



Tom Liebe, President & CEO

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same."

– Ronald Reagan

From our cooperative family to yours, Happy Independence Day!

## Co-op Kudos

Congratulations to Westby Co-op Credit Union (WCCU) on receiving a [2016 Gold Million Dollar Lender Award](#).

Congratulations to NRECA on their "[Co-op Roots Run Deep](#)" event. More than 400 electric cooperatives in 43 states sent soil for the commemoration of



## Cooperative Network News

Happy Independence Day!

### Minnesota

#### Judge orders legislature branch funding to continue during legal debate between lawmakers

A Ramsey County judge recently gave the green light for the state of Minnesota to continue funding the legislative branch for at least three more months while a lawsuit ensues between Gov. Mark Dayton (DFL) and the GOP-controlled legislature. The governor is being sued for his line-item veto of legislative branch funding that House Speaker Kurt Daudt (R – Crown) and Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka (R – Nisswa) contend is a violation of the separation of powers clause in the state constitution. Dayton contends his veto was legal and was done to bring legislators back to the bargaining table to discuss differences he believes linger from the recently concluded 2017 regular and special sessions. Funding for all 201 legislators, as well as partisan and non-partisan staff, was set to expire on June 30 due the line-item veto included in the state government finance bill. Both bodies had reserve funds in place to fill the funding gap, but those dollars would have run dry in the next several months. In his order, the judge stated that without funding, the public would be "irreparably harmed" through the deprivation of a basic constitutional right of having a fully functioning legislative branch.

#### Save the Date! 10th Annual Minnesota Co-op Day at the Capitol planned for March 20

The 10th Annual Minnesota Co-op Day at the Capitol has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 20, 2018. This annual event continues to prove instrumental in helping advocate and advance cooperative-related initiatives. Cooperative leaders from across Minnesota will come together for this grassroots lobbying event to meet with legislators and administration officials in St. Paul. We will discuss the important role our cooperative members play in Minnesota's economy and how current issues affect their businesses. This event is a very effective way of gathering together to ensure that the voice of cooperatives is heard throughout all parts of the state. Cooperative Network will continue to keep you updated on details of the event as they become available.

NRECA's 75th anniversary.

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## Cooperative Network Calendar

**July 27: Wisconsin Agricultural Credit Issues Conference**, Stevens Point, Wis.  
[Learn More...](#)

**Sept. 20: Employment Law Update**, Eau Claire, Wis.  
[Learn More...](#)

**Save the Date!**  
**Aug. 8: Electric Sector meeting**, St. Cloud, Minn.

**Nov. 14-15: Cooperative Network Annual General Meeting**, St. Paul, Minn.

**April 30 - May 1, 2018: SCH Conference**, Minneapolis, Minn.

### MDA schedules additional listening sessions on draft Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has scheduled two additional listening sessions on the draft proposal for regulating the use of nitrogen fertilizer in Minnesota. The new meetings will be held on July 12 at the McIntosh Community Center at 4 p.m. and on July 17 at MDA offices in St. Paul at 2 p.m. Two other meetings already scheduled will be held on July 6 at the Great River Regional Library in St. Cloud at 3 p.m. and on July 11 at the Robertson Theatre in Wadena at 6 p.m. The draft rule and updates on the rule writing process can be found [here](#). All comments must be submitted by August 11 in writing, after which MDA is expected to publish the final draft of the rule in the fall of 2017. It is expected that the rule will be adopted in the fall of 2018. Cooperative Network plans to submit comments on the plan and did so during the rule's [first comment period](#) in the winter of 2016. If you have any thoughts or suggestions on comments, please let us know.

### CN participation continues on workgroup dealing with farmer led-water management councils

Legislation included in the omnibus agriculture finance bill during the 2017 session includes language for the establishment of farmer-led water management councils. Cooperative Network and other agriculture groups have participated on a workgroup since last fall to craft a plan on water quality practices related to agriculture. The group recently met to discuss next steps, including the formation of an advisory group and the role agriculture groups will play in the formation of the farmer-led water management councils. The omnibus agriculture finance bill appropriates approximately \$13.3 million per year of the biennium from the former ethanol producer payment account, which can be used for a host of grant opportunities including the farmer-led water management councils.



## Wisconsin

### Cooperative Network supports veteran farmer assistance legislation

At a hearing Wednesday by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Small Business and Tourism, Cooperative Network joined many others in support of Senate Bill 224, relating to establishing a veteran farmer assistance and outreach program and creating a veteran farmer logotype. The legislation is authored by Sen. Patrick Testin (R – Stevens Point) and is the companion to AB 302, which was heard three weeks ago by an Assembly committee. The bill requires DATCP to create, in consultation with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Military Affairs and the federal Department of Agriculture, a program that will integrate veterans into the field of agriculture and support veterans currently working in agriculture. It also requires the DVA, in consultation with DATCP, to create a logotype to identify agricultural products produced by farmers who are certified by DVA as being veterans or who are certified as being immediate family members of veterans who died during service, are missing in action, or died as a result of a service-connected disability.

### **June 26 cheese tour**

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker highlighted the importance of cheese to Wisconsin's economy by having members of his administration, as well as himself, visit cheesemakers in the state. Walker pointed out that "Wisconsin makes over a quarter of the nation's cheese and if our state was a country we would rank fourth in the world in overall cheese production." Walker went on to say that "the dairy industry in Wisconsin is also creating jobs and helping to boost Wisconsin's economy." Cooperative Network participated in the tour with DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel. It should be pointed out that cooperatives process the majority of the cheese produced in Wisconsin.

### **DATCP hosts dairy discussion**

Cooperative Network was invited by DATCP to participate in a discussion on the state of Wisconsin's dairy industry. The discussion was a follow-up to the Dairy Summit hosted by the UW-System as reported in the June 26 edition of Cooperative Network News. DATCP is meeting with producer groups, processor groups and the lending community before deciding the next steps.

### **State Representative Patrick Snyder (R – Wausau) visits with Farm Supply Committee**

Cooperative Network's Farm Supply Committee met on Thursday, June 29 at United FCS offices in Stevens Point, Wis. DATCP Agrichemical Management Bureau Director Lori Bowman reviewed proposed changes in the current state budget relevant to products and licenses that fund the agrichemical management programs and agricultural chemical cleanup program. She stated that if the state budget is not passed by September 1, that there would be an additional year before transitioning to the new flat fee structure for agrichemicals.

State Representative Patrick Snyder (R – Schofield), spoke to the committee on the status of the state budget. He identified the issues outstanding that separate Assembly and Senate Republicans. Transportation was the top issue, with the Senate favoring a higher level of bonding than the governor's budget proposal. Snyder anticipates the state budget could be finalized by mid-July. Rep. Snyder also recognizes the need for more young people to pursue careers in the trades and the importance of technical colleges and partnerships with school districts in giving students the opportunity to gain in-demand skills.

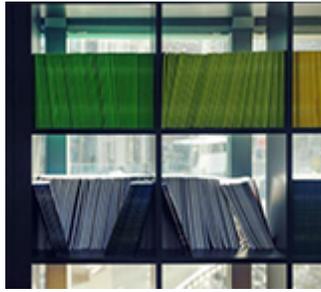
### **Petroleum shortage contingency plan meeting July 26**

The next meeting of the petroleum shortage contingency plan working group will be July 26, from 9-11 a.m. in the office of Wisconsin Emergency Management, 2400 Wright Street in Madison. The agenda includes updates to the contingency plan, waiver procedures (including weight limits, formulated fuel, oxygenate, etc.), prevention of tank topping, even-odd purchasing, set aside and priority end user contracts. Cooperative Network has been participating in the effort to update the 1980s-era document. Megan Levy of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin addressed this effort as a part of the updating of the Energy Assurance Plan at the Farm Supply Committee meeting Thursday in Stevens Point.

### **CHS co-sponsors Safety Day**

Cooperative Network member CHS is among several organizations that are sponsoring Safety Day on July 13 in Wisconsin Dells. Safety Day is designed to help agribusinesses evaluate their safety and training programs for completeness. It will also help you answer the question, "Can your facility pass an OSHA inspection?" For more information on Safety Day visit [www.wiagribusiness.org/safetyday.html](http://www.wiagribusiness.org/safetyday.html)

## **Featured Event**



## **Employment Law Update - September 20** *Protecting your employees and cooperative*

In the business climate, the areas where you need to be legally up-to-date are seemingly endless, and one mistake can be too many. This update is packed with information and insight into today's constantly changing employment law. The highly qualified instructors will provide you with an overview of the most pressing issues, case studies and necessary information related to difficult legal challenges you could potentially face.

*Register today!*

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