

# THE POWER OF LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Community Minded



December, 2011

Community Proud



Community Owned

The employees of Rice Lake Utilities would like to say thank you to our consumer/owners for the privilege and honor to serve you in 2011. We will continue to strive and maintain the high quality you have come to expect while keeping costs to a minimum in 2012. As 2011 comes to a close, Rice Lake Utilities reflects on a busy year and gives many thanks for keeping our staff safe as they accomplished their tasks throughout the year. We thought we would share some of our more significant projects that we have worked on throughout 2011.

The electric crews have been busy patrolling our distribution system looking for items/issues that could jeopardize our ability to maintain a reliable electrical system. Every five years the electric department walks the distribution system (aka walking the line) and inspects every pole, overhead and underground line, transformers, primary and secondary pedestals and compiles a list of preventative maintenance projects. Some items that are included in the inspection are: grounding of U guards, street light maintenance, tree trimming/vegetation control, daily substation inspections etc., checking signage on poles, truck maintenance, as well as an infrared scan of the system to identify hot spots. The idea is to catch a problem before it becomes one. They are also continuing to implement energy efficiency projects funded through a state grant such as energy efficient street lighting and traffic signal installation.

The wastewater crews have kept quite busy dealing with treatment plant upgrades, which are currently on schedule. Numerous updated processes along with major equipment replacements are the focus of the project. The anticipated completion date for the upgrades of the treatment plant are the end of March beginning of April 2012. The water department finished checking the water and sewer services this fall in conjunction with the street reconstruction that has taken place on N. Main St., which is now common practice on all street reconstructs. The water towers located on Coleman St. and Hilltop have also undergone a complete refurbishing on the inside and out which meant that the water crews needed to establish a temporary water tower system during construction. Water/wastewater crews continue along with preventative maintenance such as hydrant flushing, meter testing, sewer televising and operating of valves to name a few things. All crews and personnel have been involved in the conversion of the AMI (Automated Metering Infrastructure) project which we hope will be completed by the end of 2012.

The front office has also seen big changes in 2011. The office space has been completely remodeled and many energy efficiency upgrades have been implemented as part of a statewide grant for improving energy efficiency in government facilities. There will also be a new billing software system added in 2012 that will have many new enhancements as well as new technology available to our consumer/owners. We will keep you updated as the implementation begins. The office also said goodbye to Charlie Dulyea, Rice Lake Utilities Billing Clerk for over 29 years who retired. Her position has been filled by Pam Mackiewicz. Ironically, Pam was the very first recipient of the Rice Lake Utilities high school continuing education scholarship that was established in 1998. Pam brings with her a vast amount of computer knowledge which will be a very valuable resource in our ever changing technological world. Welcome Pam!

Rice Lake Utilities will be closed on the following dates to celebrate the holidays with our families: Monday, December 26th, and Monday, January 2nd. Our phone lines will still be answered 24 hours a day by Gold Cross Services in Eau Claire who will dispatch personnel in an emergency. All non-emergency matters will be handled the following working business day.

### Rice Lake Utilities adds a hybrid powered bucket truck to the electric fleet.

Since the creation of the bucket truck it has been powered by an internal combustion diesel engine. Despite the technological developments of the vehicle over the last several decades, the truck base and the diesel engine have remained the standard design. The diesel engine exclusively provides the power that allows the truck to drive and the hydraulic lift to work. Recently, due to the increasing cost of fuel, engineers have begun rethinking the traditional bucket design and have added an electric motor into the equation, giving birth to hybrid bucket trucks.

A version of this vehicle known as a hybrid bucket truck is equipped with not one engine, but rather two different types of engines. Under the hood of this hybrid version is its main "clean" diesel engine that powers the vehicle during on-road driving; an electric motor lies alongside the diesel engine to power the truck's hydraulic system, saving money and the environment with unnecessary engine idling.

When the holidays are over and it's time to undeck the halls, pack your decorations carefully so they'll stay safe in storage and operate safely when you unpack them next year.

- Before you pack away your lights, inspect them for flaws like cracked sockets, frayed wires and loose connections.
- Separate outdoor from indoor decorations, and label them accordingly. Using indoor decorations outdoors can be hazardous because they may not be water resistant.
- Use LED Christmas lights to light your decorations they significantly reduce energy use and the bulbs last a lot longer.



**NEW plastic items to be added to the residential citywide recycling program beginning January 1st, 2012. Allied Waste will be adding the collection of household/consumer goods that are plastic products, including their packaging. Look for the recycle numbers 3-7. This includes:**

**#1 - PET or PETE: polyethylene terephthalate** All soft drink water bottles (leave the bottle caps ON the bottles) beverage and mouthwash bottles and rinsed plastic food jars/containers.

**#2 - HDPE: high-density polyethylene** Plastic bottles, plastic milk & water jugs, detergents, cleaners, shampoo bottles.

**#3 - PVC: Vinyl or polyvinyl chloride** Household cleaning product bottles (must be empty), cooking oil bottles, salad dressing bottles and some shampoo bottles. (No PVC piping allowed at all).

**#4 - LDPE: low-density polyethylene** Plastic bags (all of the bags must be put inside one of the bags), small bucket: (8" diameter max), soap dispenser bottles, food storage containers, squeeze bottles (No food residue allowed).

**#5 - PP: polypropylene** Yogurt containers, margarine tubs, some food containers, ketchup bottles (rinsed clean).

**#6 - PS: polystyrene** Small plastic flower pots (8" max size and must be clean), plastic cups, some medicine bottles and some small plastic toys.

**#7 - Everything else** Some miscellaneous small plastic containers/packaging.

If you have any questions you can contact city hall at 715-234-1989 or log onto their website at [www.cityofricelake.com](http://www.cityofricelake.com). Thank you for participating in the city-wide recycling program. Just a reminder-you can also bring your lamp/light bulbs to city hall to be recycled. This includes incandescent as well as fluorescent bulbs.

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