Hundreds of public power leaders from across the country gathered in Washington, D.C., in late February for the annual Legislative Rally organized by the American Public Power Association (APPA). Fifty-five delegates representing 22 Wisconsin municipalities joined fellow mayors, alders, commissioners, general managers, and others for group meetings to educate federal lawmakers about public power’s policy priorities and the work their utilities do in the communities.

Meetings took place Feb. 27 and 28 in the congressional office buildings surrounding the U.S. Capitol. The group met separately with U.S. Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin, which provided an opportunity to specifically discuss a number of current issues, including ongoing supply chain challenges, permitting reform, and modernizing municipal bonds, among other topics. The House of Representatives was on recess at the time of the Rally, so participants met for 30 minutes in small groups with the staff from their Member of Congress.

“Lawmakers always enjoy hearing from their constituents, and the APPA Rally is a great opportunity to have focused discussions about issues that matter to municipal utilities,” said MEUW President and CEO Tim Heinrich. “Wisconsin always has an impressive showing, and the level of engagement makes a real difference in APPA’s efforts to influence legislators.”

APPA stages the rally every year to advocate for public power utilities and provide a forum to engage legislators and policymakers about topics important to municipal power companies. Wisconsin’s delegation — which also includes representatives of WPPi Energy and Great Lakes Utilities — is typically among the largest from any state to participate.

Aside from meetings with legislators and their staff, the Rally also features topical breakout sessions and the APPA Legislative and Regulatory Luncheon. This year’s program included a presentation by Jake Sherman, founder of Punchbowl News, who provided an entertaining, insider’s view of current happenings in D.C., as well as perspective about the 2024 Presidential election.

APPA President and CEO Scott Corwin moderated a discussion about strategies used to communicate with lawmakers. Joseph Owen, Senior Director of Government Affairs at WPPi Energy, was part of the three-person panel.

Continued on page 2
Continued from page 1

He emphasized the challenges Wisconsin utilities are having “procuring distribution transformers — some of the delays that those are causing in the communities that we serve — is really important for members of Congress to hear.”

Owen also noted, “We always like to say that some of the most effective lobbyists are local elected officials. [Their voices are] impactful, and I think that resonates really well with elected officials, whether they’re state or federal.”


Scenes from this year’s APPA Rally

Public power leaders from Wisconsin met with both of the state’s senators while in D.C. for the APPA Rally. (1) Sen. Ron Johnson (R) and (2) Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D) each posed for photos with the group; (3) Sturgeon Bay Utilities General Manager and WPPI Energy Board Chair Jim Stawicki (standing at right) shared key messages and answered questions from Sen. Baldwin. (4) WPPI Energy’s Joseph Owen was part of a panel discussion addressing strategies used to communicate with lawmakers. (5) Leaders from Clintonville, Kaukauna, New London, Shawano, and Sturgeon Bay met with staff from Rep. Mike Gallagher’s office.

2024 APPA Rally

Wisconsin Delegation

| Cedarburg | Menasha |
| Clintonville | New Glarus |
| Cuba City | New Holstein |
| Evansville | New London |
| Hartford | Shawano |
| Hustisford | Slinger |
| Jefferson | Stoughton |
| Kaukauna | Sturgeon Bay |
| Lodi | Sun Prairie |
| Manitowoc | Two Rivers |
| Marshfield | Waupun |

MEUW Director of Legislative and Regulatory Relations Tyler Vorpael snapped this selfie as the Wisconsin delegation posed for a group photo on the steps of the U.S. Capitol building.
Rare February tornado prompts mutual aid for Evansville

The first-ever February tornado in Wisconsin caused significant damage in and around Evansville on the evening of Feb. 15. The storm — which the National Weather Service later confirmed to be an EF-2 tornado — brought down an ATC transmission pole, knocking out service to all of the approximately 4,500 municipal electric customers in Evansville. MEUW coordinated mutual aid crews from Lodi, New Glarus, Richland Center, Stoughton, Sun Prairie, Waunakee, and Vanguard Electric to help Evansville Water and Light employees respond to the emergency. Crews helped repair several broken poles throughout the community, bringing most customers back in service within 10 hours of the storm. All of the crews from different municipalities worked together seamlessly and with no accidents.

MEUW is proud to help our member utilities when it’s necessary to request mutual aid. Recent events in Evansville are a reminder that preparing for a mutual aid event will make it easier when that time comes. The Mutual Aid Community Resource Guide is available exclusively to MEUW members and can be accessed here (member login is required).

The Resource Guide was developed a couple of years ago based on lessons learned and feedback from a large mutual aid event in 2019. It includes various tools necessary for a well-coordinated mutual aid response, including roles and responsibilities, key contacts, and pre-planning details for critical facilities, lodging, and meals. The guidebook is a Microsoft Excel document with multiple tabs, which allows for everything to be kept in a single location and makes it easy to update. The first page of the Resource Guide has a comprehensive Table of Contents that is linked to each form for quick access, and each tab is formatted for simplified printing.

One call to MEUW’s Mutual Aid Hotline — 1-844-MEUW-911 —triggers an immediate response to organize resources and support a member utility’s recovery.

Inside 725 Insights from the MEUW Office

The first Friday of March is set aside by the “calendar people” as the day to observe Employee Appreciation Day. While it’s one of the lesser-known holidays and doesn’t get the same attention as National Cheese Curd Day (Oct. 15), I wanted to use the occasion to publicly recognize the people who keep MEUW going. There are 12 of us who are employed by MEUW. Collectively, we have a total of nearly 75 years of service to the organization.

In the early days of MEUW, there were no employees, of course. This 95-year-old trade association was established by a group of volunteers who nurtured MEUW. In fact, it wasn’t until 1965 (when MEUW was then 37 years old) before the membership authorized the hiring of a part-time staffer who was paid $100 per month.

We’ve come a long way since then. Through the years, the one constant has been the people — whether volunteers or employees, it’s the people who have enabled MEUW to achieve longevity.

Today’s MEUW staff is composed of people who bring a wide variety of backgrounds, expertise, and personality to serve our member utilities. Their day-to-day efforts don’t often get celebrated. Please join me in thanking them for the work they do to help MEUW to unify and strengthen public power in Wisconsin.

You can reach MEUW’s President and CEO Tim Heinrich by email at theinrich@meuw.org or by phone at (608) 478-0998

Mike Czuprynko – September 2016
Steve Eller – July 2013
Don Harnisch – December 2022
Tim Heinrich – April 2018
Jeff Helgestad – August 2009
Brian Johnson – July 2021
Randy Larson – August 2018
Patrick Murphy – November 2020
Andrew Paulson – October 2013
Tyler Vorpagel – June 2022
Sean Wall – November 2014
Sharon Wolf – March 2023
Municipal employees recognized for professional development milestones

Another group of municipal employees was recognized at the Feb. 14 Fundamentals of Utility Management training class held in Mauston. These workers achieved milestones in their professional development journeys by attending MEUW training sessions.

Two employees attending the recent Utility Planning and Risk Management class have now satisfied the requirements to be considered “graduates” of the legacy Management Training Program that’s been offered by MEUW since 2004. Shannon Statz (Stoughton Utilities) is a full graduate of the program, and Theresa Ulam (Lake Mills Light and Water) was recognized for participating in the training series.

In addition, five individuals were honored as the first “class” to graduate from MEUW’s four-part Fundamentals of Utility Management Training series that was launched in 2023. These courses are designed specifically for public power utility employees and leaders, with an emphasis on detailing the “why” behind each of the discussion areas. Training is designed for municipal workers of all skill levels and backgrounds and is intended as a foundation for understanding the benefits of public power. Those recognized for completing the new series are Michael Avanz (Kaukauna Utilities), Cody Conrad (Sun Prairie Utilities), Jordan Fritche (Fennimore Municipal Utilities), Cora Seibt (Sun Prairie Utilities), and Marc Stephanie (New Holstein Utilities).

Course offerings in the Fundamentals series will start a new rotation mid-year, with Communications & Project Management to be held on June 5. Full details about all of the courses offered through MEUW’s professional development programming are available at meuw.org/pdp.

Regulatory Roundup

Turnover among PSC Commissioners highlights the power of one

The makeup atop the three-person Public Service Commission (PSC) has changed almost completely since Jan. 1. The unexpected resignation of Chair Rebecca Cameron Valcq and the State Senate’s rejection of acting Commissioner Tyler Huebner’s appointment in mid-January left two seats open. Meanwhile, Summer Strand, who first began serving in March 2023, was appointed by the Governor to become Chair and Kristy Nieto, a Division Administrator on staff at PSC, was named acting Commissioner to complete a one-year term.

Nieto’s previous involvement in several active dockets has led to her recusal from a number of pending cases. With the third seat vacant until Gov. Evers names a new acting Commissioner, decision authority rests exclusively with Chair Strand for some cases.

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MEUW Community Spotlight

The regular LIVE LINES feature focusing on the history and unique qualities of municipal electric utilities will return next month.

An archive of past issues of LIVE LINES is available at www.issuu.com/meuw
Recent seminar helped to showcase “Everything Solar”

A fter hearing feedback from member utilities, MEUW recently hosted a new seminar designed to address all things — including technical and operational issues — related to the fast-growing installation of solar. Nearly 40 participants in the seminar, held Feb. 29 and March 1 in Madison, learned about “Everything Solar,” including key factors involved in solar energy systems and configurations, applicable standards and rules, key facets of implementation, and impacts on operations and revenue.

Dave Krause, P.E., from Electric Power Systems International (EPS) shared his extensive knowledge and experience with the group, addressing individual questions and scenarios. He covered distributed energy resources (DER), inverter-based resources (IBR), and battery energy storage systems (BESS), as well as different rate and purchased power components.

Michael Domke, Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) presented on protections in place for consumers considering solar implementations. He also shared common solar complaint concerns, the associated mediation process, and the services DATCP offers. Members of the Public Service Commission (PSC) staff also joined to discuss PSC 119, the administrative rule for interconnecting customer-owned generation of 15 megawatts or less to the utility grid. They shared proposed changes to this rule that are currently being considered, including increases in fees utilities can charge solar applicants and a new section classifying energy-storage systems as distributed generation facilities.

Following the two-day class, participants reported a better understanding of solar energy systems and feeling much more prepared to work with solar implementations. Portions of the training were recorded and will be made available for on-demand viewing. Please watch for full details.

Did you know?

Wisconsin generates 2.32% of its electricity with solar, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association through the fourth quarter of 2023. The Badger State is second in the nation, behind only Minnesota which generates 3.71%.

Members’ NEWS

Kurt Meier has been promoted to Superintendent for Vanguard Electric, which services municipal electric utilities in Black Earth and Mazomanie. He began working at Vanguard in 2012 as an Apprentice, and was promoted to Lead Lineman in 2019. Kurt enjoys spending time with his wife and two-year-old daughter and working on the family farm in his spare time.

Bill Menting joined Kaukauna Utilities March 4 as a Project Engineer. He previously held roles at Appleton Coated Locks Mill (now Midwest Papers Group Locks Mill), as well as the Electrical Distribution Department Manager role at Menasha Utilities.

Send us your news! Tell MEUW about new hires, promotions, retirements, honors, and awards, so those tidbits can be shared in MEUW member communications. Simply send an email to news@meuw.org to share your news.

MEUW Board of Directors elections coming soon

Nominations for interested individuals to serve on the association’s Board of Directors for a two-year term will be accepted beginning March 20. This year’s election will be for Directors and Alternate Directors in even-numbered districts. Additional information is available at meuw.org/elections.
Annual Conference topics focus on “the future”

Municipal leaders and energy industry enthusiasts will gather in Marshfield for MEUW’s Annual Conference this year. The meeting is planned for May 15–17 and will feature discussions on a wide variety of topics impacting public power at both the state and national levels. (This is the 94th meeting MEUW has hosted since its founding in 1928; the conference was not held in 2020 due to the pandemic.)

The annual gathering provides time for networking, education, and information-sharing among municipal utility leaders and industry partners from around the state. The program will offer insights into the future of the electric utility industry, including cybersecurity. The program is structured to enable every attendee to get the most out of their time.

- General sessions bring everyone together on broader issues.
- Breakout sessions dive deeper into key issues facing municipal utilities.
- Built-in time for peer roundtable discussions provide for targeted learning about current topics of interest.
- Pre- and post-conference receptions and networking breaks allow attendees the chance to make and renew connections.

This year’s conference will include a scramble-style golf outing on Wednesday, May 15, at the RiverEdge Golf Course in Marshfield. Golf check-in will begin at 9:00 a.m.

As the host utility, Marshfield Utilities will welcome attendees for a tour of its facilities, which were completely rebuilt in 2022 and now feature a modern office space and 55,000-square-foot garage and warehouse facility. The Welcome Reception, including axe-throwing and competitive cornhole, will take place at the Marshfield Utilities building, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

The main program on Thursday, May 16 (including the luncheon Awards Ceremony) will be held at Hotel Marshfield, which is also the recommended lodging location for the conference. Reservations at Hotel Marshfield are currently being accepted. Conference registration will open April 1.

Nominate individuals for recognition at Annual Conference

Each year, MEUW honors utility leaders and elected officials at a special awards ceremony held in conjunction with the Annual Conference. The association is currently accepting nominations to honor individuals in a variety of categories.

MEUW is introducing two new award categories in 2024, including one recognizing exemplary service and achievement by a municipal utility employee and another honoring individuals with fewer than eight years of public power service, designed to recognize emerging leaders. A full description of each award and the specific criteria is available here.

The MEUW Awards Committee reviews all nominations. The deadline to submit nominations is Friday, March 29.
Lawmakers in Madison wrapped up a tumultuous winter session in late February. They left behind a trail of unresolved issues, notably concerning redistricting problems flagged by the Supreme Court prior to the holiday season. Despite initial disagreements, the governor’s redistricting map eventually secured approval, albeit with Democrats registering their dissenting votes. This development sets the stage for potentially more competitive districts, and a number of incumbents being paired together in the forthcoming elections, although the Republican majority is anticipated to remain intact in both houses.

There were notable wins for municipal utilities in the legislature. MEUW’s work with the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association and, to a lesser extent, the state’s investor-owned utilities (IOUs), secured passage of a bill that allows utility vehicles to display green warning beacons when restoring power. There has also been considerable progress toward passing legislation to allow the retail sale of energy for charging electric vehicles — a step that will open Wisconsin companies’ ability to apply for grants through the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. The legislation requires retailers to purchase the electricity from incumbent utilities and would enable municipal utilities to choose whether to own and operate charging stations. Wisconsin was one of two states (Nebraska being the other) that still need to pass legislation to open up the NEVI funds. On their last day in session, the Assembly passed the legislation, with an amendment, which will likely be adopted by the state senate when they meet for their final session day in March.

Debate also continues on critical issues such as community solar initiatives and a right-of-first-refusal (ROFR) for utility transmission projects. We continue to work with a coalition of utility providers to aggressively advocate for incumbent transmission facility owners to have the right to construct, own, and maintain a transmission facility that has been approved for construction in the Mid-continent Independent System Operator (MISO) transmission plan and that connects to transmission facilities owned by that incumbent transmission facility owner. Our municipal utilities are in a unique position on this legislation because WPPI Energy — the state’s largest joint action agency — is about a 10% owner of ATC, while a number of public power companies are fractional owners of ATC. While the State Assembly passed the ROFR legislation on a voice vote, it is unlikely to be taken up by the Senate.

In the legislative pipeline, a proposed bill mandating agriculture impact statements for solar installations larger than 15 megawatts on prime farmland is currently under consideration. While the proposal won’t pass this session, its existence signifies a crucial step toward balancing environmental concerns with renewable energy initiatives.

Overall, while some progress has been made, there’s a prevailing sentiment of limited advancement amidst ongoing discussions and legislative activity in Wisconsin. Regardless of the pace, MEUW will continue to be the voice of community-owned utilities in our state and we’ll navigate the legislative challenges as a unified group.

Tyler Vorpagel is MEUW’s Director of Legislative and Regulatory Relations. He can be reached at tvorpagel@meuw.org

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Upfront planning is essential for “public construction”

By Richard Heinemann
Boardman & Clark

As public entities, municipally-owned electric utilities are subject to Wisconsin’s public bidding laws. While this is not news to MEUW members, today’s construction environment — featuring continually rising costs and changing project timetables due to equipment shortages and contractor demand — represents a good time to revisit the nuts and bolts of public construction.

Wis. Stat. §196.49 requires municipal utilities to obtain authorization from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) before undertaking construction projects above utility-specific cost thresholds (adjusted on May 1 of each even-numbered year). In some limited instances, PSCW staff may allow the procurement process for certain pieces of critical equipment to begin prior to obtaining the required certificate of authority (CA).

Public bidding requirements apply to public construction projects that exceed an estimated cost of $25,000 (Wis. Stat. §62.15). The term “public construction” means improvements that require a combination of materials, supplies and labor — such as erecting a building or structure; constructing a distribution or collection system; or installing a fixture.

Public construction does not include contracts for consulting, engineering, or legal services; neither does it include maintenance, equipment that will not become a fixture, or inventory that is not dedicated to a project. With good planning, working with vendors for a public construction project may provide opportunities to procure extra pieces of equipment with long lead times (such as transformers and breakers) for “inventory” that can be used later, and which do not need to be bid.

Exceptions to public bidding requirements also include work done directly by municipal personnel or by another utility or local government, or repair or reconstruction work that is necessary to address a public emergency, like a collapsed water main or failed transformer. Work that requires use of a patented article, material or processes, in whole or in part, may also be done without following bid requirements, if you furnish the patented item at a reasonable and stated price or obtain consent prior to advertising.

If your project must go out for bid, the statutes lay out requirements for bid advertising and bid opening. Major projects typically require assistance from an outside engineering resource.

The main focus should be on preparing the bid package. Some elements of the bid package are required to ensure completion of the contract and payment of subcontractors and materials. These include bid bonds and (for projects that exceed $148,000 in cost) payment and performance bonds with sureties (Wis. Stat. §779.14 (1m)(d)). Some vendors will push the envelope on the requirements. Objections from potential bidders must be rejected and bid responses without them should be deemed incomplete.

Using a detailed pre-qualification application can help screen out potential respondents that do not have the experience, financial wherewithal, equipment, requisite training, or competence needed to successfully complete your project. While the statutes do allow qualification at the time of bid review, pre-qualification allows for obtaining a wide range of pertinent and confidential information from the vendor. This can be useful because the law permits municipal entities to exercise reasonable discretion in rejecting a low bidder as not responsible or responsive.

The construction contract is a critical part of the bid process, establishing the duties and relationship between the owner and the contractor. The engineer is not a party to the construction contract and is not bound by it. For that reason, you should be sure to have a separate contract with your outside engineering resource that is consistent with the construction contract and that clarifies the scope of respective responsibilities of the engineer and contractor. It is important to ensure the two contracts are appropriately intertwined.

Care must also be given to include detailed plans and specs. The contractor is entitled to rely on these in preparing bids, and unclear or ambiguous plans and specifications will inevitably cause costly delays and change orders down the road. Each contract should also include provisions for contractor performance such as performance standards and times; guarantees and warranties; consequences of delays; treatment of nonconforming work; and allowable retainage.

You should be prepared for pushback. Even carefully drafted contract forms may be greeted by bid awardees with requests for modification, particularly when qualified bidders are in short supply. Be sure to engage an attorney because negotiating with bidders is not permitted.

Time and attention upfront to preparing a comprehensive bid package will go a long way to ensuring project success. In the end, there is no substitute for good project management. Stay informed, establish clear expectations and communication protocols, address issues promptly, and do whatever is necessary to meet the goals of your project.

- Attorney Richard Heinemann is General Counsel for MEUW.
Watt-Hour Workshop set for late March in Green Bay

The Watt-Hour Metering Workshop — a staple of the MEUW training calendar for decades — will be held at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) in Green Bay March 25–28.

The regular session helps utility workers stay on top of what’s happening in the industry and explore the latest technology through practical, hands-on training. This year’s workshop is spread over four days and features discussions about approved work practices and techniques for verifying and identifying metering inaccuracies. The workshop includes a small trade show where attendees will be able to engage with metering equipment suppliers.

Details, including the full workshop schedule and registration information, are available at [MEUW.org](http://www.MEUW.org). Registration options allow participants to attend all or a portion of the workshop.

April 3 leadership training class will focus on consistency

MEUW’s three-part Municipal Utility Leadership Certificate Program continues with another class next month. “Leading with Consistency” will be offered as part of the new program focusing on critical competencies identified for municipal utility leaders. MEUW revamped its professional development programming for 2023.

The one-day leadership development course focuses on why consistency is essential to being an effective utility leader. The course will be held Wednesday, April 3, at the Lodge at Mauston. Participants will learn practical tactics they can apply to become a consistent leader and learn how consistency can inspire people to work toward a common goal. Click [here](http://example.com) for more details.

Make plans to join one of the seven Roundtable sessions happening this spring

Member utilities will gather to exchange ideas and learn from one another about leading practices, service trends, and emerging issues affecting municipal electric utility customers. Everyone is welcome!

A member of MEUW’s Accounting and Customer Service Committee moderates each session, which are sponsored by Focus on Energy. There is no cost to attend; lunch is provided.

The dates and locations are:

- Tues., March 12: Wisc. Rapids
- Tues., March 19: Cumberland
- Tues., March 26: Oconomowoc
- Thurs., March 28: Kaukauna
- Tues., April 9: Waunakee
- Wed., April 10: Wonewoc
- Tues., April 16: Evansville

Pre-registration is required. Sign up today at [meuw.org/csr](http://www.meuw.org/csr).

Overhead Hotline School planned for late April

MEUW is once again partnering with Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) to hold a three-day hands-on training session to enable lineworkers to fine-tune their skills on a number of critical overhead line procedures.

The workshop will take place both inside the classroom and on the pole field at CVTC’s Eau Claire campus on April 23, 24, and 25. Planned training topics include using drones to assess damage and maintenance needs; grounding; stringing wire with rope machines; splicing broken wire; and three-phase arm changeouts, among others.

Full details and registration information is available [here](http://example.com). The cost is $195 per person.

Start your week safely with MEUW safety reminder emails. Use the topics as discussion starters in meetings throughout the week. Keep safety top-of-mind — sign up to receive email safety reminders [here](http://example.com).
State’s largest solar facility now fully in service

The final set of solar panels at the Badger Hollow Solar Park have now entered service, signaling completion of Wisconsin’s largest solar farm. The long rows of panels cover parts of the villages of Montfort and Cobb in Iowa County, making it one of the largest in the Upper Midwest, with a total of 830,000 panels. The 300-megawatt project was completed in two phases, with half brought online in early January after the first phase was completed in late 2021.

The solar farm has 830,000 bifacial solar panels that follow the sun, providing power to an estimated 90,000 homes. Badger Hollow is jointly owned by three investor-owned utilities, We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service Corp., which are both subsidiaries of WEC Energy Group, own 200 MW of production at Badger Hollow. Madison Gas and Electric own 100 MW.

MISO warns of increased risk of reliability challenges

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) is warning reliability challenges have grown urgent as the nation’s power system grapples with a “hyper-complex risk environment.”

The grid operator that serves the Canadian province of Manitoba and 15 U.S. states (including Wisconsin), recently released an update of its Reliability Imperative report. MISO flagged several critical challenges facing the region. The risks, ranging from fleet changes to new complexities related to regulatory incentives and fuel assurances, have been rendered more complex by extreme weather events, load additions, and incremental load growth, the Feb. 22 report said.

“We have to face some hard realities,” wrote MISO CEO John Bear in the report. “Studies conducted by MISO and other entities indicate it is possible to reliably operate an electric system that has far fewer conventional power plants and far more zero-carbon resources than we have today. However, the transition that is underway to get [there] is posing material, adverse challenges to electric reliability,” he stressed.

In its report, MISO describes these challenges as a “hyper-complex risk environment,” a term coined by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) to describe evolving and interdependent risks. MISO noted, “There are urgent and complex challenges to electric system reliability in the region and elsewhere. This is not just MISO’s view; it is a well-documented conclusion throughout the electric industry.”

According to MISO, about 75% of the region’s total load is now served by utilities that have unveiled ambitious decarbonization and renewable goals. “Without question, utilities and states are making remarkable progress towards their goals. [MISO] carbon emissions have already declined more than 30% since 2005, and far greater reductions are expected going forward,” the report noted.

New Affiliate Members join MEUW

In 2022 MEUW’s Board of Directors amended the association’s By-laws to provide Affiliate Membership to any municipality and not-for-profit electric utility that does not qualify for full membership, but is interested in participating in MEUW’s programs and services.

In February, both Dairyland Power Cooperative (based in La Crosse) and Taylor Electric Cooperative (in Medford) signed up to become MEUW Affiliate Members, which enables them to take advantage of the benefits of belonging to MEUW.

Full details about different memberships in MEUW are available here.

MEUW helped to organize the annual Apparatus Workshop held at Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) in February. The two-day program showcases innovations available to help lineworkers work safer and more efficiently. Shown here, Scott Vergin with Energy Product Sales demonstrates the “Trip-Saver,” a recloser-type device that can be installed to isolate a portion of a line in an effort to limit the number of customers who lose power during outages.
Solar PV training courses offered as part of partnership

Focus on Energy is partnering with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) and regional technical colleges to provide a Photovoltaic (PV) Training Series package. The package consists of four MREA courses that allows participants to work through materials in preparation for the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) PV Associate exam, or any entry-level PV training, in a self-paced online format.

The online courses combine about 32 hours of training with a hands-on lab day. Students can work through recorded presentations and exercises at their own pace. Once the coursework is finished and all assignments receive a passing grade, a completion certificate is issued for each course. Students must first complete three online classes to be eligible to attend the hands-on, in-person, lab course. Courses offered are:

**Basic Photovoltaics (PV 101)** — Eight-hour course addresses the basics of solar electricity. (30 days to complete)

**PV Site Assessment (PV 201)** — Eight-hour course uses presentations, exercises, activities, and classroom discussion to demonstrate how to perform a residential PV site assessment, using a template created by the MREA. (30 days to complete)

**PV System Design (PV 202)** — 16-hour course teaches the step-by-step process of designing a PV system and energy production. (60 days to complete)

**PV Labs and Design Scenarios (PV 304)** — Eight-hour in-person lab course demonstrating PV system design principles and proper installation practices through the construction of two PV systems using a portable ground-level lab (no climbing).

Registration is open to 10 students in each location.

Total cost for this training opportunity is normally $788. However, thanks to scholarships offered by Focus on Energy, the cost is reduced to $350. To earn the NABCEP PV Associate Credential, students must successfully complete the 32 hours of online coursework and pass the NABCEP PV Associate Exam. The fee to take the exam ($150) is not included in the cost of the training course. MREA provides registration for the exam as the NABCEP Approved Registered Training Provider.

In addition, the three courses are approved by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services for the following licenses and (total) credit hours:

- 31.5 Commercial Electrical Inspector
- 31.5 Journeyman Electrician (including industrial and residential)
- 31.5 Registered Electrician
- 31.5 Master Electrician (including residential)
- 31.5 UDC-Electrical Inspector
- 27 Dwelling Contractor Qualifier

Participants must register for one of the following PV Training sessions by March 29. Each will include an in-person lab day after completion of online sessions. Focus training scholarships are limited to 10 participants at each of the following training sites:

- May 3: Pewaukee
- May 10: Eau Claire
- May 17: Green Bay
- May 31: Madison

Visit [https://focusonenergy.com/events-training](https://focusonenergy.com/events-training) to learn more.

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Resources available to help utility customers make good choices about solar

As the popularity of residential solar installations has increased, so have instances of aggressive salespeople and substandard solar installations. The state’s Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), provides a tip sheet to raise awareness of rooftop solar, including how to choose a qualified and reliable contractor. The information is available on DATCP’s website under [Solar Power Buying Tips](https://datcp.wi.gov/), and the document can also be downloaded as a PDF.

In the past, some MEUW members have reported issues with solar installers misrepresenting their relationship with the local utility and providing inaccurate information to customers. The DATCP tip sheet is designed to provide the facts and help utility customers. DATCP also provides a [Consumer Complaint Form](https://datcp.wi.gov/) to enable utility customers to register complaints about negligent solar installers.
Calendar of Events

March 6  Foreman’s Roundtable — Mauston
March 12  CS* Roundtable — Wisconsin Rapids
March 14  Underground Locating — Marshfield
March 19  Underground Locating — Two Rivers
March 19  CS* Roundtable — Cumberland
March 25-28  Watt-Hour Metering Workshop — Green Bay
March 26  CS* Roundtable — Oconomowoc
March 28  CS* Roundtable — Kaukauna
April 2  Monthly Safety Call — 7:15 a.m.
April 3  Municipal Utility Leadership Program: Leading with Consistency — Mauston
April 9  CS* Roundtable — Waunakee
April 10  CS* Roundtable — Wonenoc
April 16  CS* Roundtable — Evansville
April 20-25  Overhead Workshop — Eau Claire
May 7  Monthly Safety Call — 7:15 a.m.
May 15-17  94th Annual Conference — Marshfield
May 17  MEUW Board of Directors and Annual Membership Meeting — Marshfield
June 4  Monthly Safety Call — 7:15 a.m.
June 5  Fundamentals of Utility Management: Communications & Project Management — Mauston

* Customer Service

Plymouth Utilities — Apprentice/Journeyman Lineman
Full job description here. First review will be March 18 and remain open until filled.

New positions are added to the “Employment” tab on MEUW.org on a regular basis — check them out here.

When your utility is hiring, be sure to email the job posting to office@meuw.org

Spring Forward!

Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 10, at 2 a.m.
Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour.

NOTICE: MEUW uses Mailchimp to distribute Live Lines and MEUW Weekly. In an effort to outsmart spammers, some email servers are known to mark messages sent using Mailchimp as “spam” or “junk.” The best way to ensure you don’t miss MEUW communications is to confirm your email settings are enabled to receive messages from meuw.org.