

# THE POWER OF LOCAL OWNERSHIP

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December, 2010

## New Years Resolution 2011.

Save energy and money. Start the new year with a resolution you can keep. On average, we use five times as much energy to heat space as to cool it, so heating is a great place to begin your new year resolutions. You can start by using an Energy Star approved thermostat, closing storm windows and maintaining or replacing your current heating system. For more energy saving ideas, visit Focus on Energy at [www.focusonenergy.com](http://www.focusonenergy.com) or call them toll free at 1-800-762-7077.



2013 will begin a new chapter in Rice Lake Utilities History.

After many months of negotiations with Xcel energy along with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) oversight, Rice Lake Utilities and the other 9 wholesale customers were able to settle a rate case contesting the large increase. However, it will have a minor effect on the power supply increase that went into effect on July 1st, 2010 from Xcel Energy. Unfortunately, this increase will remain in effect until our current contract with Xcel Energy expires on December 31, 2012.

However the good news is, Rice Lake Utilities has taken a pro-active approach and has decided for the first time in our history to seek out another power supplier. This has resulted in a contractual agreement with American Electric Power (AEP) to purchase power for Rice Lake Utilities beginning January 1, 2013. As a result, we were able to lock in our power costs for 2013, 2014 and 2015 and will be negotiating future years supplies as soon as possible. This will give us the opportunity to stabilize rates for years to come.

Rice Lake Utilities is one of the first municipal utilities in the state of Wisconsin to take advantage of the opportunities that the open access transmission system has created. We are very excited as we enter into this new era of power purchasing and we will strive to maintain the value and performance our consumer/owners have come to expect from Rice Lake Utilities by maximizing benefits and cost efficient services.

The holidays are a wonderful time of year - - festive parties, exchanging gifts, family gatherings, wonderful music, beautiful decorations, happy smiles and warm hugs. It's good to remember that all the most wonderful things during the holiday season are free-- those happy smiles and warm hugs, friends, special feelings. Rice Lake Utilities would like to take this opportunity to thank our consumer/owners for allowing us to serve you in 2010; it has been our pleasure. We also wish all of our consumer/owners a safe and happy holiday and a prosperous new year.

## Rice Lake Utilities Commission approves submittal of rate case to the PSC.

Rice Lake Utilities will be submitting a request for a new electric rate structure to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (the state agency with authority over electric rates). It has been fourteen years since the electric utility has submitted a request for a rate review. The reason for the request is to correctly distribute rates among our rate classes as well as rolling the power costs directly into our rate which will allow a more stable power cost adjustment on customers utility bills. A lot has changed since 1997 (the year of the last rate case). Costs have risen since that time along with the amount of consumers we serve so it makes sense that our operational costs have also increased. The PSC is now using 6.25% for most rate cases, however a utility can request a lower return and because Rice Lake Utilities has taken considerable care in keeping operational costs low, and good financial planning, we will only be asking for a 5.5% rate of return, which is low for industry standards. Rice Lake Utilities has consistently been in the lowest 10% of electric residential rates according to the PSC bill comparison web site and this increase will not change that fact. Once the PSC reviews our application and design rate, a public hearing will then be scheduled. The whole process will take approximately four months. If you have any questions regarding the rate case application please contact Kristi Nelson, Rice Lake Utilities Office Manager.

### Going away for the winter?

If so you may want to notify Rice Lake Utilities for emergency purposes and to also have your bills forwarded.



## Long time Rice Lake Utilities Commissioner bids farewell.

Richard Moe has retired from the Rice Lake Utilities Commission after giving more than twenty years of service to the consumer/owners.

Dick served as a commissioner for his first four years and the remaining sixteen years as commission secretary. Rice Lake Utilities would like to say thank you to Dick for all of his years of dedication and hard work to the consumer/owners of Rice Lake Utilities and for helping to shape Rice Lake Utilities into a reliable and vital part of the Rice Lake community .



RLU Commission President, Tom Moullette (left) presents a plaque to long time commissioner Richard Moe for his years of service to Rice Lake Utilities.



## Please consider adopting a Hydrant in your neighborhood.

In the event of a fire emergency during the winter, could firefighters find the hydrant near your home or does it get buried under a snow pile? If so, please consider adopting a hydrant and keeping snow shoveled away from it during the winter season. This will ensure hydrants are visible and will greatly speed the response time in case of an emergency. If you notice a hydrant doesn't have a snow marker on it and you feel it should, please let us know. Please don't let your neighborhood hydrant remain "under cover". Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

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