

## **Fresh & Innovative Member Service Center**

By William L. Caynor Sr., Price Electric CEO

Following four years of searching for available land in the region, space needs studies, comparison and selections for efficiency, conservation, and usefulness for operations and our member/owners; your new member service center is open for business and ready to serve you. The first raising of the flags occurred on July 19, and we opened for business the next day, Friday, July 20, one workday ahead of schedule. A ribbon cutting ceremony with your board of directors and the cooperative employees occurred just before the July 31 board meeting. Many thanks to the employees for their hard work to get us operational ahead of schedule.

How proud we, the directors and employees of Price Electric Cooperative (PEC) are, of the opportunity to serve you better, and more efficiently. A new age of possibilities is upon us. We look forward to showcasing our operations to you at our member appreciation breakfast on October 13, where we will also provide building tours of your new member service center.

The new building was built on the 37 acres that are owned by the membership in the Town of Worcester, and was constructed to increase energy conservation and efficiency. Thus far with the LED motion sensor lighting, and geothermal HVAC system, we have operated at less than 25kW. That's good! There are a few PEC firsts in this building. The building is totally self-sufficient, with well water, septic tank, generator backup, and gasoline and diesel pumps. This ensures that we will be able to operate to maintain or restore your power in the worst possible conditions. We are also connected to PEC's distribution system and are purchasing energy from you. All the motorized equipment can now be stored in the garage and protected from the elements, and the pole yard and transformers are stored onsite for access and efficiency. There's also a mechanic's bay, and most significantly, the building is accessible to the handicapped. No one should be restricted from entering because of a disability.

Interestingly enough, the building appears large in comparison with the previous facility, but is average by electric cooperative size comparisons. In relationship to ten recently built WI electric cooperative office complexes, Price Electric's complex ranks sixth in overall square footage and 66% of this is in the garage and warehouse area, allowing for future growth and expansion.

There are a few logistical items to mention: the mailing and billing address, phone number, website, and e-mail address, are still the same, but the new physical address is: W6803 Springs Drive, Phillips, WI, 54555. Also, member entrance and access are on the north side of the building facing Springs Drive (See drawing). Employee parking is on south side of the building and the community and training room access door is on the southwestern corner of the building. The member drop box for payments is in the front next to the furthest eastern parking space. If you pull in there, you should be able to roll down your window and drop in your payment.

This is a monumental and historical moment within your cooperative. This is only the second time the cooperative has constructed a new member service center in its 77 years of incorporation, and thus I wish to reaffirm why we built a new member service center when the cooperative has minimal growth and increasing inflationary expenses. There are many daily operational reasonings, but much harder to quantify with an actual dollar savings. The true reasoning is uncomplicated: it's to address the future needs of the cooperative through long term financial planning. Although the cooperative membership and revenue growth is somewhat flat, the construction costs and interest rates are continually increasing and thus, the sooner one moves towards replacement, the sooner one utilizes the advantages of what a new building can offer. A modest review of

interest rates and construction expenses for the year 2000 illustrates that the construction costs were only 53% of the total cost today and the interest rate was twice as much. The old office building we departed was built in 1951 at a projected cost of \$65,000. It has not only served the membership and the employees well for 67 years, but it will continue to serve the community, as the facility was sold to Don & Jennifer Hansen of Hansen HVAC, a local family owned and operated business. The Hansens have a lot of vision and have already begun painting the outside of the structure with their trademark red paint. We know they will prosper and wish them much success.

I hope you will take the time when you have a moment and stop by to get a glimpse of your new member service center and take in that new paint smell, and don't forget to attend the October 13 member appreciation breakfast in order to tour the building in its entirety. My desire is that you leave with the same pride in the operation that the directors and employees have in working here.