



Sturges Word Communications / Cloverland Electric Acquisition

Challenge

In 2009, Cloverland Electric Cooperative in Dafter, Mich., reached an agreement to acquire Edison Sault Electric Company in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., from its parent company, Wisconsin Energy Corporation. The transaction required member approval, along with regulatory approval from the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the USDA Rural Utilities Service.

Strategy and Action

Sturges Word worked with Cloverland Electric management to develop a proactive communication program that addressed all stakeholders. The program included media relations, member meetings, community outreach, direct mail, social media, key accounts meetings, paid media, government relations, website updates, employee communications, and regular updates in the monthly magazine published by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association.

Results

In November 2009, the acquisition was overwhelmingly approved at a special member meeting, with 96 percent of votes in favor. As a result of proactive community outreach, the city of Sault Ste. Marie adopted a resolution that was sent to the MPSC formally endorsing the transaction. The MPSC fast-tracked approval, and the transaction closed in May 2010.

