



Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative

## HANDING OVER THE REINS

This will be my last report to you as I will be retiring as of December 31, 2016.

The board of directors was informed of

my intent to retire back in March. The board promptly went to work to hire a replacement and on June 1 promoted Office Manager Dean Ortmann to be the new president/CEO. Since then Dean has moved some of the office personnel to different positions and hired a new cashier to fill the void caused by the position changes. Everyone now has had time to settle into their new jobs, and your cooperative should be able to go forward without a glitch.

I would like to thank all the employees, the board, and our members for giving me the opportunity to manage your cooperative. I have spent a wonderful 37 years employed at CVEC. The work has had a great purpose, and I am leaving with a feeling of accomplishment with the number of improvements everyone at your cooperative has worked together on over the years to keep your lights on.

The cooperative has been my second family and I know I will miss the camaraderie and friendship we established, but the time has come for me to move to my next great adventure. So, with a sense of happiness and a little remorse, I bid adieu and wish everyone all the best.

Thank you.



*Todd Howard*

## TODD HOWARD RETIRES

**“There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction.”—Winston Churchill**

For 37 years, James Tiberius (Latin for Todd) Howard has been an integral part of the cycle of change at Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative. He’s seen the co-op through many changes, from cross country lines, some with poles dug and placed by hand, to today’s directional boring under solid granite river beds; from the mapping system, member payments, capital credits, and service information kept on large paper ledgers by hand to a nearly paperless information system run by high-end computers; and even from meters that when Todd started were read by the members once a month to today’s meters that send readings daily and provide a multitude of services and information that greatly improved service to members.

Todd started his co-op service as a cashier, taking member payments and questions. He then worked his way through every office position: member services, billing clerk, accountant, office manager—all the way to president/CEO. His motto was to leave each position in better shape than he had found it. Todd worked diligently with co-workers and led the charge to bring the co-op to its

**If the goal was to leave the co-op and its members in better shape than when he started, well then, mission accomplished.**

very best through streamlining work flow and implementing the latest technologies. Throughout his career, Todd was always working hard on the “next project,” yet for a small fee (a can of Coke or handful of Cheetos) he would break away and help whoever needed it.

While you may have found him working in the wee hours of the morning or late at night in the office, Todd was never content to be inside. His real passion was the electrical system that delivered electricity to the members. Often he would sneak out to help stake line, upgrade map locations, or plan line moves that would make them easily serviced and maintained. In the early days of his career, outages were common and some members complained that they lost power whenever the wind blew. Todd spent his share of time with the crews restoring power after a storm. In 1991 the co-op experienced a major storm that left thousands of members without power, some of them for up to 14 days. It was this storm and others like it that helped form his determination to upgrade the infrastructure at a much faster pace.

Over the years, Todd spearheaded the effort to improve system reliability. Through well thought out work plans that increased capital investment, adding new tie lines, moving hard to maintain lines out of right-of-way areas, switching heavily wooded overhead lines to underground, and an aggressive brushing and clearing program, the co-op’s system steadily became better. Today Chippewa Valley’s lines are second to none, and the members enjoy some of the lowest outage times in the state. If the goal was to leave the co-op and its members in better shape than when he started, well then, mission accomplished.

With thankfulness and much appreciation, the board and staff of Chippewa Valley Electric wish Todd and Sue the best in the years to come. Congratulations!

*“Change is inevitable—except from a vending machine.”—Robert C. Gallagher*



Pictured above: Front row, from left, Robbie Poradish (cashier) and Dean Ortmann (CEO/president). In the back row are Della Kent (accountant) and June Bach (office manager).

Pictured above left is Ed Rosseter, who helped out with the line crew this past summer. Directly left is Danny Hladilek, our new apprentice lineman.

## EMPLOYEE CHANGES AT CHIPPEWA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**We've had some new faces here at Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative, plus some familiar faces in different places! We're pleased to announce these recent employee changes.**

Ed Rosseter returned as a 1,000-hour employee to assist the crew during the busy summer season. Ed worked with Chippewa Valley Electric in the summer of 2015 and was brought back to be part of the crew once again. Thank you for helping us out this past summer. We appreciate your hard work!

Danny Hladilek of Cadott was hired as a full-time apprentice lineman June 1, 2016. Danny worked with the crew in the summer of 2014 and 2015. We are happy to have Danny as part of our full-time crew!

In light of Todd's retirement, Chippewa Valley Electric has seen several additional changes. Dean Ortmann was hired as the new CEO/president. Dean began his career with CVEC 25 years ago as the accountant, then in 2000 was promoted to office manager. Now he will replace Todd Howard in his new leadership role.

To fill the void that Dean left, June Bach was promoted to the position of office manager. June had been the co-op accountant for 16 years.

After June was moved to office

manager, Della Kent transitioned from the cashier position to accountant. Della had been the Chippewa Valley Satellite Accountant from 1996 until 2014. After Chippewa Valley Satellite ceased to offer DirecTV, Della became the cashier for Chippewa Valley Electric.

To fill the final vacancy, this past August Robbie Poradish, of Cornell, was hired as cashier. Robbie has been a welcome addition to CVEC with her strong work ethic and her sense of humor.

Congratulations to you all!

# WEATHERING Winter Storms

Photo courtesy of Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives

Winter storms can cause hazardous road conditions, downed power lines, and extended power outages. Safe Electricity shares tips on preparing for and safely weathering winter storms.

Before a storm ever begins, tune into your local weather service for the weather forecast. It is important to know the differences among various watches and warnings.

- **Winter Storm Watches** signify that stormy conditions, including heavy snow, freezing rain, or sleet, are likely within the next few days. You should be alert, as this means adverse conditions could begin within the next 12 to 48 hours.
- **Winter Storm Warnings** call for stormy conditions to begin within the next 24 hours. Those in the range of the warning should be mindful of the impending conditions and consider canceling plans to travel outside of the home.
- **Blizzard Warnings** advise those in the affected areas to seek refuge immediately due to high levels of snow, strong winds, and resulting near-zero visibility to those traveling on the road.

If the power goes out, notify Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative of the outage. Have an emergency kit prepared to help you and your family weather the storm and the outage safely and comfortably. Some of the items this kit should

include are bottled water, non-perishable food, flashlights, a weather radio, and extra batteries.

If you are using an alternative heating source during an outage, know how to use it safely and have all supplies for it gathered. To help you and your family stay warm during an outage, dress warmly, cover windows at night, close off unneeded rooms, and place draft blocks at the bottom of doors.

To protect your circuits and appliances when power is restored, switch off lights and unplug appliances. Leave one light switched on as a quick reminder that the power is restored.

Only venture outside if absolutely necessary. Downed power lines could be submerged in snow and ice, making them difficult to see. If you must go outside, use caution and treat all downed and hanging lines as if they are energized. Stay away, warn others to stay away, and immediately contact your utility.

If travel is necessary, be especially cautious driving, and keep an emergency kit in your vehicle. Its supplies should include a windshield scraper, a first aid kit, a cell phone charging adaptor, booster cables, a blanket, and a flashlight with extra batteries.

Never drive over a downed line because that could pull down the pole and other equipment, causing additional hazards. If you see a downed line, do not get out of your car. The safest place is inside the vehicle. Contact the utility immediately.



## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE to High School Seniors



This spring, Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) will be awarding several scholarships to graduating high school seniors of member families through our Federated Youth Foundation Scholarship Program. The scholarship program is funded entirely from unclaimed patronage capital issued by the cooperative and from members who wish to donate their capital credits earnings to this program. Please contact CVEC if you wish to do so.

Each scholarship is worth \$500, and applications can be obtained from Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative ([cvecoop.com](http://cvecoop.com)) or the student's high school guidance counselor.

CVEC's scholarship program began in 1998, and since its inception we have provided more than \$123,000 in scholarships to area students. An independent scholarship committee composed of retired educators judges the applicants based upon merit.

Eligibility will be determined according to the following criteria:

- The student must graduate during the 2016–2017 and be enrolled in a post-secondary program at a college, university, or vocational school.

- The applicant's parents (or legal guardians) must be members of Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative, and they must currently be receiving service.
- The applicant must display average or above-average academic records.
- The applicant's family income will not be a deciding factor in awarding the scholarships.

To apply for the scholarships, eligible applicants must complete an application about school activities, leadership positions, community involvement, awards and recognitions. In addition, each applicant must write a 200-word essay about future goals and objectives, and the student's values and attitude on life.

The completed scholarship applications must be returned to the cooperative office by April 1, 2017. The applications will be reviewed by a special Scholarship Committee, and the scholarships will be awarded to the students at an honors ceremony or at graduation.

If you have any questions about the scholarship program, please call Nicole at Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative, 715.239.6800 or 800.300.6800.

### Dean Ortman, President/CEO

317 S. 8th St., P.O. Box 575, Cornell, WI 54732  
715.239.6800 • 1.800.300.6800  
[www.cvecoop.com](http://www.cvecoop.com)

### Nicole Whipp Sime, Editor



**Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative**

*CVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*