

## A Historic Month for PEC

William L. Caynor Sr., Price Electric Cooperative CEO

It is difficult to convey the historic events at your Cooperative without first expressing our grief and sorrow to everyone affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Harvey swept ashore on the evening of August 25<sup>th</sup> with 130 mph winds. The impact was devastating and as if this weren't enough, Harvey went back out to sea and made landfall two more times before downgrading its strength and proceeding inland. Rainfall was an unprecedented 50 inches in some areas and more than 60 unfortunate souls lost their lives. At least 160,000 Texas Cooperative members lost power and Victoria Electric Cooperative in Victoria and Jackson Electric Cooperative in Edna experienced systemwide outages. Utilizing mutual aid agreements, one-third of the 67 Texas Cooperatives responded to assist and six days later only 14,000 members were still without electricity. The support was overwhelming but it is evident that there is much more work to do as the flood waters subside.

Irma made landfall in the Florida Keys as a Category 4 storm on September 10. Throughout the next several hours it left a trail of destruction in its wake, recording peak gusts of 142 miles per hour in Naples and maximum rainfall of nearly 16 inches at Fort Pierce. An estimated one million co-op members were still without power by September 12. To answer the call for aid, nearly 2,000 cooperative crews from over 25 states headed to Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina to assist with restoration. In Wisconsin, line crews from 18 electric cooperatives



including PEC formed convoys and headed to assist with rebuilding at Clay Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Keystone Heights, northeast of Gainesville. At its peak, Clay Electric had approximately 130,000 members—representing about 75 percent of its system—without power. More than 40 vehicles were dispatched from Wisconsin, including bucket trucks, pole-hauling trailers, and digging

equipment. Anticipating a lengthy rebuilding project, a second round of 24 co-op volunteers had been recruited for later rotation into the damaged area. The relief mission is similar to assistance rendered by Wisconsin co-ops 12 years ago following Hurricane Katrina. Personnel from 14 Wisconsin electric cooperatives were dispatched over a four-week period to Louisiana on a rotating basis, helping to rebuild a local co-op distribution system that had been almost totally destroyed. It's also similar—on a larger scale—to the ROPE (restoration of power in an emergency) program in which Wisconsin co-ops help each other shorten recovery times when severe weather damages local electric systems.

Here in the Northwoods, two monumental events occurred in August. One was the dedication and ribbon cutting for the Flambeau Solar Project and the other was the ground-breaking of your new member service center.

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, WI Senator Janet Bewley and Assemblywoman Beth Meyers were on hand along with representatives from CMS Enterprises, groSolar, Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and your Cooperative for the ribbon cutting and dedication of the largest solar array in Wisconsin. The Flambeau Solar Project has a generation capacity of 2.5 MW (AC) and is connected to your distribution



system, energizing more than 600 homes in Crane Chase region. This is one of 12 utility scale solar projects DPC have contracted for and amount to 20.5 MW overall. Price Electric members, Ken and Sally Denzine were also on hand. The Denzines own the 22 acres that have been leased for the solar array to be constructed and operated. Ken's father purchased the land in 1945, which was used to cultivate corn, soybeans, or alfalfa prior to its new-found purpose.

Another monumental event occurred on August 31<sup>st</sup>. On this day, a ground-breaking ceremony transpired at your new member service center location on Springs Drive, south of Phillips. All your directors and Cooperative employees were on hand for the ceremony, along with



representatives from River Valley Architects and Hoeft Builders. Equipment for the grading work had already been unloaded as bid responses have been reviewed and most contractors selected to get this project underway. There is a lot to be done in a short time but the energy is intensifying as the project moves forward. I am excited to see all of you at next year's open house.

These events are historical, although we tend to view history as the past and it is defined as, “the whole series of past events connected with someone or something.” It is the recording of events. However, significant events of today are the recorded history of tomorrow. The member service center is the Cooperative’s first new complex since 1951, and the solar array is the first of its size and scale in the state. Given the progression in the renewable market, someday this might seem a trivial measure, but it can still produce 20% of your Cooperative’s summer demand load.

President John F. Kennedy said, “We would like to live as we once lived, but history will not permit it.” We will continue to do our best to stay ahead of the changes affecting your Cooperative to minimize the impact to you, our member/owners.