

# Wisconsin's Municipal Electric Utilities



**Public Power and MEUW Overview**  
*August 2025*

# Municipal Utilities = PUBLIC POWER

- Owned by the municipal corporation; governed by a “utility commission” or the city council/village board
- Count on MEUW for services — safety, education, news
- Retail services regulated by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
- Wholesale transactions (i.e., power contracts) regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Municipal joint-action agencies provide power supply and other services to their member utilities

# Public Power in Wisconsin



11

Percentage of Wisconsin electricity delivered by municipal utilities



23.3

Millions of dollars in direct support provided to communities



81

Number of Wisconsin communities that own and operate an electric utility



3,231

Average population of communities served by a municipal electric utility

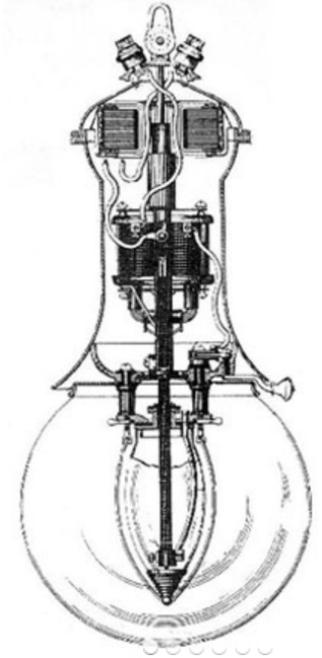


43

Number of Wisconsin counties (out of 72) that are home to a municipal utility

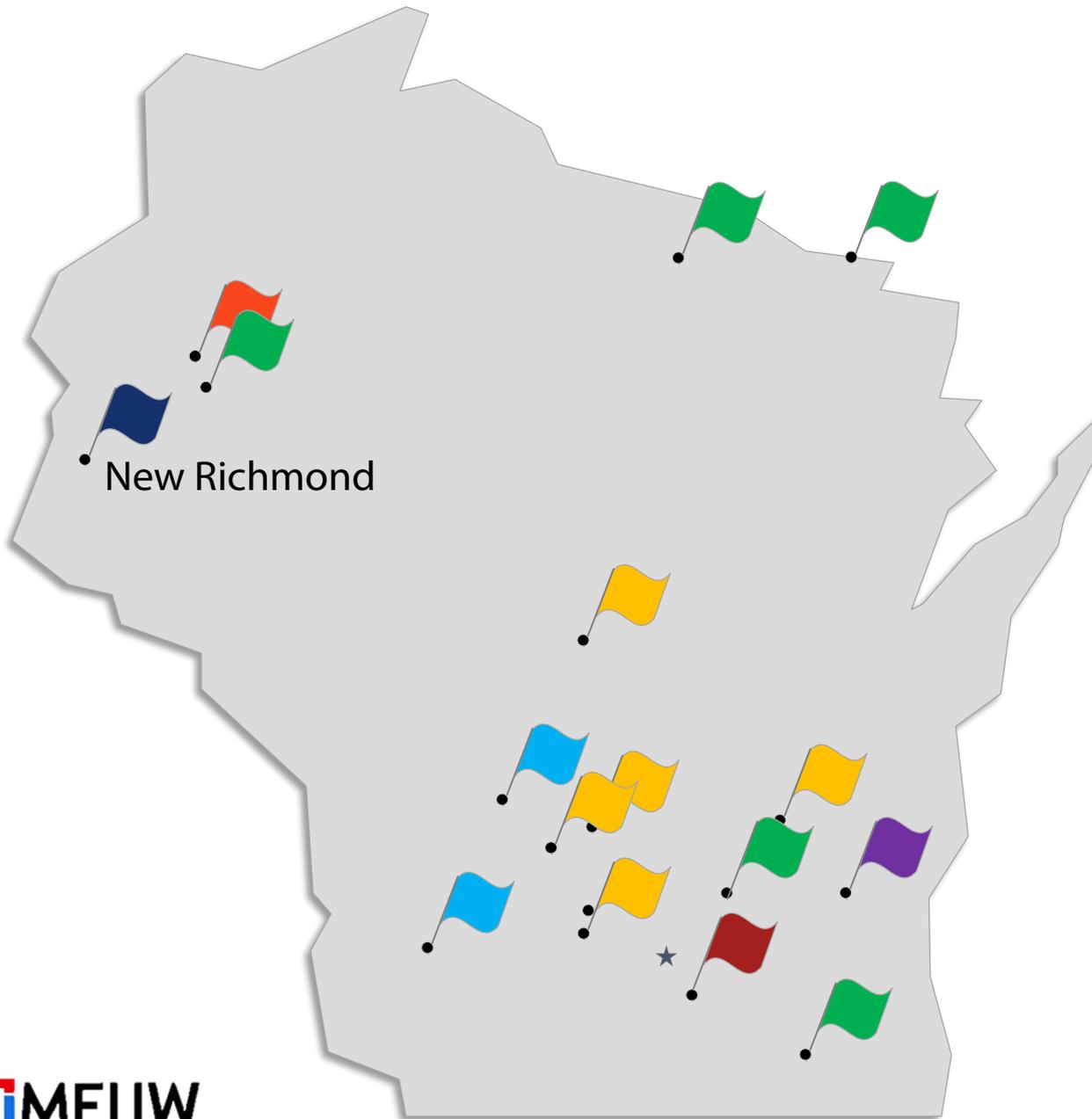
# Origins of Public Power

- Late 1800s – Remote parts of country (including in Wisconsin) were not going to generate enough revenue for investor-owned utilities
- Local leaders were not content to wait – economic development opportunities
- Formed own electric utility to serve community
  - Wisconsin's first was in New Richmond, 1890
  - More than 50 in Wisconsin by 1920
  - Today, >80% are more than century old

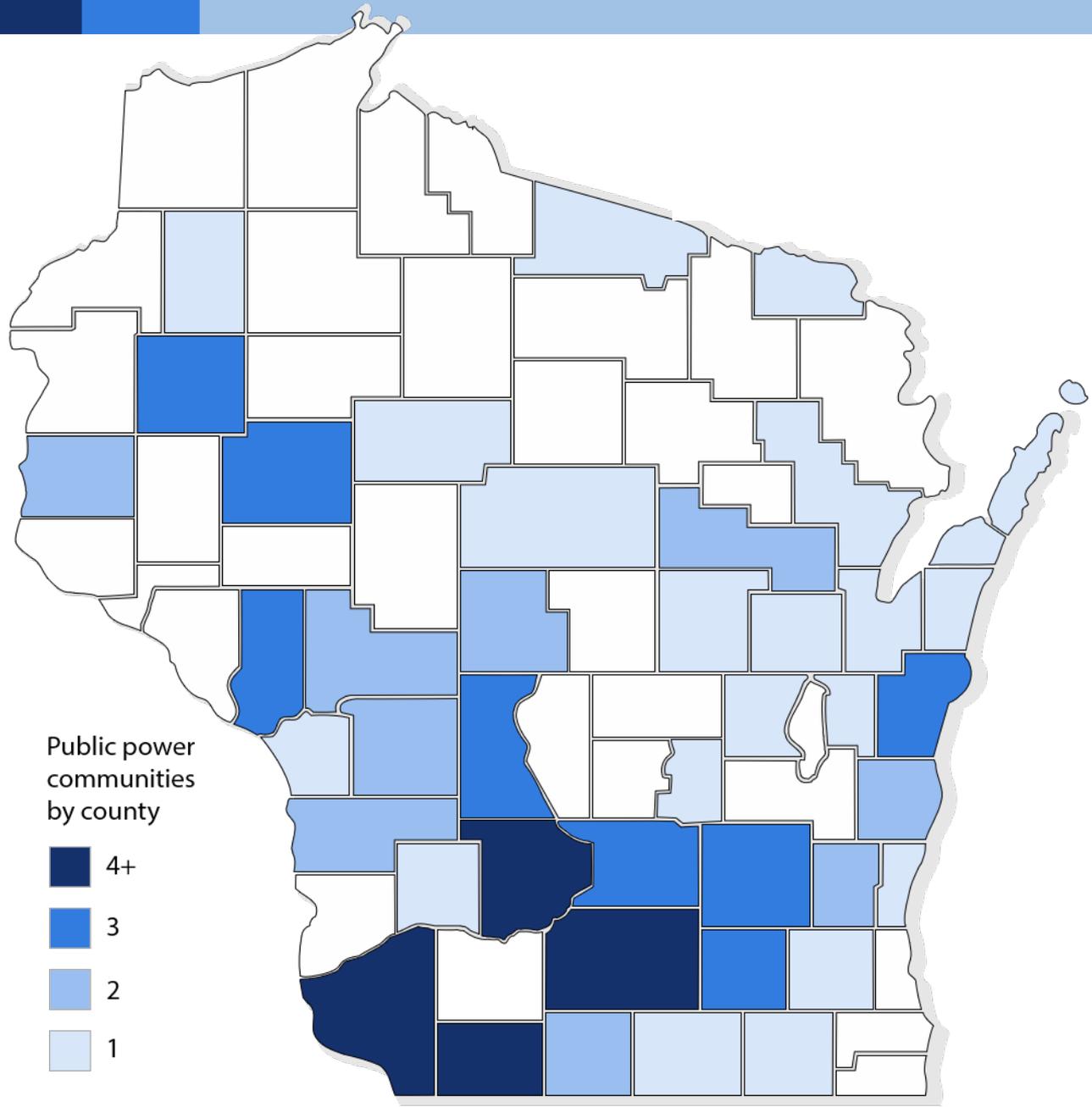
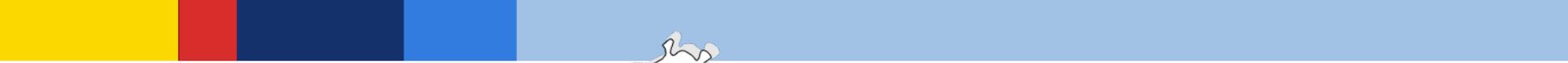


# Growth of Wisconsin's Public Power Utilities 1890-1900

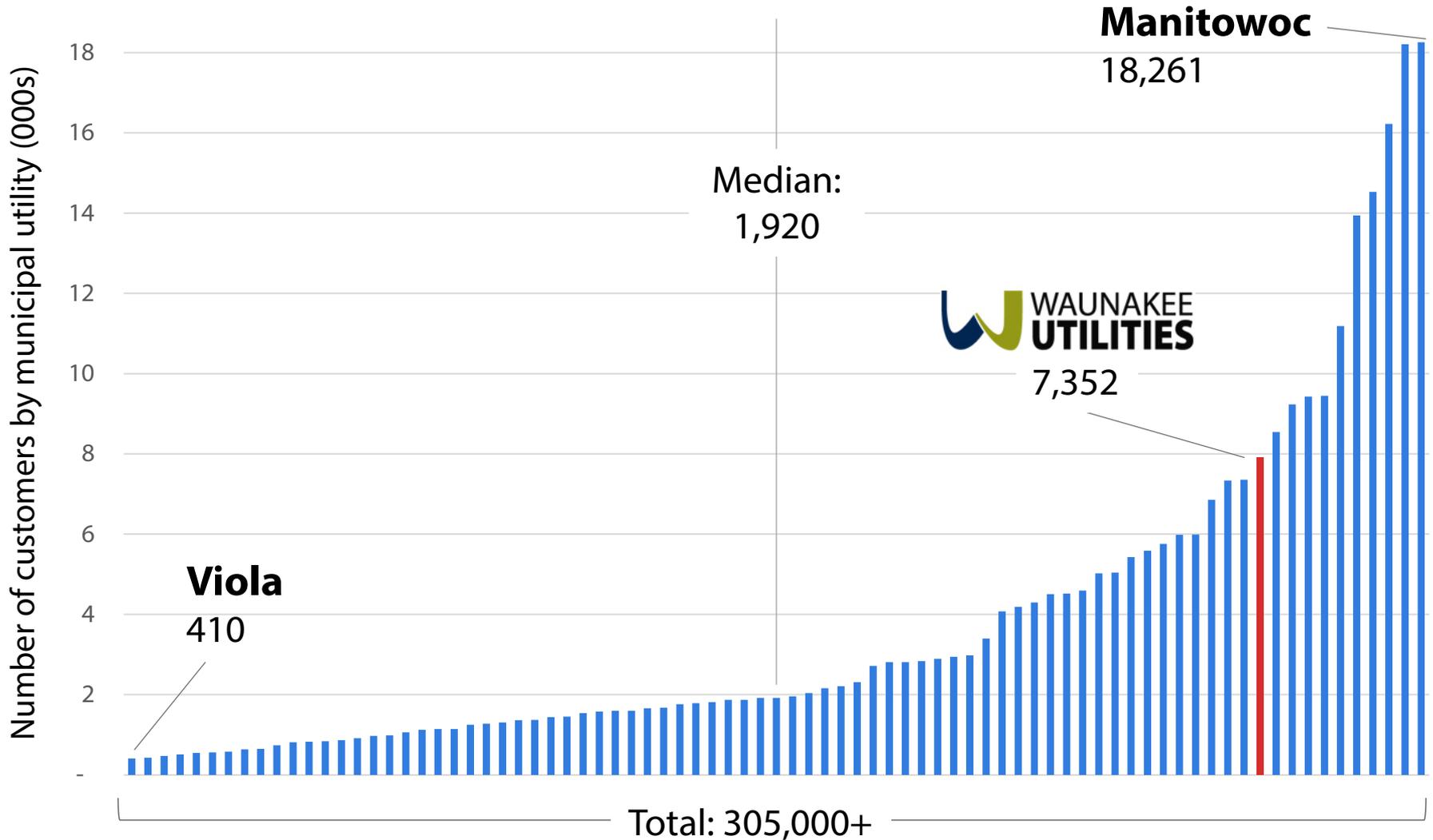
*16 municipalities  
within 10 years*



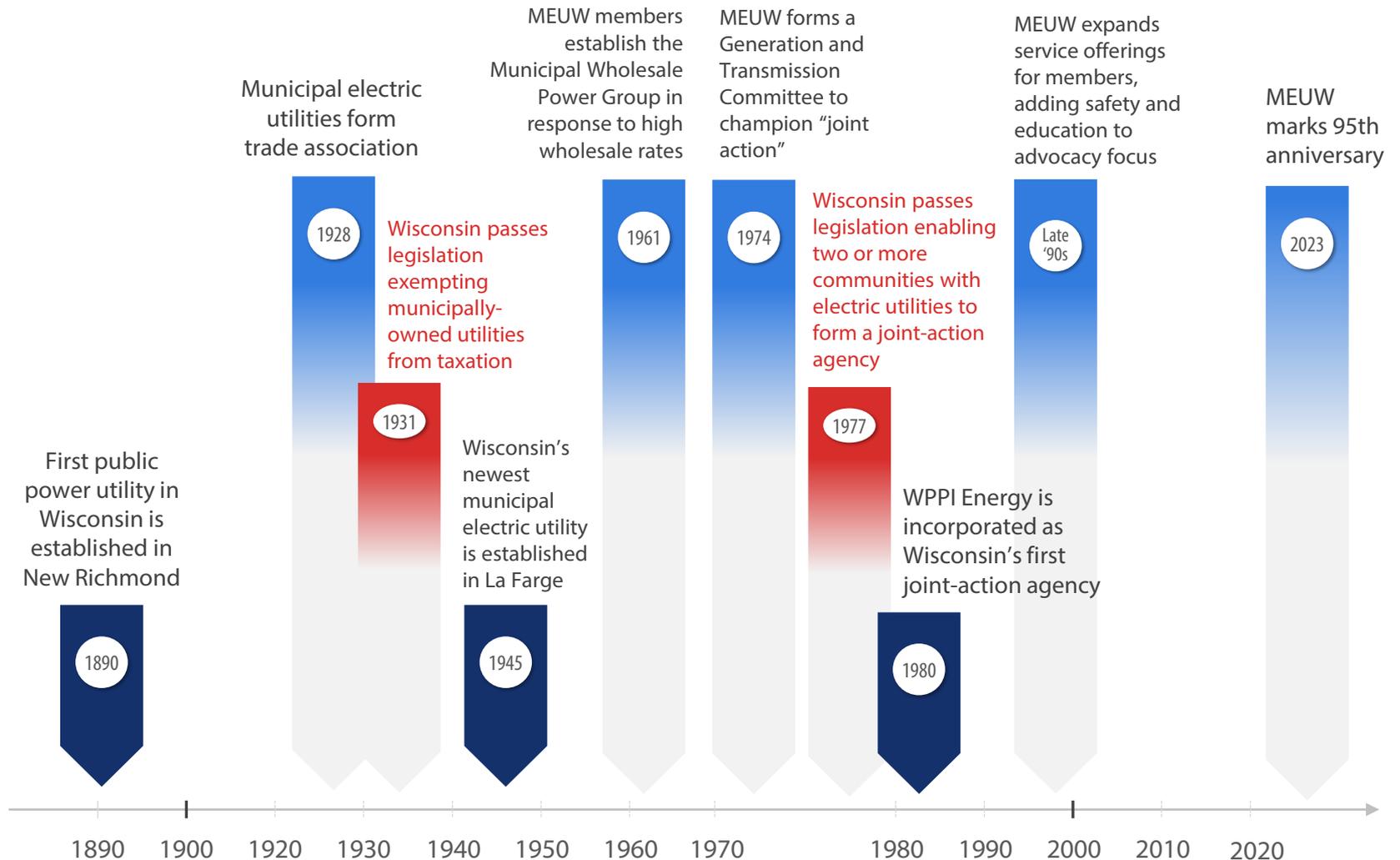
- 1890 (Original)
- 1891 ■ +1
- 1894 ■ +5
- 1895 ■ +1
- 1897 ■ +1
- 1898 ■ +5
- 1899 ■ +2



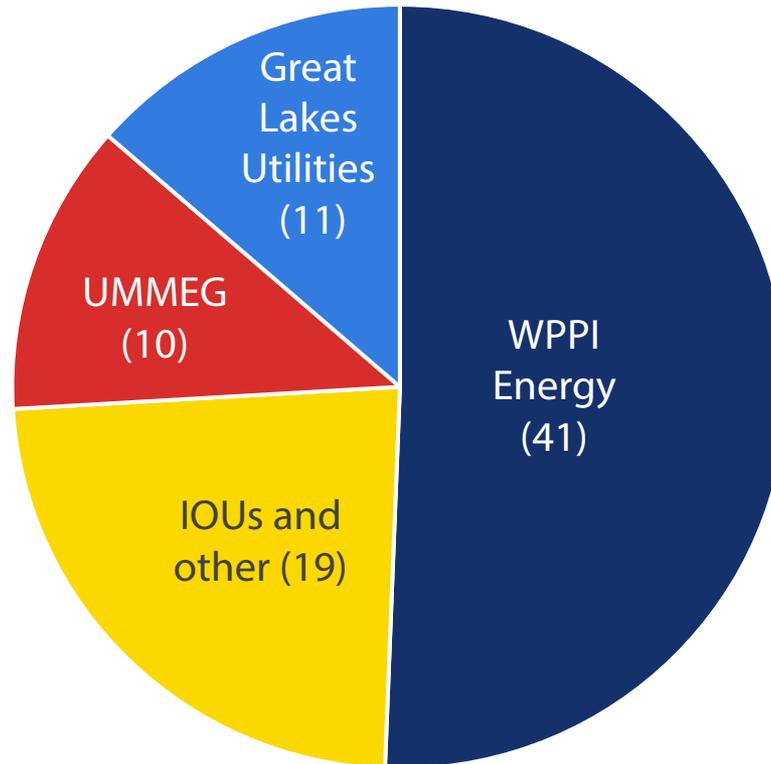
# Public Power Customers in Wisconsin



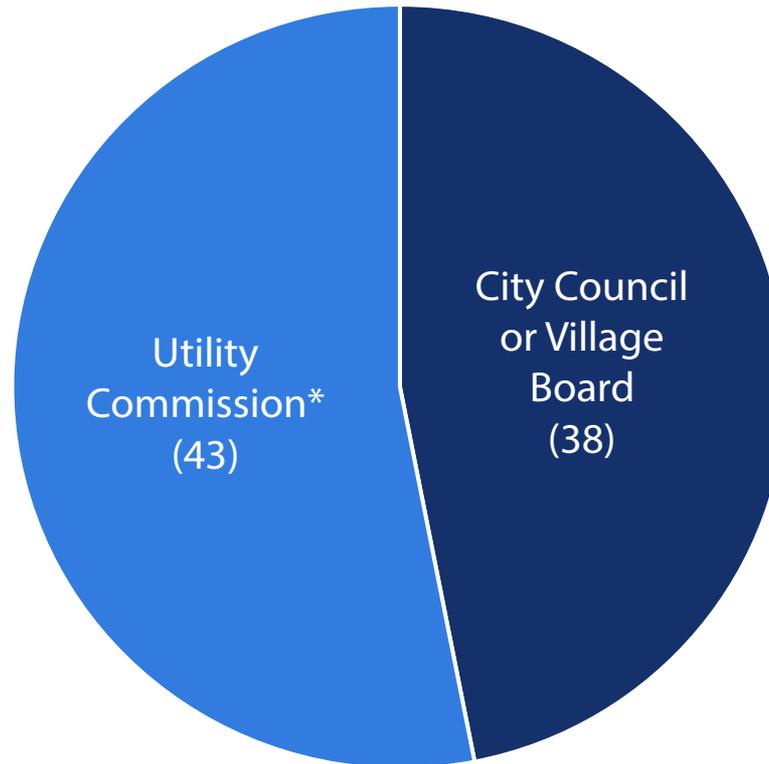
# Brief History of Public Power in Wisconsin



# Wisconsin municipal utilities' wholesale power suppliers



# Wisconsin municipal utilities' governance model



# Public Power Advantages



Locally Controlled

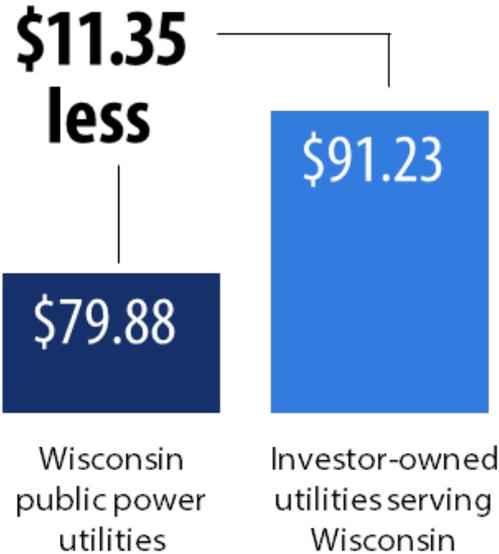


Not-for-Profit

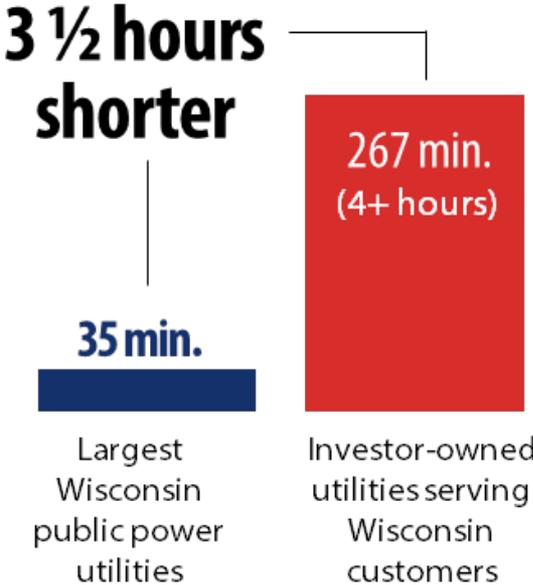


Exceptionally Reliable

## Average residential monthly electric bill<sup>1</sup>



## Average annual outage time for electric customers<sup>2</sup>



(1) Bill data is based on comparison of December 2022 bills from 94 municipal and investor-owned utility companies regulated by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.

(2) Source: Energy Information Administration, 2021 (public power data includes only the 22 largest municipal electric utilities that are required to report).

# About MEUW



*August 2025*

# About MEUW

- Statewide trade association; formed in 1928
  - Mission: Unify and strengthen community-owned utilities
  - Affiliated with American Public Power Association
- Support all of Wisconsin's municipal electric utilities
  - Safety training and education
  - Mutual aid coordination
  - Advocacy
  - Leadership and management training
  - Issues education and collaboration
- Office in Sun Prairie; 12-person staff across state
- 19-member statewide Board of Directors

# Actively Engaging with MEUW Provides Opportunities

- In addition to safety, advocacy, and training:
  - Networking with other utility leaders, forming professional relationships and contacts
  - Talking with and hearing from subject matter experts
  - Professional development for you and your staff
  - Clearer understanding of issues and topics impacting municipal utilities and how to influence them
  - Access to data and insights from other utility operations
  - Direct access to more than 100 Associate Members representing utility product and service providers

# Why Public Power Engagement and Advocacy Matter



## UNPRECEDENTED CHANGE

The threat of a harmful legislative or regulatory outcome in this changing utility landscape presents significant financial and operational risk to municipal utilities.

## LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

Too many influential people don't even know public power exists, let alone that municipal utilities operate as not-for-profit, locally-controlled businesses, and without taxpayer dollars.



## BIG MONEY INFLUENCE

Unlike municipal utilities, larger and more powerful entities have big budgets and flex their muscles to influence lawmakers and tell their story.

## BECOMING MORE KNOWN



Raising awareness of public power and the affordable, highly reliable service municipal utility customers receive fosters more informed legislative decision-making.

## TAKING PRIDE IN WHAT WE DO

Celebrating what makes municipal utilities unique is a strategic step to help protect the future of the public power business model.



## WE ALL WIN!



Drawing attention and being "Proudly Public Power" will make a difference for your community and municipal utility customers.

# Why Public Power Engagement and Advocacy Matter

- **It only takes one piece of unfavorable legislation to impact costs for all municipal utilities.**
- If the public power voice and interest isn't properly represented, there could be significant long-term costs.
- It's critical that we raise awareness among our legislators to help them understand the needs and interests of municipal utilities.

Joining together and presenting a unified voice to promote public power's interests to lawmakers.

# Check out our website for information and events



[www.meuw.org](http://www.meuw.org)

**KEEPING 'EM SAFE**  
Our team provides training to 300+ municipal utility lineworkers statewide

**Events**  
13 Mar  
CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING  
9:00 AM to 11:30 AM CDT  
19 Mar  
FOREMAN'S ROUNDTABLE  
8:00 AM to 3:00 PM CDT  
19 Mar  
CREDIT & COLLECTIONS SEMINAR  
8:30 AM to 3:30 PM CDT  
2 Apr  
LEADING THROUGH COACHING

**Committed to Safety**  
Workplace safety is vitally important to municipal utilities. MEUW is committed to providing professional safety instruction and education. Communities all across Wisconsin take part in safety services offered by MEUW. And, in the true spirit of cooperation, MEUW members are invited to participate in the association's mutual aid program, providing disaster assistance to any member community in need of emergency support.  
[LEARN MORE >>](#)

**Advancing Public Power**  
We are the common voice of Wisconsin's community-owned electric power providers. Alongside our members and allies, we advocate for policies that help to advance the benefits of public power across the state. Together, Wisconsin's municipal utilities:  

- Strongly support Wisconsin's current approach to regulating utilities, which has proven highly effective for more than a century.
- Actively engage with Focus on Energy and help to promote energy efficiency.
- Support efforts to expand critical infrastructure and to continue modernizing the electric grid to meet changing customer expectations and adoption of electric vehicles and other beneficial electrification.
- Welcome new technologies like 5G to our communities, and we also prioritize equitable cost recovery, electric reliability, and employee

**Friends of Public Power**  
Representing municipal utilities with state and federal elected officials is a key service of MEUW.

## Contact us with questions or requests:

[office@meuw.org](mailto:office@meuw.org)  
(608) 837-2263



**MEUW**  
**LIVE Lines**  
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### Munis, co-ops network, learn together at EOCE 25

The annual Electric Operations Conference & Expo (EOCE) brings together municipal and electric cooperative employees from across Wisconsin, and this year's gathering — which took place Jan. 15–17 — drew nearly 500 utility attendees and exhibitors to the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Asked what they "liked" about the conference, those who responded to a post-event survey highlighted the opportunities for networking, the great tradeshow, and a very "well-balanced" set of topical presentations.

Attendees and exhibitors alike provided positive feedback on the event, with 92% of those who responded to a post-event survey saying they were "quite" or "extremely satisfied" with the conference, and 97% said they are "very" or "extremely likely" to attend next year.

The conference agenda offered something for everyone — municipal and cooperative leaders and employees of all experience levels and backgrounds — including a wide range of timely and relevant presentations. Wednesday's session included an appearance by Commissioner Marcus Hawkins of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC). Hawkins shared his background and focus areas, including regional grid reliability, wholesale electricity markets, and transmission planning.

Dave Krause, PE, a recognizable face and regular presenter at the conference, shared his insights about how utilities can improve their systems and also his "keys to better sleep," which included a recommendation to "cut, cut, cut, and cut some more trees." MEUW Director of Legislative and Regulatory Relations Tyler Vorpapel led a panel discussion about the importance of political advocacy, which included highlights from Rep. Rob Summerfield (R-Bloomer) who talked about how much lawmakers depend on feedback from their constituents, especially when considering controversial pieces of legislation.

Stuart Campbell, Director of Strategic Relations & Commercial Marketing with Irbay Utilities, reflected on hot topics within the utility industry, including load forecasts, impacts of supply chain time-

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PSC Chair reflects on eventful year  
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Help MEUW honor those who help public power thrive  
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Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin's mission is to **strengthen and unify community-owned utilities**. Since 1928, MEUW has been the trade association for Wisconsin's 81 public power communities and is affiliated with the American Public Power Association (APPA) — [www.publicpower.org](http://www.publicpower.org)

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