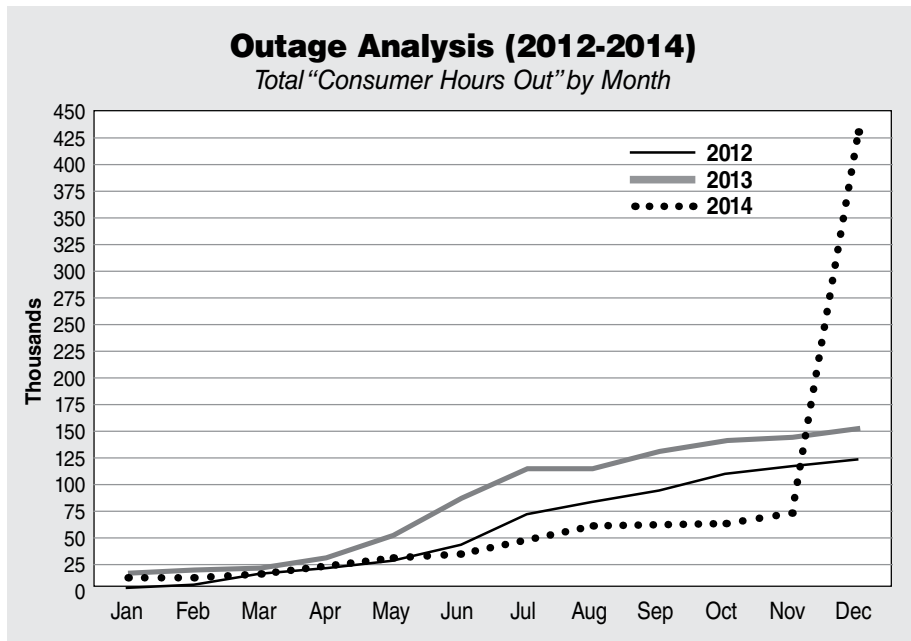


2014 System Reliability Report

Where WEC Is Coming From, And Where It's Going

Take a look at this.



"This single major storm event in December accounted for 38 percent of the total number of outages, and a whopping 85 percent of the total consumer hours out in 2014."

— from WEC's 2014 System Reliability Report

This graph, included in Washington Electric Cooperative's 2014 System Reliability Report to the Vermont Public Service Board, provides a history of the Co-op's annual outage records, accumulated month by month, for each of the past three years. And while this particular graph charts what the industry calls "consumer hours out" rather than the number of outages WEC experienced (if you and your neighbor are both affected for one hour by the same outage event, it counts as "two consumer hours out"), that spike at the end reveals dramatically what happened to this Cooperative and its members in December 2014 when a four-day storm dumped between 12 and 22 inches of wet, heavy snow nearly everywhere in WEC's service territory.

Quoting from the report: "This single major storm event accounted for 38 percent of the total number of outages, and a whopping 85 percent

of the total consumer hours out in 2014."

Washington Electric does not contend that its entire service territory is protected against all weather-related outages (or outages from any cause). WEC manages more than 1,250 miles of right-of-way, roughly the distance from Montpelier to Tampa, Florida; no rural utility of that size, built in the North America's Great Northern Forest, could make such a claim.

But the other important, if less dramatic, information revealed in this graph is what 2014 looked like before the December storm. From January through April the "consumer hours out" experienced by WEC members were similar in 2012, 2013, and 2014. In 2013, the yearly total began to accumulate more noticeably in May, and in July for 2012. But as the graph reveals, the Co-op's record for 2014 stayed well below those two previous years, until – BOOM! – last

continued on page 8

Manager's Report

A 'Renewable Portfolio' For Vermont Utilities?

President's Disaster Declaration May Ease WEC's Storm Costs

By Patty Richards

Renewable Portfolio Standard

In the Vermont Legislature this year, lawmakers are tackling a bill that will introduce a renewable portfolio requirement for Vermont electric utilities. These standards, which exist in other states in New England, require all Vermont electric utilities to provide a certain percentage of their power from renewable resources. The bill (H.40) would create a Renewable

Energy Standard and Energy Transformation (RESET) program.

A primary objective of the bill is to support continued growth in renewable energy sources and to clear up confusion related to Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). WEC supports this new legislation, as it is important for WEC and all electric utilities to continue promotion of renewable power and to resolve concerns expressed in other states where RECs are bought and sold.

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Washington Electric Cooperative

East Montpelier, VT 05651

Inside

Four candidates for your Board of Directors. With WEC's Annual Meeting approaching in early May, elections are just around the corner. This year four board seats will be filled by the voters. The WEC members who wish to serve introduce themselves on page 4.

WEC's Community Fund set a record in 2014, providing donations to 64 causes and organizations. For details, and to learn about contributing, see page 5.

WEC as a workplace. Supporting your employees benefits the Co-op. And besides, it's the right thing to do. Page 7.



VCIL makes ours a better community and Vermont a better state. Learn more about this organization, which received a Community Fund donation in 2014, on page 6.

A Vermont winter this year. Hard times, too, for WEC families touched by loss. President's Message, page 2.

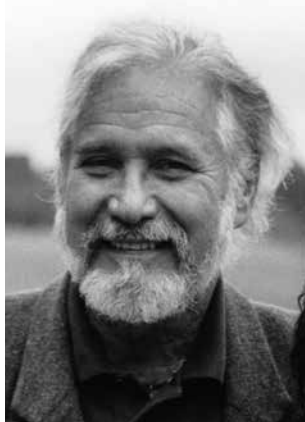
President's Message

Plodding Resolutely Toward Spring

Also: Special Sorrows Touch the WEC Family

By Barry Bernstein

It has been a strange, eventful winter. The December storm took its toll on all of us, followed by some very cold weather over January and February. At least we missed the six feet of snow that hit Boston and some of the East Coast over a two week period;



my sympathies to the skiers I know who were disappointed by that, but for us snow-shovelers it was a bit of a break.

I do want to thank those members who took the time to e-mail or call us thanking the WEC team for the great work they did in restoring power during the December storm. Also, it was really nice to get feedback from you on how much you appreciated the *Co-op Currents* Storm issue in

January. Thanks to Editor Will Linder and Tim Newcomb, who works with Will on the layout; and thank you to the Board's Editorial Committee, General Manager Patty Richards, and Dawn Johnson from Member Services for their hard work and input on that special edition.

On a personal note,


it has been a difficult time for the WEC family. Two of our staff members recently lost their mothers at relatively young ages. It is also with deep regret that I note that Member Services Representative Dawn Johnson lost her daughter, Seleste, in a tragic ski accident at Burke Mountain in early February, at the young age of 27. Seleste had been at her mother's side this summer when Dawn was

recovering from surgery, telling her Mom that her inner strength was going to get her through her recovery. I know Dawn will keep those words close to her heart as she, her husband Duanne, her son Corey, Seleste's husband Chuck and step-children Devin and Cameron Bell, and their community of friends support them over the difficult months ahead. At WEC, our employees and Board work cooperatively as a supportive family with a common purpose, and especially during difficult times, whether it be a storm, a family loss, or a member in need, to reach out to give support. It is why I am forever grateful for my long-term involvement with WEC and our Central Vermont community network.



Seleste Fenoff

issues we are involved in at the Legislature. Please see Patty Richards' Manager's report, which starts on page 1. WEC continues to actively work with the Vermont Department of Public Service, the Legislature, and other stake holders to support our members' best interests, while working toward reasonable solutions as we move forward together to address the serious issues facing all of us as a result of global warming and climate change. The severe and recurring weather events that WEC and its members are experiencing continue to shape how we prepare and respond to better serve you going forward. Your co-op has been committed for the past 25 years to energy conservation, energy efficiency, and developing a renewable energy power supply. WEC will continue to be a leader, working with others and providing a yardstick that can assist others in seeing what's possible and measuring their progress.

As the days get longer, it stays lighter longer into the evening, and daylight savings time approaches – honestly! On Sunday, March 8 – there is hope that Vermonters will not forever remain in a deep freeze. Here's to the approaching spring. 

Co-op Currents

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WEC is part of the alliance working to advance and support the principles of cooperatives in Vermont.

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Editorial Committee

Patty Richards Donald Douglas David Magida Anne Reed Will Lindner

The Board of Directors' regularly scheduled meetings are on the last Wednesday of each month, in the evening. Members are welcome to attend. Members who wish to discuss a matter with the Board should contact the president through WEC's office. Meeting dates and times are subject to change. For information about times and/or agenda, or to receive a copy of the minutes of past meetings, contact Administrative Assistant Deborah Brown, 802-223-5245.

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Utility issues at the Legislature

In this March edition of *Co-op Currents* we highlight some key

The Vermont Public Service Board requires all electric utilities to publish this Herbicide Use Notification periodically. Members of Washington Electric Cooperative are reminded that it has long been the policy of this cooperative not to deploy herbicides in the right-of-way management program.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

HERBICIDE USE NOTIFICATION

Vermont utilities maintain electric line rights-of-way with several methods, including the selective use of herbicides on trees and brush. They also encourage low-growing shrubs and trees which will crowd tall-growing species and, thus, minimize the use of herbicides. The application of herbicides may start as early as April 1. Requests to utilities for notice by mail, however, must be made by February 15.

The Public Service Board requires Vermont utilities to carry out vegetation management techniques which allow maintenance of electrical systems in a cost-efficient manner.

The types of herbicide treatment used to maintain vegetation on utility rights-of-way include the following applications: stump, injection, basal, soil, and foliar. These are the commonly used methods; your local utility may use other methods. Landowners have the right to request that a utility apply herbicide treatment on cut stumps only or that a utility refrain from applying herbicide. In the latter case, the landowner has to pay the utility an administrative fee. Only electric utility rights-of-way that have tall-growing tree species with the potential of threatening the electric utility system are treated.

Utilities advertise by radio and newspaper prior to herbicide applications on all lines. Utilities typically treat rights of way once every four-to-six years, depending on the utility's specific vegetation management cycle. Please check with your utility regarding the vegetation management cycle of a particular line.

Some utilities identify their poles with metal letters and numbers, e.g., V.E.C. (Vermont Electric Co-operative), or V.E.L.C.O. (Vermont Electric Power Company). These markings are not found on every utility pole. However, by checking of several poles on a line, you should be able to find a marked pole and determine which utility owns it.

Persons owning or occupying land within 1,000 feet of a utility right-of-way may request in writing that the utility notify them individually by mail anytime but at least 30 days prior to treatment of the line with herbicides. The landowner or resident is responsible for contacting the utility, in writing, to request placement on the mailing list. The utility should be provided with sufficient information as to the exact location of the residence and land. It is the duty of each landowner or resident to make the utility aware of the location of any potentially affected water supply, and any environmentally sensitive areas where herbicide application ought to be avoided.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTRIC UTILITY WITH QUESTIONS OR SUBMIT THE COUPON PROVIDED

If you have further questions or concerns contact:

Agency of Agriculture
James Leland
116 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602
1-802-828-2431

Consumer Affairs & Public Information
Dept. of Public Service
112 State St., Montpelier, VT 05620
1-800-622-4496 or 1-802-828- 2332

LANDOWNER REQUEST TO BE ADDED TO HERBICIDE TREATMENT NOTIFICATION MAILING LIST

Name	Town/City of Affected Property
Street Address	Telephone Number (Home)
Town	(Work)
State	Zip Code
Electric Account Number	O.K. to use Work Number: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Property of Concern: <input type="checkbox"/> Year Round Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Property	Best Time to Call
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Supply <input type="checkbox"/> Land <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Line and Pole Identification: Utility Initials	Numbers
We need all of this information in order to determine if you qualify for personal notification. If information is unobtainable, please state why. Use an extra sheet of paper if you need more space.	
RETURN TO YOUR LOCAL UTILITY	
VELCO15	

Manager's Report

continued from page 1



Vermont utilities have been working for several years to achieve various renewable energy goals through what's known as the Sustainably Priced Energy Enterprise Development Program, or SPEED. The Legislature created SPEED in 2005 to encourage and support construction of new renewable energy generating projects in Vermont and bring them on line. It has resulted in many wind, solar, hydro, and biomass facilities, located throughout the state.

Vermont utilities can sell various electric market products from such renewable power resources as separate and distinct items. There are, for example, markets for energy, capacity, and RECs. WEC can sell these products one at a time or as a bundled package. Our decision has been to sell RECs from the Sheffield Wind and Coventry facilities in out-of-state markets, while keeping energy and capacity to serve our members' load needs.

Under the SPEED program, Vermont utilities are able to count renewable energy projects that were built and located in Vermont toward the state's renewable energy goal that goes into effect in 2017 (described below). In the remaining period before this goal goes into effect, utilities can split off RECs and sell them in other states, to help buyers meet their renewable energy requirements in those states.

However, because Vermont has these 2017 renewable energy goals, regulators and traders are questioning who legally owns the rights to the "renewability" of the energy, and this has led to claims that there may be a "double counting" of these RECs from Vermont. Some Vermont utilities, including WEC, no longer sell renewable energy certificates to Connecticut, because that state has raised such questions. In 2012, Connecticut changed its laws due to this concern about double counting and its potential negative impact on Connecticut's RPS program. In 2014 this issue raised its head again and the markets became very uncertain, making REC sales more difficult.

To clear up the confusion, H.40 proposes to repeal SPEED and replace it with a three-tiered system for utilities to own and develop renewable energy sources. The law further clarifies a requirement for Vermont utilities to keep and own RECs.

WEC supports a legislative fix to the cloud cast on the sale of Vermont RECs in other New England markets. The legislation that was introduced by the Department of Public Service (DPS) is in part an attempt to put to rest the double-counting issue. WEC wants to be sure it can fully participate in the RPS markets across New England, and we believe H.40 will achieve that end.

WEC supports a Vermont RPS that will increase the development of renewable resources, limit rate impacts,

provide REC market certainty, and remove double-counting claims. WEC supports repeal of SPEED with an end date of July 1, 2015. We also support retaining our ability to sell Class 1 RECs and buy back Class 2 renewable credits. Buyers of Class 1 RECs generally pay

a premium for this class of REC, while Class 2 RECs are worth significantly less in dollars. (Buyers are likely to need certain amounts of Class 1 RECs to meet their state standards, but not as many Class 2 RECs, which creates the price disparity.) But we also believe an exemption for utilities that are already 100-percent renewable (Washington Electric Co-op and the Burlington Electric Department) is justified, as WEC has already made long-term commitments to renewable power sources. Utilities that have met the states goals have earned the right to special consideration in this legislation – a position which the DPS shares.

To introduce some content of the bill, there are, as noted, three tiers in legislation:

Tier 1 is referred to as a "Total Renewable Energy" requirement. It requires utilities to have 55 percent of their retail-load needs served by renewable energy sources by 2017, increasing incrementally to 75 percent by 2032. Utilities can satisfy these requirements through renewable energy contracts and/or by having RECs retired to meet the levels specified. WEC supports this tier. We already comply, with our current power supply mix and purchase of Class 2 RECs. In fact, between our power contracts with renewable sources and the Class 2 RECs we purchase, we have, not 55 percent, but 100 percent of our load met through renewables.

Tier 2 is referred to as the "Distributed Generation" requirement. Utilities will be required to include, over and above Tier 1, 1 percent of retail sales served by new renewables by 2017 ("new renewables" are defined as resources generating less than 5 megawatts and coming on line after July 2015). The requirement increases to 10 percent by 2032. Since WEC is already 100-percent renewable we will be eligible for an exemption from this tier as long as we run an approved net metering program. WEC's net metering program will satisfy this need.

Tier 3 is referred to as the "Energy Transformation" program. It's somewhat reminiscent of the demand-side management programs WEC instituted in the 1990s to help Co-op members reduce their electricity consumption through energy-efficiency improvements in their homes. Under Tier 3, utilities will be required to have 2 percent of their retail sales served by projects that improve energy efficiency – not just for electricity, but also other fuels, such

as for heating and transportation. Like the other tiers, Tier 3 requirements are graduated, beginning at 2 percent of retail sales and reaching 12 percent by 2032. It will focus on reducing energy consumption through such technologies as air source heat pumps, weatherization, solar hot water, electric vehicle charging stations, and more. Yet despite this focus on other realms of energy consumption, distributed generation (such as net metering) would qualify under Tier 3's requirements. In effect, this tier recreates efficiency-like programs for any fuel source, and is not limited to electricity.

As proposed, WEC would not be exempt from Tier 3. We would need to comply with its requirements. However, WEC has asked the legislators to consider recasting these Tier 3 objectives as *goals*, rather than requirements. There is uncertainty in the legislation as to how Tier 3 programs would be credited; changing these concepts from requirements to goals will allow time for utilities and regulators to better understand what energy projects qualify and what credits they will receive – a change we believe would better serve our members. Regardless of what comes out, we will work to reach the requirements and goals passed by the Legislature.

In summary, we support H.40, as it will lead to new sources of renewable power and it will provide clarity in the market for Vermont RECs. It is very important that a legislative fix is implemented to remove the uncertainties about Vermont RECs in other New England markets. We want to make sure that our Co-op can fully participate in the RPS markets across New England, and we believe H.40 will achieve that end.

Net Metering:


WEC received a carve-out in Act 99 last year to design a new net metering program. Our program was approved by the Public Service Board in July 2014 and immediately went into action. Since then, we have had steady enrollment, with all distributed generation systems coming on line

being solar PV. The WEC net metering program charges a small grid-service fee (4.8 cents per kilowatt-hour) and customer charge (\$12.24/month). It is important to note these changes have not been a deterrent to new installations. With the cost of solar continuing to decline, we expect WEC's program design to continue resulting in more members participating and producing their own renewable solar energy. To date we have 33 members, totaling 213 kilowatts of generating capacity, in the new net metering program.

December Storm Declared Disaster by President Obama

We all know just how bad the December winter storm was, and President Obama apparently agrees. In early February, the President signed a disaster declaration for 10 counties in Vermont, including Washington and Orange. Most of our Co-op members live in these two counties, which suffered severe damages from the storm.

The presidential declaration paves the way for towns and nonprofit utilities like WEC to request and receive 75-percent reimbursement for storm response and outage restoration – chiefly the labor costs for those extensive operations: cutting and removing trees, repairing the lines, replacing broken poles, and restoring power for WEC members.

WEC's costs for storm restoration were roughly \$641,000, but not all of those costs will qualify for federal reimbursement. We will work with state and federal officials to recoup as much of the costs as possible. Meanwhile, WEC is working with state regulatory officials on an agreement that will allow the Co-op to spread the remaining (non-recoverable) costs out over time, to mitigate their potential impact on rates. In the event we can't absorb and offset the remaining storm costs there may need to be an adjustment to our rates in the future, though we hope to avoid it. We know members prefer smaller increases to larger ones, and we will work hard to make the impacts as manageable as we can. 

Members Write

Co-op Currents welcomes letters to the editor that address any aspect of the Co-op's policies and operations, or any matters related to electricity. Readers can write to Co-op Currents, P.O. Box 8, East Montpelier, VT 05651. Letters to the editor will not be published in the Annual Meeting (April) issue.

Compassion Goes a Long Way

Editor, Co-op Currents:

I just wanted to acknowledge the vast improvement in your service call system during outages. I was without power for five days during that last horrendous storm and while I admit that my patience was ebbing after the 4th day, the people I spoke with sounded like they cared about my situation. That made all the difference to me. Thank you.

— Rachel Hexter Fried, Stannard

Editor's note: It's been a while since we've had a letter to the editor. We're grateful that Ms. Fried chose to convey her message this way, as it gives us an opportunity to remind WEC members that letters provide a way to share your views with other Co-op members. The editor's e-mail address is listed on page two; messages sent to other WEC staff can also be forwarded for publication here, with your name and town of residence.

2015 Annual Meeting Set for May 6 at Canadian Club, Barre

Four Candidates for WEC's Board of Directors


Four member/owners of Washington Electric Cooperative have come forward as candidates for the Co-op's Board of Directors in 2015. The three candidates with the highest vote totals will serve for three years, their terms ending in 2018. The fourth candidate elected will serve the remaining two years of the term for which the late Marion Milne was elected last year. That term will end in 2017.

Every year three seats on WEC's nine-member board expire, providing the membership an opportunity to elect one-third of the board that makes leadership decisions for the customer-owned electric utility, and oversees management and staff. This year the directors whose terms will expire at the time of the Annual Membership Meeting are **Roger Fox** of **Walden**, **Richard Rubin** of **Plainfield**, and **Mary Just Skinner** of **Middlesex**. All three of the incumbents are seeking re-election to the Board. Also running is **Stephen Knowlton** of **East Montpelier**, who was appointed in December 2014 to the seat formerly held by Marion Milne. Appointments to the board are interim, as the bylaws require that permanent replacements on the board of a former director be elected by a vote of the membership.

The election of directors is performed by ballots sent to each Washington Electric Cooperative member by mail in the weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. **When your ballot arrives, check the accompanying materials to determine**

when the deadline is for posting your votes by mail. Members who attend the Annual Meeting can vote there if they wish, rather than by mail. The meeting, which includes dinner, will be held at the Canadian Club on Route 14 in Barre Town. Reservations are required for dinner, but not for the meeting itself. A reservation form will be included in the April issue of *Co-op Currents*. Dinner is free for those members who register by May 1. The date of the 76th Annual Washington Electric Cooperative Membership Meeting is Wednesday, May 6. A schedule of events will appear on in the next (April) issue, which is the official Annual Meeting issue of *Co-op Currents*.

Voters who choose to do so can write in the names of other Co-op members who are not official candidates on their ballot. Board candidates run at-large because Washington Electric Cooperative is not divided into districts.

Printed below are brief biographical sketches submitted by the candidates, in which they introduce themselves and provide information on their background and involvement with the Cooperative and other avenues of community service. The April issue will feature their responses to questions about issues related to board service. It will provide readers a broader sense of the interests, viewpoints, and experience of the candidates. 

Roger Fox



Residence: I live at Dows Crossing in Walden, in the northern part of WEC's service territory, and I've been a Co-op member in Walden since 1971. You can contact me by mail at 2067 Bayley-Hazen Road, East Hardwick, VT 05836; by phone at (802) 563-2321; or by e-mail at rfox@pivot.net.

Education/Profession: I received a bachelor's engineering degree from M.I.T., and I worked on aerospace engineering projects in Florida and Massachusetts prior to becoming a Vermonter. Since 1974, I've operated a printing and graphic design business, Apocalypse Graphics, in Walden.

Community Service/WEC: I currently serve as Walden's town moderator, and as a justice of the peace and chair of the Board of Civil Authority. I've previously served as selectman and town energy coordinator. I'm a member of several other Vermont consumer cooperatives, including Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op, VSECU, North Country Federal Credit Union, Opportunities Credit Union, and Co-operative Insurance Companies.

I was first elected to the WEC board in 1991, and have served as the Co-op's vice president since 1998, and previously as secretary. My current assignments include chairing the Members & Markets Committee, and membership on the Finance & Administration and Policy Committees. In the past I've served on the Power & Operations and Editorial Committees, and as treasurer of the Northeast Association of

Electric Cooperatives (covering the upstate New York and northern New England area).

As concerns continue to increase about energy's impact on our environment and economy, I want to use the experience and perspective I've gained on the WEC board for the continued benefit of our Co-op, its members, and our communities.

Stephen Knowlton

Residence: I live in the White Pine Co-housing community in East Montpelier. I have lived there since 2012, and I have been a member of Washington Electric Cooperative since 2001. Members may contact me by mail at 160 White Rock Dr. #2, Montpelier, VT 05602, by email at knowlsf@auburn.edu, or by phone at 223-2230.



Background: Growing up in a military family, I have lived in a number of different places. I graduated from Middlebury College, and received my Ph.D in physics from MIT in 1984. I have spent my working life as a researcher in the science of alternative energy both domestically and abroad, and a physics professor. I spent most of my career at Auburn University, where I taught full-time at all levels from introductory physics to graduate courses. Furthermore, I led a federally supported experimental fusion energy research laboratory comprised of students, post-docs, technicians, and staff scientists. I retired from this position in 2012.

Community Service/WEC: In December 2014, I was appointed

to serve on the Board of Directors of Washington Electric Cooperative in place of board member Marion Milne, who passed away in August. I have recently served as a mentor in U-32 high school's Branching Out program. As a faculty member at Auburn, I served on and chaired many committees involving research, hiring, campus life, and faculty governance. I have been active in scientific outreach activities, including annual Science Olympiads, presentations at urban and rural schools, and local science fairs and open houses. In my professional service, I participated in numerous scientific program reviews and advisory panels at the request of the U.S Department of Energy, and continue to do so. For eight years, I played a leadership role in the University Fusion Association in which I frequently visited U.S. Congressional offices, subcommittees, and executive-branch agencies to inform them of the research needs and scientific priorities of federally supported fusion energy research. I have recently completed a 3-year term on the Executive Committee of the American Physical Society, Division of Plasma Physics. In brief, my experience spans a range from science instruction, independent research, and cooperation with policy makers.

Richard Rubin

Residence: I have lived on East Hill in Plainfield for more than 40 years. I am 69 years old and am married to Jayne Israel. We have three children (two still in Plainfield) and three grandchildren. I enjoy hiking, skiing, gardening, golf, and hanging out with



my grandchildren. My e-mail address is rubin@sover.net.

Education/Profession: I was born and raised outside of Boston. I attended Harvard College, and law school at the University of Pennsylvania. I have practiced law in Barre for 38 years. My law firm is Rubin, Kidney, Myer & Vincent. Our firm is also the public defender for Washington County. My practice has involved representing people with all kinds of legal problems. Mainly, I am a trial lawyer.

Community Service/WEC: I have served as a WEC director for 15 years. I was first elected after being appointed to complete the term of a board member who had resigned. In the community, I was a member of the Twinfield School Board for five years, helped establish the original food co-op in Plainfield, and served on the board of Vermont Legal Aid. I have also been active in various legal organizations and am now a member of the board of the Vermont Association for Justice. Many years ago I was involved with my brother, Mathew Rubin, in creating the Wrightsville hydroelectric facility and the Winooski 8 hydroelectric plant in East Montpelier.

Mary Just Skinner

Residence: I have lived in Middlesex since 1977. I have been a WEC member for 38 years, and before that I was a Vermont Electric Co-op member for seven years. I am married to Scott Skinner and we have two sons, one an immigration lawyer and the other a middle school



continued on page 5

Candidates

continued from page 4


teacher. I can be reached at 223-7123, and by e-mail at mskinner@sover.net, or maryjustskinner@gmail.com.

Education/Profession: I graduated from Barnard College and earned my law degree from Columbia University.

I have been a practicing lawyer in Montpelier since 1972. I worked for Vermont Legal Aid for four years and then opened my own law practice in 1976. My practice primarily involves family law and real estate, but earlier in my career I was involved in a number of utility cases. I represented a group of low-income Vermonters in what was known as the “purchased power” case in 1974. In the late ‘70s,

Attorney General Jerry Diamond hired me as a Special Assistant Attorney General to represent the state in opposing a 150-percent increase in the cost of a pay phone call. We were successful in defeating the proposal.

Community Service/WEC: I have been a member of the Middlesex Select Board for the last 20 years.

I also served seven terms in the Vermont State Senate, including a period as chair of the Senate Finance Committee, which handles utility legislation. I am a member of the Vermont Human Services Board. I was on the advisory board of RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) for 20 years. 

2014: A Generous Year For WEC Community Fund

Zero Overhead Boosts the Impact of Member Contributions

The Community Fund was founded by WEC in 2002. On average, the Fund has donated each year to around 45 organizations. The highest number of donations during its first decade was 49, reached in both 2007 and 2011; in 2013 WEC set a new record by contributing to 53 local nonprofits. But this was topped, in a big way, by the 64 donations made last year. A single-year increase that large had not occurred since the Community Fund’s very earliest days, when local organizations were first learning of this source of support for their good works.

The total amount of money contributed by the Community Fund in 2014 was notable, too. The average annual total is around \$20,000, but in 2014 WEC’s donations reached \$21,159.

“There are many nonprofit groups doing very important work in the area that we serve as a rural electric co-op,” said WEC General Manager Patty Richards, who facilitates the Community Fund, fielding requests from nonprofits and deciding among them with the advice of a three-person committee from Washington Electric’s Board of Directors. (Members of the committee are board President Barry Bernstein and directors Richard Rubin and Mary Just Skinner.) “These are small organizations that operate on shoestring budgets and rely substantially on volunteers, all while trying to make their communities the best places they can be for everyone who lives there. It’s very inspiring.”

A distinguishing feature of WEC’s Community Fund, Richards pointed out, is that “every dollar we receive from our members and employees goes back to the community.

“Some of the larger and more corporate fundraising entities have advertising, fundraising, and employment overhead,” she explained. “We have zero. One hundred percent of the money donated to the Community Fund is given out in grants and reinvested locally.”

Link to capital credits

The 2014 Community Fund statistics were provided to the Board of Directors in Richards’ report, submitted each

Washington Electric Cooperative’s Community Fund is capitalized by members and former members voluntarily donating their annual capital credit refunds, rather than taking those amounts as deductions from their November electric bills – or, in the case of former members, waiving the checks that would come to them as refunds. It’s a way we can all make small contributions that add up to support worthy causes in central Vermont. You can make the choice on an annual basis or sign up to have your capital credit refunds diverted automatically to the Community Fund. Contact the Co-op to learn how.

January, on the Fund’s past year of activity. It lists the organizations and causes that received donations, and the amount each was given. The list of recipients appears on page 8 (the full manager’s report is available from the Co-op). Contributions range from \$100 or so to an upper limit of \$1,000. (Occasionally, as in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene in 2012, that upper limit has been exceeded.) Most are in the \$250-\$500 range.

The modest amounts allow the Fund to assist a larger number of groups and activities, and although most social-service nonprofits, including these, need every dime they can raise, the Community Fund contributes only to organizations that the committee believes are financially viable, to ensure that WEC members’ and former members’ money won’t be wasted.

This is an important point, because it *is* WEC members’ money, voluntarily contributed, that capitalizes the Community Fund. The Co-op itself does not provide capital, because doing so would, in effect, constitute a donation from WEC member/owners who have not given their permission.

As a regulated utility, WEC cannot use Co-op funds for that purpose; its obligation is to invest in its operations, providing reliable, affordable electric service to its members/owners.

WEC’s Community Fund is capitalized primarily by current and former members’ capital credit refunds which they

have authorized the Co-op to divert to this cause. Capital credit refunds are applied toward November’s electric bills for active Co-op members; for former members, the refunds accumulate until they reach a threshold, at which time WEC sends a check (if their addresses are known).

Contributing that money, instead, to the Community Fund is, for most people, a small, barely noticeable act of philanthropy, as they tend to range from \$15 to \$25.

Last fall Washington Electric went through this procedure again, distributing refunds as credits on members’ November electric bills while informing them of the option to waive the credit in favor of the Community Fund. In this way, WEC replenished the Fund for operations in 2015, with 1,302 members providing a total of \$21,969 for the new year. This was added to roughly \$600 in funds carried over from 2014, recapitalizing the Community Fund at around \$22,597.

It should be noted that Washington Electric’s employees and vendors have, as a group, voluntarily adopted two end-of-the-year causes for which

they annually raise money and make contributions through the Community Fund. One is the Adopt-a-Family program operated through the National Guard Armory in Berlin, which provides holiday dinners and gifts for needy military families in our area. The other is the Stuff-A-Truck



WEC’s Dan Couture totes a carton of spring water, a small part of the edibles contributed by WEC employees and vendors to the Stuff-A-Truck event, benefitting the Salvation Army Emergency Food Shelf.

Food & Funds Drive coordinated by several local businesses to benefit the Salvation Army Emergency Food Shelf. In 2014 our staff and vendors raised \$1,760 for the two programs, enabling a spirited shopping spree at a local supermarket for the Stuff-A-Truck campaign.

Operating principles

WEC’s Board of Directors created the Community Fund to put into practice one of the core tenets of the modern cooperative movement, its “Concern for Community” principle, which states: “While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustained development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.” Washington Electric’s Policy 6 (Donations and Support of Community Organizations), reads in part: “(I)t is appropriate for Washington Electric Cooperative to support the activities of worthwhile nonprofit, charitable agencies, educational institutions, and other community organizations which enhance the well-being of our members and the communities they live in.”

As the accompanying list reveals, organizations the Community Fund assisted in 2014 ranged from social services benefitting elderly, low-income, and/or disabled people in our area, to environmental and conservation groups, food shelves, arts, libraries and educational services, historical societies, town recreational committees, and many more. The fund does not contribute to groups furthering a religious or political agenda.

While the positive impact of the Community Fund has been noted in *Co-op Currents* with special features and highlights over the years, such as the story on the Vermont Center for Independent Living on page 6 of this issue, it’s also true that, with 1,302 WEC members and former members contributing, there is substantial room for growth, with a current active membership of roughly 10,800. If you have not authorized Washington Electric to contribute your capital credits to the Community Fund, please consider doing so. One-time donations,

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A Community Fund Profile

VCIL: More About 'Ability' Than Disability

Since its inception, Washington Electric Cooperative's Community Fund Committee has been guided by the principle that causes approved for grants from the fund should be ones that, in the judgment of the committee, most people would endorse.

Here's a cause. A young Vermont man, still in his twenties, was a farmer and looked forward to spending his life in agriculture – working outdoors, using his body and his hands, raising food that the rest of us depend on. But he was injured in an accident, and although he recovered many of his faculties he had to use a wheelchair. That meant, among other things, that he could no longer drive his tractor.

Then along came a team of "peer counselors" – others who have learned to farm with disabilities of their own – who shared their experiences with him and connected him with further resources from the University of Vermont and the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Their assistance led to our young farmer's obtaining a lift for getting onto the tractor seat; as a result, he's back in the saddle, working his fields, living an independent life, and contributing to our economy and our food stock.

Think that's a cause we can get behind?

Or how about a woman who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) in her early 40s (it could happen to any of us) and was advised by her doctor to prepare to move into a nursing home. It was the last thing she wanted to do. Fortunately, she too was connected with peer counselors, most notably a woman approximately her own age who also used a wheelchair and who encouraged her to imagine another outcome. Leveraging know-how, experience, and existing, available resources, the "other outcome" came to pass, and with an entrance ramp to the doorway and modifications to the bathroom, she was able to stay where she wanted to be: at home.

Would you support that?

If you're a current or former Washington Electric Cooperative member who contributes to WEC's Community Fund, you did. The Vermont Center for Independent Living – the agency that provided the peer counselors and links to the resources that assisted the young farmer and the woman confronted with MS – was one of 64 programs and organizations receiving Community Fund donations in 2014. It's hard to imagine money better spent. VCIL, founded and headquartered in Montpelier, serves the entire state, with regional offices in Rutland, Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, and Morrisville. That most definitely includes the Washington,



We all deserve to live independently, and we all benefit when people can. Making that vision come true are (top, from left) VCIL Information, Referral & Assistance Specialist Jake Lavigne, Executive Director Sarah Launderville, and Development Coordinator Linda Meleady. Below, Sarah (at left) and Linda (center) come in out of the cold to pose with Civil Rights Specialist Mike Charron (second from left), Outcome & Evaluation Specialist Patrick Fitzgerald, and (far right) Database Coordinator Peter Johnke.



Orange, and Caledonia County towns served in some measure by Washington Electric Cooperative.

In a letter of thanks to the Co-op, Sarah Wendell Launderville, who has been with VCIL since 1997 and its executive director for six years, wrote:

"Through the giving, caring support of our funders, VCIL works hand in hand with people with disabilities and the community toward our shared vision of equality. Now in our 35th year of support and advocacy, we are helping to build a society where we can all live with dignity, independence, and our full civil rights. We are truly appreciative of your generous contribution during these tough economic times. Thank you!"

VCIL, Launderville explained in an interview, describes itself as a disability-rights organization. Its seeds were in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, which fostered an awareness of institutionalized discrimination based on factors beyond race. Its first executive director – who was also instrumental in securing initial funding for VCIL – was the current president of Washington Electric's Board of Directors, Barry Bernstein.

The focus for this now 36-year-old nonprofit organization is, and always has been, on the "I" in its title:

Independent. VCIL's programs and services are geared toward assisting people with disabilities to live independently if that's their desire.

"In 1979 there were not a lot of housing units called 'independent living,' which is a more recent concept," said Launderville. "People with disabilities were often housed in nursing homes and other institutions. There were a lot of barriers to people staying in their own homes, and there still are today. Helping people get out of institutions is a core part of our work."

Get out, or stay out. Stories like that of the 40-something woman diagnosed with MS, Launderville said, "play out all the time. With our peer advocates, people are (visiting) nursing homes and explaining how they live independently and successfully. It's life-changing."

Peer counseling and other forms of direct, personal assistance also enable VCIL's clients to tackle challenges related to transportation and employment. Over time, the organization has developed a breadth of programs. The young farmer gained his tractor lift (and regained his vocation) through an appropriately titled program called AgrAbility. The Community Access program opens doorways, literally and figuratively, to buildings,

businesses and other services (such as law enforcement) for people with disabilities. VCIL has its own version of Meals on Wheels, separate from the well-known and vital program run by the Council on Aging; it's targeted to people under the age of 60 who are not able to prepare their own meals, and serves about 500 Vermonters a year.

A comprehensive explanation of VCIL's services, and of the conditions that qualify people to become engaged with VCIL counselors and staff, can be seen at www.vcil.org.


"We serve people with any type of disability – physical, psychiatric, or 'intellectual,' which used to be called developmental disabilities," Launderville said. "Many people have multiple disabilities, for example combining physical and intellectual."

VCIL has a statewide staff of some 30 employees, but through interaction with other resources such as Vocational Rehabilitation, and with volunteers who are dedicated to the cause (often through their own experiences), their impact is considerably larger. "We interact with about 2,000 people a year throughout our programs," said the director.

Launderville now is particularly excited about a new opportunity for VCIL. While the majority of VCIL clients are between the ages of 40 and 60, a new partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation this year will start opening doors to people 14-to-22 years old who are in school but need more active and engaged support from their communities if they are to stay there.

"Students with disabilities are three times more likely to get kicked out of school than the general population," Launderville explained. "Getting to people at a younger age – focusing on their issues, looking at barriers to their success – is very important. It's something we hope to provide leadership on."

Friends, neighbors, and family members, fellow Washington Electric Cooperative members – ourselves, in fact – who are dealing with disabilities are everywhere; some are obviously challenged with special burdens and some less obviously. VCIL helps them live full, independent lives. And that makes the organization an excellent, deserving cause for WEC's Community Fund to support.

WEC members can donate to the Community Fund by electing to have their capital credits used for the fund, or through an outright gift to the fund. Capital credit donations can be set up on a regular, recurring basis, or as a one-time donation of the credits that the Co-op expects to issue next fall. If you would like to take this step, contact the Co-op to get started. 

Standing Up For A Better Work Environment

WEC Weaves Wellness into its Corporate Culture

Lately there's been a lot of standing around at Washington Electric Cooperative's headquarters in East Montpelier.

But while that's often another way of saying that people aren't doing very much, in this case the opposite is true. There has been an influx of standing desks and workstations in the building, and many who have tried it say they're more energized and productive when they spend much of their workday on their feet rather than seated before their computer screens and paperwork.

"It encourages you to just move about more," says Assistant Finance Director Linda Nelson, who shares a second-floor office with Senior Accountant Teia Greenslit. Both women switched to adjustable desks about three months ago. The work surfaces are perched upon retractable supports that can be raised for standing or lowered when the employee decides it's time to take a seat for a while.

"When you're sitting you might get so involved with what you're doing that hours pass and you don't realize you haven't moved," says Linda. "As the day goes on you feel a lot better and healthier if you've been moving."

"I start out standing at seven in the morning, then by ten or eleven o'clock I'll usually sit for a while," Teia says. "But pretty soon I start to feel uncomfortable, like I used to most of the time."

So she gets up again.

Teia and Linda experimented with the standing-desk lifestyle by borrowing a unit from Dawn Johnson's workspace while Dawn, a WEC member services representative who greets members and visitors at the front counter, was gone for a period last summer. Impressed, they both took advantage of a company offer to provide adjustable desks to any employee who wanted one.

Several others did, too, and while some stand more than others during the workday the new desks are now scattered around the building. It makes abundant sense to Dawn Johnson, who's not only standing behind the front counter the entire day, but is perched on a "rebounder" – a small trampoline – that benefits her posture and her circulation, and contributes some of the energy and positive mindset that are Dawn's trademark.

"If you don't take time to stretch and move, by the afternoon your brain has pretty much turned to mush. It's been proved," says the former state employee who benefitted from ergonomic practices at the Agency of Human Services.

The "standing desk" phenomenon at WEC really arrived with Patty Richards, who became general manager in July 2013 and was immediately noticeable standing all day in her office at the front of the building. Patty is a runner,



Information Database Technician Sandy Gendron (center) gives a thumbs-up to the introduction of standing desks and adjustable work stations for WEC employees who want them. Field Technician Brian Wilkin (left) and IT Manager Kevin Stevens use platforms that can raise or lower their computers as desired. All say they have found that standing, at least some of the time, helps them feel better physically and improves their energy level.

with several marathons under her belt and the Boston Marathon ahead of her this spring; standing seemed to be part of the package, but her coworkers were curious, so she sent out an office e-mail (subject line: Why is Patty standing?), explaining the benefits she had experienced and the science that supports the advantages of standing rather than sitting. (Richards' personal story is that the standing desk helped her overcome a ligament injury several years ago.) In her e-mail, she offered to make a very affordable portable unit available for people to try out. For those who liked it, WEC would then procure raised desks or adjustable platforms.

For the Co-op, Richards says, this is money well spent.

"For me, the motivation is that a happy and healthy employee is an effective and productive employee, an employee who is going to give the high-quality service to our Co-op members that they expect, and should expect," she explains. "Someone who is healthy and more energetic both physically and mentally is going to perform better at their job."

Watt's Up at the Co-op?

While the standing desks are the most obvious example of this ethic at Washington Electric Cooperative – supporting employees as they make positive choices for their health and wellbeing – it's only a part of what's going on, and has been going on for a while. Like businesses of all kinds across Vermont, WEC makes use of the Invest EAP program, a Burlington-based nonprofit engaged throughout the state. EAP stands for Employee Assistance Program, the "Invest" part of its title referring to the valuable human capital that a productive workforce represents. Invest EAP provides expert and

confidential personal counseling and guidance to employees across a range of issues, whether workplace-related (such as relationships among coworkers, and unmet needs at the workplace) or personal (dealing with mental or financial stress, dependency on medications, or family issues such as eldercare or childcare problems). It also provides crisis services to individuals, and to companies and agencies dealing with a stressful workplace event.

WEC's relationship with Invest EAP began under former General Manager Avram Patt. Richards made sure to retain this resource when she came to the Co-op as Patt's replacement.

"We don't have a lot of money to spend, so we want to leverage the programs we already have," she says. "EAP offers a wide spectrum of services we can take advantage of. We used their staff to facilitate training on effective workplace culture – how to treat one another respectfully and considerately under all circumstances. We thought it was fabulous. The entire staff attended, and I felt people really got a lot out of it."

A far newer initiative at WEC is the Wellness Program. Richards, with Dawn Johnson's enthusiastic participation, launched this initiative about a year ago. Headed by a Wellness Committee, the intent is to raise people's consciousness of the importance of physical, mental, and even social health in a workplace environment (and, of course, away from work).

"Dawn is chair of the committee, and I am a member," says General Manager Richards. "We try to have representation from all the departments. Dawn is a key person in this whole equation. She's very committed."

Others on the Wellness Committee include Teia Greenslit, Linda Nelson

and Cheryl Willette, who alternately represent the Finance Department; Utility Field Technician Brian Wilkin from WEC's Engineering Department; First Class Lineman Jason Preston; and Member Services Supervisor Susan Golden. Safety & Environmental Coordinator Scott Martino participates, too, which is helpful because he can incorporate instruction and reminders about safe and healthy work practices particularly important to the employees who work in the warehouse and garage, and the line workers in the field.

Dawn, who has worked part-time as a personal trainer in the past, points out that "Wellness isn't just exercise. It has to do with nutrition, the air in your workplace environment, mental health..."

She's also realistic, knowing this approach can be off-putting for some employees. "You've got to meet people where they are," she says. "Not everyone is going to run, or stand on a rebounder like I do, or stretch publicly like I also do. (I'm way past being embarrassed about that!)"

Actions undertaken so far include putting healthy snacks, like almonds, around in both buildings, and in December the debut of an interoffice e-newsletter called *Watt's Up*. It's a one-pager; on the front are brief entries including employee recognition ("On May 16, Linda Nelson celebrated 31 years of service with WEC!") and staff goings on ("The annual Buck Pool just concluded. Brent Lilley won – 5 points, 169 pounds"). On the back is the Wellness Team Corner, with news about the Wellness Committee, recipes to encourage healthy eating, and a list "wellness resources" in the area.

Watt's Up will also remind employees of resources that the Co-op provides. It has been longstanding policy, for

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2014 System Reliability Report

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December.

In other words, WEC's reliability performance for its members had markedly improved.

In the text of the report (not in the above graph), the Public Service Board (PSB) permits utilities to report their outages "exclusive of major storms," to gauge their performance under what should be more manageable conditions. With the December storm excluded, WEC Operations Director Dan Weston was able to report that consumer hours out in 2014 reflected a 6.5-percent decrease over the rolling average from recent years, and a 12.5-percent decrease from 2013.

This actually leads to a closer look at 2013. Why does 2013 appear to have a worse record than 2012? Electric utilities are a regulated industry, answerable to the PSB, so shouldn't things steadily improve?

There's a better explanation for 2013's comparatively poor performance than 13 being, in some people's estimation, an unlucky number. The Co-op was in the final stages of completing a major equipment-replacement project that had been financed partly with federal funds from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (a.k.a. the "stimulus bill"). WEC had thousands of "cutouts" on its lines – a type of fuse housing – that were made of porcelain, and because they cracked in Vermont's weather conditions they were a leading cause of outages for Vermont utilities. The Co-op set about replacing all of these cutouts on its system, and though the project had been ongoing for some years, 2013 was the deadline under the ARRA grant.

"WEC's efforts to replace these devices have been instrumental in decreasing the number of outages caused by equipment failure," Weston reported. "The safe installation [of the replacement devices], however, typically requires a [planned] outage."

The "consumer hours out" associated with those purposeful outages were an investment in a future with a major reliability-associated headache for WEC and its members out of the way, and better years to come. In fact, WEC's performance in 2014, up until December, bore that out.

Here are some other notable conclusions arising from the research Weston and his staff performed for the PSB report.

1. Trees were the major cause of outages for the Co-op in 2014 – no surprise there – accounting for 37 percent of all outages and 43 percent of total consumer hours out.
2. The second-leading cause of consumer hours out – at 26 percent – was "power-supplier-related outages." This refers to the five times last year that Green Mountain Power's sub-transmission lines, which carry bulk power from the grid to several of WEC's substations, went dead. In terms of *numbers* of outages, the second-leading cause was "company-initiated" power interruptions for maintenance

work on the lines; but these were usually short in duration, with localized impact. By contrast, the power-supplier incidents affected hundreds of WEC members at a time (because they disabled substations), and lasted for hours. These were frustrating events for the Co-op, as WEC's staff simply had to wait for other utilities to bring their systems back on line before WEC could move to restore power to its members.

Ultimately, the 2014 System Reliability Report came out positively for WEC. The PSB holds Vermont's utilities to individualized standards of performance. In this, Weston was able to report: "WEC's three-year average . . . is significantly better than the established performance indices."

What's on tap?

Weston calls it "hardening the system."

Washington Electric is now several months into a new Four-Year Construction Work Plan (CWP). These are documents that commit electric co-ops to specific improvement projects, financed by loans from the federal Rural Utilities Service. The thrust of WEC's effort from now through May of 2017 will be to upgrade targeted sections of the system to better withstand the more-extreme storms that Vermont is now experiencing on a regular basis.

Recent CWPs aided the rebuilding of several Washington Electric substations, and improvements to the three-phase power lines (three parallel wires running over cross arms from pole to pole) that typically carry power to the smaller, single-phase circuits where most people live. These were important projects, and some of the latter will continue.

But what Weston is eyeing now is making the electric distribution system – the poles and wires – more physically durable, "so that they won't break under the snow and ice loading that we're seeing more frequently." To a large extent, this means changing to thicker conductors (wires) and shorter spans between poles.

There's a history to this. Rural co-ops like WEC were founded shortly before World War II, and as they expanded their territories they did so under wartime and early post-war restrictions on some materials, including copper. Consequently, they used steel wire that's basically the same size as the cords for your toaster or table lamp. They would braid three of these to create something more substantial; thus the name "3/12" for these electric conductors: three strands of number 12-gauge wire wrapped together. But even braided, these old conductors are not very thick or very strong, and they are also prone to rusting.

Yet for lots of utilities, including WEC, they're still out there.

"We've identified 41 miles of it on our 1,250-mile system," says Weston. Providing an example, he cites an area in Cabot where the 3/12 conductor put up in 1940 is still in service. "The poles were replaced in 1969, and some of those have been replaced again. But that aged, vintage, small conductor

remains."


The remedy is what's called "one-aught," a multi strand aluminum-alloy wire about as thick as a person's thumb. There is less line-loss with aluminum alloy (think of line loss as friction, which converts some of the electric energy it's carrying to heat, and thus wastes it). The alloy is also stronger.

All good. But the thicker wire will hold more snow and ice, which is not so good.

"That's why we go to shorter spans," Weston explains. Poles placed more closely together will provide more

structural support for wires that, although they'll be stronger, will also be prone to heavier snow loads.

That's not all that's in the 2014-2017 CWP. It also covers more aggressive replacement of decaying poles and other aged equipment. But the theme remains: hardening the system. (A related component is the move to relocate more line sections from the woods to the roadsides, where they'll be easier to reach and repair.)

"This represents a huge commitment by the Board of Directors," Weston says. "But it's the core of what we are as an electric co-op." 

Wellness

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example, for WEC to offer modest financial assistance for the cost of a gym membership; and each worker, every three years, qualifies for a contribution toward some kind of exercise equipment. Over the years, employees have used those funds to help them purchase treadmills, mountain bikes, snowshoes, kayaks, and exercise classes.

Another progressive benefit WEC offers is a Wellness Day – a paid day off if an employee has worked a calendar quarter without taking sick time. Ever watchful for a new way to promote a healthy work environment at the Co-op, Dawn recently completed an application for a "Green Thumbs at Work Garden Grant," a program for small businesses offered by the Vermont Department of Health.

The 'Corporate Cup'


The Wellness Committee's first notable public accomplishment was to recruit WEC teams to participate in the 31st Annual Corporate Cup Challenge last May. The Corporate

Cup, a five-kilometer running-or-walking event, attracts hundreds of companies and thousands of participants. Washington Electric fielded two runners – line workers Jason Preston and Hans Pope-Howe – and six walkers: Administrative Assistant Debbie Brown, Information Database Technician Sandy Gendron, Linda and Teia from Accounting, and Member Service Representatives Beth Ouellette and Elaine Gonier.

By elevating a culture of wellness and reminding employees of the breadth of resources that are available to them, Dawn says WEC can impact people's lives and the workplace as a whole.

"The better you feel about yourself, the better you are at relationships and things that affect how we work together," she says.

General Manager Richards agrees and points out that this is one way smart, modern companies are investing their energies, and even a small portion of their finances.


"Our greatest assets at WEC are our employees," she says. "We all do better, as a Co-op, when we're all doing better as human beings." 

Community Fund

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of course, are also invited.

With winter upon us, it's also a good time to remember that WARMTH

and Operation Round-Up, which are heating-assistance programs, are other ways for members to help their neighbors. Call the Co-op to learn how to participate. 

2014 WEC Community Fund Contributions

Contribution Recipients

Adopt-A-Family & Food Boxes
 AWARE
 Barre Area Senior Center
 Barre Heritage Festival
 Bradford Public Library
 Cabot Connects
 Calef Memorial Library
 Capital Soccer
 Central VT Adult Basic Education
 Central VT Council on Aging
 Central VT Home Health & Hospice
 Chelsea Public Library
 Corinth Historical Society
 Duxbury Elf Food Shelf
 Faith In Action Northern Communities
 Fourth Grade Foresters
 Friends of the Mad River
 Friends of the Winooski River
 Good Beginnings of Central VT
 Good Beginnings of VT
 Granite City Grocery
 Green Mountain Performing Arts
 Green Mountain United Way
 Green Up Vermont
 Groton Community Club
 Hanna Satterlee – Animal Dance
 Production
 Home Share Now

Jaquith Public Library
 Kellogg-Hubbard Library
 Mad River Valley Rotary Club
 Montpelier High School Project Graduation
 North Branch Nature Center
 NRECA Internation Foundation
 People's Health & Wellness Clinic
 Plainfield Historical Society
 Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
 Roxbury Free Library
 SHS Project Graduation
 Studio Place Arts
 Stuff-A-Truck
 The General Breed Fund
 The Governor's Institutes of Vermont
 Topsham Corinth Little League
 Topsham Historical Society
 Twin Valley Seniors
 Twinfield Union School-Spanish Class
 UVM - 4-H Dairy Program
 UVM - 4H Foundation
 VT Agricultural Hall of Fame
 VT Center for Independent Living
 VT Council On Rural Development
 VT Historical Society
 VT Horse Assisted Therapy
 VT State Science & Math Fair
 Washington County Youth Service Bureau
 Woodbury Volunteer Fire Dept