretson.

“The guys did a really nice job,” said LaValley. “They got done at about 7 a.m. Then one of the guys asked if we saw the other pole and I said ‘are you kidding me?’”

In other business, the commission approved a motion to name the new BRFMU office manager Samantha Linehan as the authorized user/signer on BRFMU accounts for the Black River Country Bank and Security Financial Bank. The commission also approved a motion to name Linehan an alternate to the Board of Directors to the WPPI (Wisconsin Public Power Inc.).

The commission also looked at a trio of public power fund contributions. BRFMU has a fund every year from the WPPI that does not roll over to the next year if not used.

“The balances so far, we have \$800 left in the community contributions, \$1,000 left in the economic development and \$3,100 left in the community service and branding,” explained Engebretson. “What I was

thinking is adding \$800 from the community contributions and \$750 from the community service and branding for a total of \$1,550 to the Black River Falls Fire Department (BRFFD). They have some equipment they’re going to need, so at least we can take a good chunk out of something for them. Then, \$1,000 to the Black River Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) for economic development. They just did the trail of terror for Halloween and they’re doing Small Business Saturday where they give out Chamber bucks and gift cards to support shopping locally. Lastly, the Black River Falls School District (BRFSD) created a community education coordinator position. What that’s about is having a person that can work with different community groups in collaborating to meet with the education needs of the community. They might not have hired yet, but I think we could throw some money their way to get that started. That would be \$1,000 out of that community service and branding. That would leave approximately half of

See BRFMU New well, page 3

BRFMU new well from front

the community service and branding funds, and I think we could use that to buy some promotional items like when we give away stuff at customer appreciation day.”

The commission approved \$1,550 to the BRF Fire Department, \$1,000 to the Black River Area Chamber of Commerce and \$1,000 to the BRF School District.

Hartford Electric receives Smart Energy Provider Designation from American Public Power Association

HARTFORD — Hartford Utilities recently announced that the American Public Power Association named them a Smart Energy Provider during its annual Customer Connections Conference held from Oct. 27-30.

According to the release, the Smart Energy Provider designation recognizes public power utilities for demonstrating a commitment to and proficiency in energy efficiency, distributed energy resources, research and development and environmental initiatives. Currently, there are 111

public power utilities throughout the country that hold the title of Smart Energy Provider. This designation now lasts three years, a change from the previous span of two years. [Hartford Electric](#) also received the designation in 2022.

“It’s an honor to be recognized for enhancing energy efficiency within our community,” said Brian Rhodes, director of Hartford Utilities. “We take the title of ‘smart energy’ to heart and will continue providing responsible and cost-effective electric service as we move forward.”



House fire on Mc Kinley Avenue in Hartford, WI

By Judy Steffes | November 23, 2024

Hartford, WI – At 9:54 a.m. on November 22, 2024, Hartford Fire & Rescue responded to Mc Kinley Avenue for the report of smoke in a home.

Upon arrival, the first arriving fire unit found the home to be filled with smoke and the homeowner standing outside.

It was confirmed all occupants and pets had evacuated the building. Hartford Fire & Rescue firefighters arrived shortly after and made entry to extinguish the fire which was located in the kitchen.

After the fire was extinguished overhaul was conducted to ensure the fire had not spread into the wall space of the kitchen, and that no smoldering fire existed.

EMS crews provided rehabilitation efforts to the firefighters.

No citizens or fire rescue personnel were injured in this incident. Mutual aid assistance was provided from Slinger Fire Department and St Lawrence Fire Company, along with help from [Hartford Electric Utility](#) and WE Energies who secured electric and gas utilities.

The building's structural integrity was not affected, but smoke spread included the entire building, with fire damage to the cooking area of the kitchen. Fans were used to complete ventilation of the house with fresh air. A fire investigator from Hartford Fire & Rescue conducted an origin and cause fire investigation, and upon completion the property was turned back over to the homeowner.



Photo courtesy of the city of Hartford

Members of Hartford's electric and water utilities celebrate their debt-free status with cake and ice cream.

Hartford utilities celebrate debt-free status

HARTFORD — Last week, members of the Hartford Water Utility and [Hartford Electric](#) celebrated the achievement of a significant milestone: debt-free status.

According to the announcement from the city, the organizations paid off their outstanding revenue bonds back in July and hosted a gathering recently to commemorate this milestone achievement with a celebratory event featuring cake and ice cream — a small but meaningful way to recognize their hard work and dedication.

In recent years, the Hartford Water Utility has undertaken several major

projects that have strengthened the utilities' infrastructure, including adding Well 16 and its treatment facility, constructing a 750,000-gallon water tower near Pleasant Hill Cemetery, the extension of a new water main to Well 16 and the completion of numerous watermain replacements. These upgrades have strengthened the city's water supply, ensuring it remains dependable for years.

[Hartford Electric](#) has also substantially improved in building a stronger and more resilient electric grid, working on improvements such as the construction of the Arthur Road Substation on the northeast side of

Hartford, extending circuits to this new facility and adding additional circuits to enhance overall capacity. Completing these projects resulted in a more reliable electric system for residents and businesses.

"This accomplishment reflects years of dedication and investment in projects that have significantly improved the reliability and efficiency of our community's water and electric utilities," the city said in a release. "Congratulations to the Hartford Water Utility and [Hartford Electric](#) teams for this success. Your commitment to excellence continues to make Hartford a better place to live, work, and play."

Title: Beginning to Look a Bit Like Christmas

Author: JOHN KLOTZBACH

Size : 42 Inches Sq Independence,IA Circulation: 2029

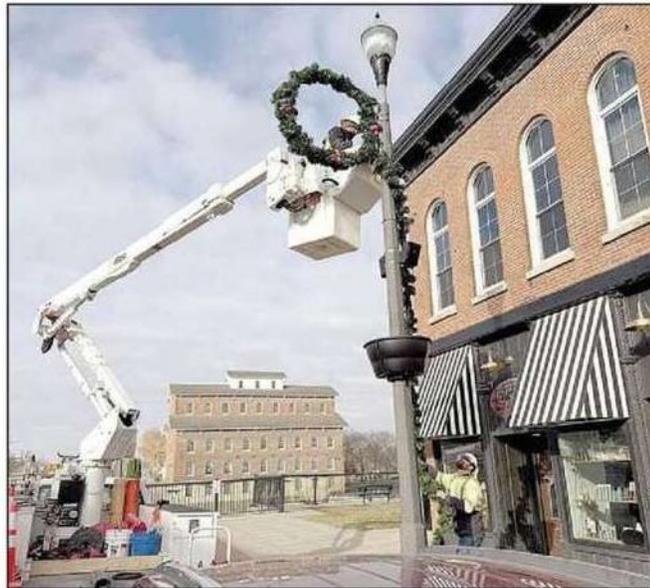
Keywords: Independence Light & Power, Telecommunications



Beginning to Look a Bit Like Christmas

BY JOHN KLOTZBACH
EDITOR

INDEPENDENCE – Downtown is transforming to Christmas this week with the Holiday Open House and the Christmas wreaths and garlands being hung by Independence Light & Power, Telecommunications.



JOHN KLOTZBACH PHOTO

Hanging Christmas wreaths and garland by Color Devine Salon.

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JOHN KLOTZBACH PHOTO

Independence Light & Power, Telecommunications linemen Mike Schmitz (in bucket) and Dave Gissel hanging Christmas decor by Heinz Academy on Thursday, Nov 7.



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2024

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DNR Celebrates Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Award Winners On America Recycles Day

Green Circle Recycling won a 2024 Recycling Excellence Award for their overall program.

DNR

In honor of America Recycles Day, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announces the winners of the 2024 Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Awards.

Wisconsin's recycling law bans certain materials from the trash and establishes a statewide recycling program. This year, the DNR recognizes 13 organizations for going beyond what is required by law.

"This year's winners successfully implemented robust and sustainable diversion programs within their organizations and communities," said Jennifer Semrau, DNR waste reduction and diversion coordinator. "The amount and types of waste they have saved from the landfill is truly impressive."

In addition to landfill-banned items, which include curbside recyclables and electronics, the winners diverted many tons of food

waste, furniture, plastic film and household hazardous waste for reuse or recycling.

This year's winners include:

Projects And Initiatives Category

Cornell Camaraderie Club and Our Saviors Lutheran (Chippewa County): In 2023, Our Saviors Lutheran Church started a recycling initiative encouraging city of Cornell residents to collect plastic bags and film. Our Saviors worked with a Twin Cities recycling center and a Festival Foods drop-off site to divert over 2 tons of soft plastic from landfills. In 2024, the Cornell Camaraderie Club took over the program. The plastic was delivered to Trex, a manufacturer of composite lumber made of recycled plastic, in exchange for free benches. The city of Cornell plans to install the benches along the Chippewa River.

See DNR page 5



Wisconsin DNR photo

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2024

Wausau Times/Buyers Guide

DNR from page 2

Ducommun (Outagamie County): Ducommun Appleton is a supplier of electronics and structural systems for aerospace applications. Most of the raw material Ducommun receives is packaged in materials that are not typically accepted at recycling centers. Ducommun ships its waste to pelletizers instead of the landfill, and the pelletizers convert the waste into fuel pellets to supplement coal at various Wisconsin power plants. This effort, along with other waste stream diversions, has led Ducommun to divert 3.2 tons of material from the landfill since early 2023.

theExchange: La Crosse Area Furniture Bank (La Crosse County): theExchange has operated since 2016 as a charitable furniture bank providing basic household items to La Crosse-area residents experiencing hardships such as homelessness, domestic violence, disability/aging, veteran status and other impacts of poverty. In collaboration with nearly 40 social service partners, theExchange diverted over 45 tons of household items in 2024. These items include beds, couches, tables, TVs and many other household appliances that are provided to more than 500 households annually.

Good News Project, Inc. (Marathon County): Good News Project is a small nonprofit organization in Wausau. They have been a registered collector with the DNR's E-Cycle Wisconsin program since 2010. Staffed mostly by volunteers, Good News Project has been able to collect and recycle over 3.9 million pounds of electronics since 2005. More recently, the nonprofit began offering events at local businesses, giving employees affordable and accessible electronics recycling opportunities and resulting in above-average collection numbers. Since 2021, Good News Project has facilitated 14 employee benefit events and collected a total of 62 tons of electronic waste from these events alone.

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (La Crosse County): The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse wanted to reduce waste material generated by students moving out of college dorms. To do this, it partnered with the Greater La Crosse Region Habitat for Humanity. Together, they initiated a dumpster diversion program that was marketed to any student moving out, both on and off campus. The diversion program aimed to collect furniture in strategically placed pod containers on campus. Any collected material would be either donated to local charities or resold at the local ReStore. At the end of the 2023-2024 school year, the program was able to divert over 8 tons of household furniture from the landfill.

Overall Program Category

Green Box, LLC (Dane County): Green Box is a residential and commercial food scrap and organics hauler and composter. Starting in 2022, it has grown

to serve 900 residential members and 40 businesses. Thanks to these members, Green Box diverts 10 tons of food scraps per week through its efficient composting process. Green Box continues to fulfill its goal of making composting clean, easy and simple, allowing more people to adopt this sustainable practice.

Green Circle Recycling, LLC (La Crosse County): Green Circle Recycling is a single-stream processing facility in La Crosse. Uniquely, Green Circle employs bypass belts and recirculating systems to ensure that all recyclables are captured, optimizing waste reduction. Further, the company has invested in advanced technology, such as the installation of an optical sorter and two advanced sorting robots in 2023. Through its focus on educational outreach and community events, including popular "Touch a Truck" events, Green Circle has increased public awareness and participation in recycling. It increased its single-stream processing rate by 58% from 2022 to 2023 and maintains a commitment to minimizing landfill contributions and embracing a diverse range of recyclable materials.

Hsu Growing Supply (Marathon County): Hsu Growing Supply in Wausau was founded in tandem with Hsu Enterprises and Hsu Ginseng Farms, one of the largest ginseng producers in America. Hsu Growing Supply has been composting for over 30 years to facilitate the growth of ginseng, which requires shade and is rejuvenated from composting leaves. The company has expanded to produce all kinds of soil blends, composts and other landscaping and gardening supplies. Hsu Growing Supply has partnered with several schools, retailers and residential properties within the community to divert almost 200 tons of food waste per month from landfills.

Kaukauna Utilities (Outagamie and Calumet counties): Kaukauna Utilities

consistently operates with environmental sustainability as a top priority. In 2023, it developed a waste management plan to ensure all materials are disposed of properly. These materials include scrap metal, used oil and filters, batteries, light bulbs and ballasts, tires, plastic bags/film, traditional cans/bottles and paper/cardboard and used pallets. The company has also found reuse or recycling outlets for unique materials such as utility poles, concrete/asphalt, underground electrical conduit reels and used transformers. To further their commitment to recycling, Kaukauna Utilities began working with the city of Kaukauna to host an annual electronics recycling event. Since its inception in 2015, this event has collected over 200 tons of electronics. In 2024, Kaukauna Utilities contracted with Veolia to host its first annual hazardous materials collection event for residents.

Village of Pleasant Prairie (Kenosha County): The village of Pleasant Prairie offers comprehensive recycling opportunities and education to its residents.

The village invested in recycling truck wraps, magnets and "do not bag recyclables" cart stickers to remind residents of proper recycling practices and the importance of recycling. In addition, the village provides social media outreach, an instructional recycling video, printed calendars, newsletters and informational signage at the recycling center. In addition to its curbside recycling program, the village of Pleasant Prairie operates a year-round Residential Recycling Center, which has averaged over 27,000 drop-offs per year. The recycling center accepts traditional recyclables, motor oil, batteries, antifreeze, tires, electronics, appliances, yard waste, clothing, household hazardous waste and more, making it a "one-stop shop" for village residents.

Vernon County Solid Waste and Recycling: Vernon County's Solid Waste and Recycling Department operates a source-separated recycling program that accepts traditional recyclables, appliances, electronics, tires, light bulbs, mattresses, waste oils, antifreeze, oil filters and batteries. In 2024, the county began to accept polystyrene (Styrofoam) for recycling through a partnership with La Crosse County, 7 Rivers Recycling and Hilltopper Refuse. The material is processed through a densifying machine that removes the air and melts the material at high temperatures. The finished product is sold and turned into picture framing, window trim, crown molding and other products. The county also recently partnered with Dummer Farm to implement an organics drop-off program for food waste, yard waste and other compostable material. Additional initiatives include collecting untreated wood and pallets, textiles, electronics and appliances (including uncommon items like vacuum cleaners, fans, clocks, etc.) and working with the Vernon County Fair to promote and improve recycling.

Special Events Category

Dane County Clean Sweep: Dane County operates one of the few permanent year-round household hazardous waste facilities in Wisconsin. Despite operating year-round, Dane County found that nearby residents would travel to an "event" further away due to a perceived sense of urgency to participate. With this knowledge, Dane County started hosting in-facility household hazardous waste collection events targeted at specific municipalities. The county was able to forego additional mobilization, outside staffing and equipment costs, and residents brought hazardous waste that may have otherwise been left untouched. The events held in 2024 yielded almost 13,000 pounds. Dane County has also been providing free electronics collection events to its residents. These events accept e-waste - such as computers, TVs and batteries - and have helped divert e-waste from landfills.

Innovation Category

WM - Germantown (Washington County): WM is a national provider of

recycling and solid waste collection, processing and disposal services. WM operates six recycling facilities in Wisconsin, the biggest of which is its Germantown facility. In 2023, WM embarked on a nine-month project to transform the facility. With a \$39 million investment, WM-Germantown has greatly increased recycling processing to up to 65-70 tons/hour and an average of more than 1 million pounds of material each day. New and expanded technologies include 13 new optical sorters, which use ultraviolet, infrared, visible

light and lasers to identify material, and an advanced fire detection system, which can remotely monitor and extinguish a fire. Following the renovation, the site can process up to 230,000 tons of material annually - an increase of 70,000 tons.

View their full profiles and learn what advice the winners have for others looking to start or improve their waste reduction and recycling efforts on the Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Awards webpage.

For more information on recycling in Wisconsin, visit the DNR's What to Recycle in Wisconsin webpage.

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Nov 20 2024 Page 005 Clip resized 45% From 002

Kaukauna, Heart of the Valley Times-Villager

Kaukauna Utilities Commission excited about upcoming microgrid project

By Brian Roebke
Editor

General Manager Michael Avanzi, Manager of Engineering & Project Management Eric Miller, and Engineering & Operations Director Dave Paul gave an update on the \$6.1 million Electric City Microgrid Project at last week's **Kaukauna Utilities** meeting along with two consultants from Quanta Technologies.

Laura Hetrick and Muhidin "Dino" Lelic appeared virtually from the firm that will support KU in the areas of project management and technical expertise, to make this innovative work happen.

This is a cooperative "exciting" project between **Kaukauna Utilities** and the United States Department of Energy, Miller noted.

"The DOE has finally given their blessing, so now it's time to start making things happen," Miller said, adding they are trying to create a utility-scale uninterruptible power supply.

"To be honest with you, that's pretty novel," he said. "We're going to find out if that's what we end up getting to be honest with you."

The DOE has agreed to pay a cost-matching of about 50 percent for this endeavor through their Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership funds.

The very worst Miller expects KU to end up with is a battery system that allows them to microgrid an island and black start was well as a smart grid system.

"I'll be honest (the DOE) is reaching out to us quite often now," Miller said, saying they want to keep abreast of the project.

KU receives Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Award

Kaukauna Utilities was recognized for its overall recycling program, receiving a Wisconsin

Because the DOE is giving KU a \$3 million grant, they want to make sure it's done the way they would like to see it done.

From what he's seen so far the DOE has been very cooperative.

Miller said it's more complicated than adding a battery to the system that will be housed on the grounds of the KU warehouse to serve the Badger substation.

"Most microgrids mean you go all the way out of power and you're in the dark and then you use that to bring it back," Miller said.

KU is looking at a system that could allow the hydro plants be supported and stay energized along with a lot of critical loads on the system, even with the loss of the major transmission supply.

"That's a bit of an ask," Miller said. "It's easy to say, 'sure, we've got that out there but let's implement one of those. There isn't one of those out there.'"

Miller said the Badger substation across the street from where the battery will sit powers not only the utility property but the Heart of the Valley Metropolitan Sewerage District, Kaukauna police and fire departments, city hall, and two native gas fired power plants right next to it.

"This is a great place for some such things to take root," he said.

The battery can also absorb power if KU loses generation of the ATC supply.

"This battery would be kept at a point not fully charged all the time because it could actually be called upon to absorb energy in order to keep the grid hot too," Miller said.

diverted many tons of food waste, furniture, plastic film and household hazardous waste for reuse or

Miller said another exciting element to the project is, "what if we could shift load between this substation and another substation using a smart recloser scheme."

Avanzi said they're still very early in the project schedule.

"It's already been impressed on the team the importance of staying on schedule on the scope," Avanzi said.

Commissioners authorized staff to proceed with the issuance of \$7,725,000 in Water Revenue Bonds, subject to the parameter maximum interest rate of 5 percent, to finance 2024-26 water main replacements in the capital budget to keep pace with the City of Kaukauna's sewer and street replacement program.

The city council considers parameters resolutions on Dec. 2, and if the market is strong and meets the council's parameters, the utility will tentatively sell the bonds (finalizing the terms and interest rates) on Jan. 25, with the closing of bonds on Feb. 17.

In department reports, Pahl reported the Elm Street Turbine Deisel engine failed to start on a test run at the end of the annual fall outage. The maintenance team researched solutions to repair/replace this Cummins diesel engine built in the late 1960s.

The contract with WPPI allows KU to have the unit out of the market for 60 days prior to incurring a penalty starting Dec. 17. "We have decided to move forward with a used diesel engine which should allow us to get the unit back online prior to the penalty period," Pahl wrote in his report.

The entire project cost should be in the \$30,000-40,000 range.

Environmental & Compliance Manager Zach Moureau reported



Submitted photo

Kaukauna Utilities Commissioner Paul Van Berkel received the Richard "Dixie" Kirchoff Memorial Community Service Award from WPPI Energy. This award recognizes public officials who demonstrate the value of the electric utility through active participation and a commitment to volunteerism within the community. Previous to serving on the commission, he was the commission's attorney for many years.

KU has completed the annual evaluation of the aquifer relied upon for water supply. KU evaluated the depth to water for all groundwater wells within the KU drinking water system from 2013 through 2024 and there continues to be an increasing trend in the pumping depth to water at well No. 8 over the last five years. However, the pump in this well was lowered in 2023 and the static depth

to water is within historical ranges.

The aquifer conditions appear to be stable and there are no current concerns related to KU's current water supply.

The commission also approved the 2025 electric and water operating and capital budgets as well as the 2025 personnel policies and employee handbook that included changes to health insurance.



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KU receives Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Award

Kaukauna Utilities was recognized for its overall recycling program, receiving a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Awards for 2024.

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Kaukauna Utilities was awarded for consistently operating with environmental sustainability as a top priority.

“This year’s winners successfully implemented robust and sustainable diversion programs within their organizations and communities,” said Jennifer Semrau, DNR waste reduction and diversion coordinator. “The amount and types of waste they have saved from the landfill is truly impressive.”

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Wisconsin Recycling Excellence Award Winners

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veteran status and other impacts of poverty. In collaboration with nearly 40 social service partners, theExchange diverted over 45 tons of household items in 2024. These items include beds, couches, tables, TVs and many other household appliances that are provided to more than 500 households annually.

Good News Project, Inc. (Marathon County): Good News Project is a small nonprofit organization in Wausau. They have been a registered collector with the DNR's E-Cycle Wisconsin program since 2010. Staffed mostly by volunteers, Good News Project has been able to collect and recycle over 3.9 million pounds of electronics since 2005. More recently, the nonprofit began offering events at local businesses, giving employees affordable and accessible electronics recycling opportunities and resulting in above-average collection numbers. Since 2021, Good News Project has facilitated 14 employee benefit events and collected a total of 62 tons of electronic waste from these events alone.

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (La Crosse County): The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse wanted to reduce waste material generated by students moving out of college dorms. To do this, it partnered with the Greater La Crosse Region Habitat for Humanity. Together, they initiated a dumpster diversion program that was marketed to any student moving out, both on and off campus. The diversion program aimed to collect furniture in strategically placed pod containers on campus. Any collected material would be either donated to local charities or resold at the local ReStore. At the end of the 2023-2024 school year, the program was able to divert over 8 tons of household furniture from the landfill.

Overall Program Category
Green Box, LLC (Dane County): Green Box is a residential and commercial food scrap and organics hauler and composter. Starting in 2022, it has grown to serve 900 residential members and 40 businesses. Thanks to these members, Green Box diverts 10 tons of food scraps per week through its efficient composting process. Green Box continues to fulfill its goal of making composting clean, easy and simple, allowing more people to adopt this sustainable practice.

Green Circle Recycling, LLC (La Crosse County): Green Circle Recycling is a single-stream processing facility in La Crosse. Uniquely, Green Circle employs bypass belts and recirculating systems to ensure that all recyclables are captured, optimizing waste reduction. Further, the company has



Green Circle Recycling won a 2024 Recycling Excellence Award for their overall program. Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

invested in advanced technology, such as the installation of an optical sorter and two advanced sorting robots in 2023. Through its focus on educational outreach and community events, including popular "Touch a Truck" events, Green Circle has increased public awareness and participation in recycling. It increased its single-stream processing rate by 58% from 2022 to 2023 and maintains a commitment to minimizing landfill contributions and embracing a diverse range of recyclable materials.

Hsu Growing Supply (Marathon County): Hsu Growing Supply in Wausau was founded in tandem with Hsu Enterprises and Hsu Ginseng Farms, one of the largest ginseng producers in America. Hsu Growing Supply has been composting for over 30 years to facilitate the growth of ginseng, which requires shade and is rejuvenated from composting leaves. The company has expanded to produce all kinds of soil blends, composts and other landscaping and gardening supplies. Hsu Growing Supply has partnered with several schools, retailers and residential properties within the community to divert almost 200 tons of food waste per month from landfills.

Kaukauna Utilities (Outagamie and Calumet counties): Kaukauna Utilities consistently operates with environmental sustainability as a top priority. In 2023, it developed a waste management plan to ensure all materials are disposed of properly. These materials include scrap metal, used oil and filters, batteries, light bulbs and ballasts, tires, plastic bags/film, traditional cans/bottles and paper/cardboard and used pallets. The company has also found reuse or recycling outlets for unique materials such as utility poles, concrete/asphalt, underground electrical conduit reels and used transformers. To further their commitment to recycling, Kaukauna Utilities began working with the city of Kaukauna to host an annual electronics recycling event. Since its inception in 2015, this

event has collected over 200 tons of electronics. In 2024, Kaukauna Utilities contracted with Veolia to host its first annual hazardous materials collection event for residents.

Village of Pleasant Prairie (Kenosha County): The village of Pleasant Prairie offers comprehensive recycling opportunities and education to its residents. The village invested in recycling truck wraps, magnets and "do not bag recyclables" cart stickers to remind residents of proper recycling practices and the importance of recycling. In addition, the village provides social media outreach, an instructional recycling video, printed calendars, newsletters and informational signage at the recycling center. In addition to its curbside recycling program, the village of Pleasant Prairie operates a year-round Residential Recycling Center, which has averaged over 27,000 drop-offs per year. The recycling center accepts traditional recyclables, motor oil, batteries, antifreeze, tires, electronics, appliances, yard waste, clothing, household hazardous waste and more, making it a "one-stop shop" for village residents.

Vernon County Solid Waste and Recycling: Vernon County's Solid Waste and Recycling Department operates a source-separated recycling program that accepts traditional recyclables, appliances, electronics, tires, light bulbs, mattresses, waste oils, antifreeze, oil filters and batteries. In 2024, the county began to accept polystyrene (Styrofoam) for recycling through a partnership with La Crosse County, 7 Rivers Recycling and Hilltopper Refuse. The material is processed through a densifying machine that removes the air and melts the material at high temperatures. The finished product is sold and turned into picture framing, window trim, crown molding and other products. The county also recently partnered with Dummer Farm to implement an organics drop-off program for food waste, yard waste and other compostable material. Additional initiatives include collecting untreated wood and

pallets, textiles, electronics and appliances (including uncommon items like vacuum cleaners, fans, clocks, etc.) and working with the Vernon County Fair to promote and improve recycling.

Special Events Category
Dane County Clean Sweep: Dane County operates one of the few permanent year-round household hazardous waste facilities in Wisconsin. Despite operating year-round, Dane County found that nearby residents would travel to an "event" further away due to a perceived sense of urgency to participate. With this knowledge, Dane County started hosting in-facility household hazardous waste collection events targeted at specific municipalities. The county was able to forego additional mobilization, outside staffing and equipment costs, and residents brought hazardous waste that may have otherwise been left untouched. The events held in 2024 yielded almost 13,000 pounds. Dane County has also been providing free electronics collection events to its residents. These events accept e-waste – such as computers, TVs and batteries – and have helped divert e-waste from landfills.

Innovation Category
WM – Germantown (Washington County): WM is a national provider of recycling and solid waste collection, processing and disposal services. WM operates six recycling facilities in Wisconsin, the biggest of which is its Germantown facility. In 2023, WM embarked on a nine-month project to transform the facility. With a \$39 million investment, WM-Germantown has greatly increased recycling processing to up to 65-70 tons/hour and an average of more than 1 million pounds of material each day. New and expanded technologies include 13 new optical sorters, which use ultraviolet, infrared, visible light and lasers to identify material, and an advanced fire detection system, which can remotely monitor and extinguish a fire. Following the renovation, the site can process up to 230,000 tons of material annually – an increase of 70,000 tons.

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News from around the area

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RICHLAND CENTER – The Richland School District Board of Education did not fine-tune its budget or its levy any further before certifying it to the state Monday night during a special session. As a result, the district’s budget will require a mill rate of \$8.76 per \$1,000 to provide the \$10,035,314 - the same amount that was approved at the district’s annual meeting last week. The board approved the district’s \$22.2 million budget for the 2024-25 school year. District Business Official Jon Bosworth said the state had not provided any information in the amounts of money the state will be available. District Administrator Steve Board reported that a generator and a switchboard needed for the district improvements authorized by the passage of the district’s referendum have been ordered since they will require 32 to 54 weeks of lead time to produce. Board also reported that the work on the district’s four 4K classrooms at the Richland Center Primary School may not be able to be finished by the time school is expected to start in 2025-26. As a result, he said the district needs to make plans in case the work is unable to be completed. In other action, the board accepted two gifts. Compeer Financial donated \$250 to pay for any unpaid school lunches. And Donors Choose donated \$350 for the purchases of books “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory”, “Charlotte’s Web”, “The One and Only Ivan”, and “James and the Giant Peach”. Twelve copies of each book will be provided.

FENNIMORE – The Fennimore cross country team experienced the highest of highs in the sport, and the lowest of lows at Saturday’s WIAA Division 3 Prairie du Chien Sectional last Saturday. Sophomore Natalie Horsfall and junior Kylee Mumm began the day with fantastic races, finishing fourth and fifth respectively to earn individual berths to this Saturday’s WIAA Cross Country State Championships. As a team, the Fennimore girls (109) finished third behind D3 #5-ranked Westby (42) and SWAL champion #6-ranked Darlington (75). The Fennimore boys were up next and had sights set on joining their female teammates in Wisconsin Rapids this weekend. But, the Golden Eagles (162) fell agonizingly short in their bid to return to state as a team for a third consecutive season, finishing third behind SWAL rivals Iowa–Grant (88) and Boscobel (109).

LANCASTER – “She was a role model, someone we should all try to be.” Kathy Nelson said those words at the Lancaster Country Club in talking about Marge Sherwin, whose family was holding a celebration of her this past Saturday. “You know how they always say someone is irreplaceable? She is the one you are not going to be able to replace,” Nelson continued.

“How many organizations was she a part of, and ran?” Marge, Margie, Marge-in-charge, witchy - Sherwin was called many names by those who knew here, all of them in love, although some of them in a playful manner. When Sherwin passed away last month, she left a hole in her adopted community of Lancaster, having thrown herself into organization after organization, a leader in most of them, and making herself the unofficial welcomer of the community. “She had a lifetime of being her own, in her own job, but also with volunteering,” said daughter Nichole, who remarked that time before the party was supposed to start, people came walking through the door, wanting to remember her mom. “For me, it’s all of these different circles of connection,” said daughter Cathy. “There are so many phases and groups that she that she found a home with. We’ve got her family from Iowa. We have his family (husband Joe) from Wisconsin. We have Red Hat people. We have, you know, people who worked in the thrift shop, people who volunteer in the historical museum the Hillary in the 90s, yeah, who she taught in, you know, third grade, and then in the 70s and 80s, people who remember her front porch and Halloween....”

MUSCODA – Two men from Muscoda Utilities were among workers who restored electricity and service to the people of Lakeland, Florida following Hurricane Milton. Lakeland, near Tampa, has a population of about 100,000 persons. About 80,000 of them lost their power during the strong storm. Two men from Muscoda Utilities, Superintendent Troy Wardell and Justice Dilley, joined a caravan of volunteers who gathered, with equipment, in Beloit for the journey south. They were going to help folks who had been hit hard by Hurricane Milton. Wardell said the city’s electrical system was a mess with broken poles and wire, plus many trees down everywhere.

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN – After nearly a month, Mississippi Meats has opened its doors to the public on a limited basis. The deli/butcher shop spent a significant portion of September and October closed for remodeling of their location in the former Blackhawk Junction Mall. The store reopened on Friday, October 11, but according to Chris Herbst, owner of Mississippi Meats, construction is still underway on the new addition, which will house the business’ grocery space. “We have a full-service meat counter and a full frozen food line, but we are without produce and deli until we can get to the other side,” he said. “Services will be limited to fresh meats, smoke products, limited dairy and frozen.” The store’s full spectrum of services will become available to the public within the next month, according to Herbst.

South Silver Lake Street buildings evacuated for gas leak

Conley Media Staff | Nov 21, 2024

OCONOMOWOC — Several buildings in the 200 block of South Silver Lake Street were evacuated Tuesday after occupants of a business reported their carbon dioxide alarm was sounding for natural gas.

Western Lakes Fire District Chief Brad Bowen said crews were dispatched at 4:22 p.m. Tuesday to 206 S. Silver Lake St. for the alarm. He said upon arrival the business and adjacent buildings were evacuated along with closing of the roadway. While there were no odors of gas around the exterior of the building, fire crews investigated and found high levels of gas on the second floor and basement which were in the explosive range for natural gas.

"We shut off the gas going into the building and began ventilating the building. We had We Energies and **Oconomowoc Utilities** respond to shut off power and for We Energies gas to investigate," Bowen said. "The cause of the high levels was a main pipe coming into the building had rotted/rusted out and was leaking. Gas remained shut off until the pipe is replaced. We assessed one occupant due to feeling ill, and there were no injuries to civilians or firefighters."



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WATERVILLE, VERMONT
SHAWANO LEADER

Fire call, power outage enliven council meeting

By: Warren Bluhm, News Editor

Published by kjpasson on Tue, 11/19/2024

The Oconto Falls City Council meeting proceeded Nov. 12 with two department heads distracted by emergencies.

The council was wrapping up a budget hearing and moving into its regular monthly meeting when police and fire crews were called to a traffic accident at state Highway 22 and U.S. Highway 141 in the Town of Stiles at 5:57 p.m.

Fire Chief Tim Magnin and other fire personnel bolted from the room and headed for the new fire station down the street.

Just after 6 p.m., the lights went out at City Hall and across the city, leaving the city council in the dark — their faces lit only by the light from their laptop computer screens.

After a few moments, the building's generators kicked in and the meeting proceeded, but it soon became clear the outage covered a large part of the city.

Greg Kuhn, general manager of **Oconto Falls Municipal Utilities**, continued to participate in the council meeting but left the room several times to get updates from his staff.

Officials said a WE Energies transformer had blown near HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital. It took crews about an hour to restore power.

Magnin returned from the accident scene around 7:30 p.m.

wbluhm@newmedia-wi.com



City tax rate to go up 1.7%

by Emmitt B. Feldner
of The Review staff

PLYMOUTH – City taxpayers will see a slight increase in the city’s portion of their property tax bill next month.

The City Council, at their Nov. 12 meeting, approved an \$8,265,384 2025 budget which will require a 1.67 percent increase in the property tax rate to \$6.06 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, up from the \$5.92 rate in the 2024 budget.

City spending is up 2.3 percent in the new budget, while the tax levy is down by 0.63 percent, due in part to an increase in state aid.

“The budget places the city in great financial shape to balance resident needs and costs while proactively addressing the needs affecting Plymouth,” City Administrator/Utilities Manager Tim Blakeslee wrote in a memo to the council accompanying the budget document.

The budget includes a 3 percent pay raise for non-union city employees.

Major projects in the budget for the coming year include reconstruction of Collins Street and Highland Avenue north of Eastern Avenue, cybersecurity upgrades, improvements to the pool floor at the Aquatic Center and installation of an LED pedestrian crossing system at Bruns and Eastern avenues.

“This is always a difficult process to go through,” Mayor Donald Pohlman said of the budget.

He noted that the city was

able to meet its goal of keeping the tax rate increase under 2 percent.

Rezonings for two residential developments on the city’s east side won council approval.

The two parcels – one on Columbia Drive and the other on Eastern Avenue – were rezoned to R-6 high-density multi-family.

Plans are for a senior housing/townhouse development on the Columbia Drive property just west of the Baymont Inn and an unspecified future apartment development on Eastern Avenue south of the Jimmy John’s restaurant and Scooter’s coffee shop.

Both rezonings were recommended by the Plan Commission at their October meeting.

The council approved the purchase of relay panels for a planned Plymouth Utilities substation in the town of Mitchell for \$201,044 from Electrical Power Products.

Blakeslee noted that the panels are the last major bidding item for the project.

He reported that Sheboygan County Circuit Court Judge Rebecca Persick that day upheld the state Public Service Commission’s ruling approving the proposed substation to serve a proposed ANR gas pipeline and other additional needs.

He added that there has been no ruling yet on local opposition to the proposed transmission line route to serve the new substation.

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Costumes galore at Sun Prairie's Trunk or Treat

Costumed families checked out the more than 30 vendors at the Sun Prairie Trunk or Treat events Saturday at the Family Aquatic Center.

Community organizations and businesses joined the Sun Prairie Community Schools and municipal departments to host trunks and offer treats of all sorts. The event offered entertainment such as a hula-hooping activity, face painting and a spooky sing-along.



ROBERTA BAUMANN Stephenie Hamen provides a treat for a child dressed as a candy corn at the Sun Prairie Trunk or Treat event Oct. 26. At right, Emily Veselsky talks to others visiting their station. They, with Aaron Kempf (not pictured) hosted the Sun Prairie Community Schools station.



ROBERTA BAUMANN

ABOVE: The Sun Prairie Lions Club hosted a station, as well. **RIGHT:** Costumed kids check out the Sun Prairie Utilities station at the Sun Prairie Trunk or Treat event.



ROBERTA BAUMANN Keesha Lee-Oldes with Robyn Burgess from Prairie Grove Orthodontics offer treats at their decked out trunk that featured zombies at the Oct. 26 event.

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Sun Prairie Utilities recognized by APPA

IB Staff | Nov 7, 2024

The American Public Power Association (APPA) recognized Sun Prairie Utilities with a Public Power Customer Satisfaction Award, The Star reports. The award reflects positive customer data in the areas of customer service, field personnel, communication, reliability, value, outage response, innovation, and overall satisfaction.

Sun Prairie Utilities received an average rating of greater than 80% across all categories.



Sun Prairie, The Star

Sun Prairie Utilities recognized with National Customer Satisfaction Award

Sun Prairie Utilities has been recognized by the American Public Power Association (APPA) with a Public Power Customer Satisfaction Award for providing excellent service to the City of Sun Prairie, the utility has announced.

result of receiving high marks from customers in the areas of:

- Customer service,
- Field personnel,
- Communication,
- Reliability,
- Value,
- Outage response,
- Innovation, and
- Overall satisfaction.

“We proudly serve the people of Sun

Prairie,” said Utility Manager Rick Wicklund. “To be recognized by this community for our dedication to customer service excellence is truly gratifying. It’s an honor to work with such a great team here at Sun Prairie Utilities.”

Winners of the 2024

The award is the



CORA SEIBT

Public Power Customer Satisfaction Awards are chosen at gold, silver, and bronze levels based on responses to customer surveys. Sun Prairie Utilities received a bronze-level award for an average rating greater than 80% across the eight categories listed above.

APPA is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power approximately 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. It represents public power before the federal government to protect the interests of the more than 54 million people that public

power utilities serve, and the 96,000 people they employ. APPA advocates and advises on electricity policy, technology, trends, training, and operations.

For more information, visit PublicPower.org.



Sun Prairie, The Star

Sun Prairie named national leader in renewable energy

The Department of Energy National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) ranked Sun Prairie in the top 15 communities throughout the country for its engagement in renewable energy programs, Sun Prairie Utilities announced on Tuesday

NREL evaluated the renewable energy efforts of utilities in four categories and released lists of the top 15 utilities across the nation. NREL's list for Green Power Participation Rates measures the percentage of customers who participated in a utility's renewable or "green" energy programs.

Sun Prairie Utilities ranks 11th in the nation for its Green Power Sales Rate of 3.61% in 2023.

"Sun Prairie residents are receiving much deserved national attention when it comes to renewable energy," said Utility Manager Rick Wicklund. "It's exciting to have so many people invested in reducing carbon emissions."

One of the utility's most popular offerings, Choose Renewable, helped the community obtain this recognition. The program allows customers to sign up to increase their monthly bill by a few

dollars, ensuring their homes are powered by the renewable energy sources of solar, wind, and biogas. A typical home can run on clean energy with the purchase of two to three 300 kilowatt-hour (kWh) blocks, each costing \$2 per month.

Customers interested in participating in the Choose Renewable program are encouraged to contact the utility to sign up.

WPPI Energy is the wholesale power provider for Sun Prairie Utilities and has a target goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2050.



CORA SEIBT

Sun Prairie Utilities.

Sun Prairie utility workers help restore power in Lakeland, Florida

ROBERTA BAUMANN
rbaumann@hngnews.com

Amid the snakes and alligators roaming in the aftermath of Hurricane Milton in Lakeland, Florida, were about four dozen Wisconsin utility workers helping to restore power.

From Sun Prairie Utilities, Bob Kaufman and Cody Kuphal were among the linemen who volunteered through the Municipal Electrical Utilities of Wisconsin (MEUW) association to travel and lend a hand in October.

According to a timeline provided by MEUW, they departed from Beloit on Oct. 9, setting out for Kissimmee, Florida. When they arrived at the pre-staging area that night in Smyrna, Tennessee, they learned Kissimmee had the help needed and were re-assigned to Lakeland. The following day, they began the 10-hour trip to central Florida.

When they arrived, they found downed trees and broken utility poles everywhere.

"They had what we call straight-line winds," Kaufman said, adding he was told twisters, too, caused the destruction, taking out power to 86,000 customers of the total 140,000 served by the utility there.

Kaufman and Kuphal with their fellow linemen spent 7 days working, and in that time, restored power to all but



CORA SEIBT/SUN PRAIRIE UTILITIES

Cody Kuphal and Bob Kaufman take a selfie on the trip.

12 homes in need of electrical repairs. They were joined by workers from all over the country.

The local utilities in Florida acted as guides, splitting the Wisconsin linemen into two large groups and showing them where to go.

Local businesses like Culvers provided lunches for them. They said as far as the eye could see, utility trucks were lined up as workers replaced poles, and hung and spliced wire.

One person was hired just to capture the alligators to keep the workers safe.

When Kaufman and Kuphal arrived, they initially spent the night in a gymnasium sleeping on cots at Tiger Stadium;

power needed to be restored to lodging and restaurants before they could be accommodated. That first night, the city was empty, they said.

"We got a pretty nice hotel after the first night," Kuphal added.

Then each day, they got to work in the Florida heat.

They said the residents were grateful, especially



CORA SEIBT/SUN PRAIRIE UTILITIES

As far as the eye could see were utility trucks with workers helping to restore power.

one who was reunited with his dog, thanks to their efforts. Kaufman saw the chihuahua on the ground, and to protect it from any falling branches, they brought it to a nearby home.

A little while later, the dog's owner came up the road asking if anyone had seen it, they said.

As they look back on the experience, Kaufman

and Kuphal say they appreciated their time.

"The coolest part is the people coming out and appreciating what you do in turning the lights back on," Kuphal said. This is the second time he has volunteered out of state for a recovery effort, and he said he enjoys working alongside utility workers from other communities and

learning from them.

This was Kaufman's first time volunteering out of state, but he said it felt like part of his job.

"It was a cool experience," Kaufman added. "The worst part of it was driving. To and from was miserable. It just doesn't seem like you're getting anywhere when you're in a 70-foot truck."

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WAUPUN CHRISTMAS TREE GOES UP

November 18, 2024



Waupun Utilities recently posted this photo of the City of Waupun’s Christmas tree being put up. Utility and City crews installed the Christmas tree in downtown Waupun last Wednesday.

Waupun Utilities Earns Smart Energy Provider Designation

November 23, 2024 by Daily Dodge



**SMART
ENERGY
PROVIDER**

American Public Power Association

(Waupun) Waupun Utilities has earned a Smart Energy Provider designation from the American Public Power Association.

The designation recognizes a commitment to and proficiency in energy efficiency, distributed generation, and environmental initiatives. Erin Miller, Vice President of Programs and Sustainability at American Municipal Power, and Chair of the SEP Review Panel, presented the designations on October 28th in Louisville, Kentucky during the Association’s annual conference.

The SEP designation lasts for three years. Waupun Utilities joins more than 100 public power utilities nationwide that hold the SEP designation.



Picture courtesy of the Waupun Utilities website