

# STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ADVANTAGE

**W**PPI initiated a number of member and retail customer service programs in the late 1980s to help members lower their costs and provide better service to their customers. The first “member services” program was launched in 1987 with energy conservation financial incentives for customers and joint purchasing of wood poles.

Since then, WPPI has worked with member advisory groups to develop an extensive menu of programs and services that benefit members and their customers,

including metering services, rate design and financial planning, web site development, billing and accounting software, energy efficiency and low-income programs and online joint purchasing. Together, our members have carefully developed WPPI into a resource that strengthens their local advantage and adds value for their communities.

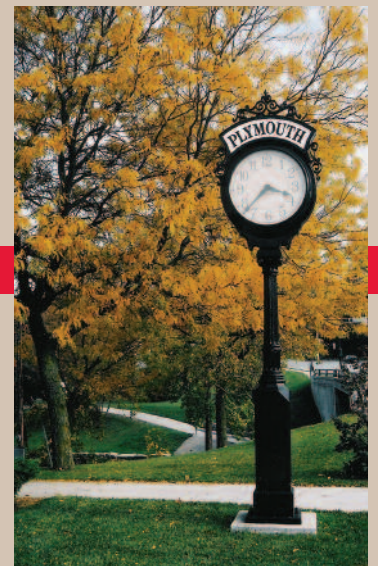
WPPI’s joint purchasing program has experienced tremendous growth. From orders totaling \$636,000 in its first year to nearly \$5 million of materials and

services bought at discounted rates in 2004, members continue to realize cost savings of 20 percent or more thanks to increased purchasing power and our managed business relationships with vendors.

Members now use a web-based catalog developed and maintained by WPPI for purchasing electric distribution materials. The catalog includes nearly 1,600 items that members can order conveniently over the Internet. In addition to lowering purchase costs, the joint purchasing program helps members



*New Richmond*



*Plymouth*

“New Richmond relies on the expertise of WPPI to help the city understand the many complexities of the electric business, and to deal with them successfully. Not only do our customers benefit from the reasonable rates, but the many WPPI programs are also invaluable to our citizens.”

Mayor David Schnitzler  
City of New Richmond

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reduce inventories, ensure product and service quality and improve delivery times.

In 2004, WPPI assisted nearly half of our members with new substation projects and major renovations of existing distribution facilities to accommodate load growth and improve electric reliability.

We neared completion of a multi-year effort to update wholesale delivery point meters in member communities. By replacing older equipment with more sophisticated meters, we are

significantly reducing the cost to collect and electronically communicate critical information from the field back to WPPI.

In 2004, WPPI assisted members with developing and implementing a new online bill payment service through their web sites, making it easier for customers to do business with their utility.

Also in 2004, WPPI launched a new service to manage programs for low-income customers on behalf of members. In the first year, WPPI administered nearly \$440,000, serving 2,749 income-eligible

households with bill payment assistance, home weatherization, refrigerator replacements and crisis services.

And, as we prepare for the next 25 years of providing programs and services that help make member communities better places to live and work, we have increased our focus on member relations to enhance recognition of WPPI as a community asset and to retain a high level of member satisfaction.



*Florence*



*Waunakee*



*Boscobel*