



BRINGING COMMUNITY TOGETHER, ONE CUP AT A TIME

Cookies & Cream Café owners Sherilyn Knoll, left, and Brandy Windsor, right, are ready to serve up gourmet coffee, Lotus drinks, baked goods, ice cream, and more in Melrose, Wis.



Branded as “The SWEETEST part of Melrose,” the Cookies & Cream Café is quickly becoming a gathering place in the heart of Melrose, Wis., a Jackson County community nestled about 16 miles southwest of Black River Falls. Since its opening in 2024, the café, owned and operated by Jackson Electric members Sherilyn Knoll and Brandy Windsor, has filled a much-needed void in the community. As Cookies & Cream approaches its one-year anniversary on June 29, it stands not just as a popular local spot, but as a reflection of community support and small-town pride.

Cookies & Cream Café is not only a dream come true, but the unity of two smaller local businesses. Before teaming up, Brandy owned and operated Amped Up Nutrition in Melrose, offering healthy shakes and energized teas, while Sherilyn operated Hwy 108 Cookies, a home-based bakery in rural Melrose. Both women loved their work, but they felt limited by licensing rules and the scale of their individual operations. “One day I was brainstorming with Brandy, and we discussed combining our strengths,” Sherilyn recalls. “That’s the day Cookies & Cream Café was born.”

Once the partnership was established, Brandy and Sherilyn got to work on finding a location. The perfect space turned out to be the former site of The Gym Bar, already fitted with a

commercial kitchen. With a few renovations and Sherilyn’s bargain-hunting skills to acquire equipment, they were ready for their grand opening on June 29, 2024. “There was much persistence to find a freezer to serve ice cream,” Sherilyn says. “I kept looking until I found a freezer we could afford because we knew how much the community desired this.”

Now open and thriving, Cookies & Cream serves a variety of drinks, desserts, and breakfast and lunch sandwiches. Sherilyn creates new specials every month around a central theme. Daily specials include Wake-Up Wednesday, All About the Cupcakes



Left: There’s always something tempting in the bakery display to satisfy any sweet tooth. Right: With a bold blend of espresso, chai, white chocolate, caramel drizzle, and a hint of cinnamon, the Devon signature coffee is a refreshing pick-me-up.

Thursday, Cookie Craze Friday, and Cinnamon Roll Saturday. Sherilyn says, “The community looks forward to our specials.”

The signature line coffee menu was created with input from family members and named by the person that created the recipe. Fan favorites include the Melrose Maple Macchiato and Mustang Mocha. “We use Tiny Footprint Coffee®, a carbon negative coffee company committed to sustainability,” says Brandy. “With fresh weekly orders and three roasts tailored for cold brew, espresso, and fresh brews, quality and freshness are never compromised,” she explains.

Like any small business, Cookies & Cream faces the challenge of keeping products affordable while maintaining quality. To stay ahead, Brandy and Sherilyn rely on radio and Facebook marketing, active membership with local Chambers of Commerce, and a network of small business owners and friends. To keep up with the current trends, they belong to a coffee owners’ Facebook group. They also take feedback seriously. “I often ask my non-coffee friends to ‘give it to me with their eyes,’” Sherilyn says.

Beyond coffee and sweet treats, the heart of Cookies & Cream is the community. The business has demonstrated this through seasonal events that gather community members, like a visit with The Grinch and an Easter Bunny meet and greet. In turn, a



coffee run turns into a cherished memory. One special four-year-old customer recently summed it up perfectly when he told them, “It was so nice visiting with you!”

Both Sherilyn and Brandy agree the most rewarding part of owning the cafe is the way it brings the community together and the relationships formed over coffee and treats. “We know our regular customers so well that we start making their drink before they order,”

Sherilyn says. “When a regular customer doesn’t come in, we genuinely wonder if they’re okay.”

Whether you’re from Melrose or just passing through, Brandy and Sherilyn invite you to stop in, try something delicious, and stay for a friendly chat. At Cookies & Cream, every cup comes with a little community. — *Janet Brandli, Member Relations Representative*

Cookies & Cream Café is celebrating its first anniversary on June 29. Visit www.cookiescreamcafe.com or follow them on Facebook for celebration details. Custom orders can be placed by calling 608.396.3011 or email cookiescreamcafe@gmail.com.

Hours:

Closed Mondays and Tuesdays
Wednesdays-Fridays, 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturdays-Sundays, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

WHAT ARE THOSE CHARGES ON MY BILLING STATEMENT? UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESIDENTIAL ENERGY CHARGE

We previously explored the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) on your monthly billing statement. This month, we’re focusing on the energy charge, a key component of your electric bill: one you have full control over.

What Is an Energy Charge?

Your energy charge reflects how much electricity you’ve used during the billing period, measured in kilowatt-hours (kWhs). It’s directly tied to your usage, meaning the more energy you consume, the greater the charge you’ll see on this line item. This charge is separate from fixed fees like facility charges.

Here’s how it works:

- **Single Meter Locations:** You’ll see one energy charge line item reflecting how many kWhs were consumed for the billing period, and the set rate at which they were billed.
- **Tiered Rates:** Jackson Electric currently uses a tiered rate structure. If your monthly usage exceeds 1,500 kWhs, a second-tier rate is applied. This will appear on your bill as a separate energy charge line item at a different rate. Unlike some tiered structures that increase rates with higher usage, Jackson Electric’s tiered rate is designed to benefit members who use more electricity. The second-tier rate is lower, providing a reduced cost per kWh for usage above 1,500 kWhs in a month. This structure helps support members with higher energy needs.

- If you participate in Jackson Electric’s Dual Fuel program, your bill will include a separate “DF Energy Charge” line item. Members enrolled in this program receive a reduced rate for qualifying electric heating and water heating equipment that is wired for control during peak demand events on the electric grid. This helps manage system-wide energy usage while offering cost savings to participating members.

How Can I Control My Energy Charge?

While Jackson Electric sets the rate per kWh, you control how much energy you use. Every time you turn on a light, binge-watch your favorite show, or load the dishwasher, you’re using energy.

You have more control than you might think. Simple habits can lead to real savings. Turning off lights when leaving a room, unplugging electronics and other devices that aren’t in use, purchasing Energy Star appliances, or upgrading to energy-efficient equipment all contribute to lower energy usage and a smaller energy charge.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ENERGY USE WITH SMARTHUB’S USAGE EXPLORER

Understanding your energy usage is the first step to lowering your bill, and SmartHub makes it easier than ever. With the Usage Explorer feature, you can dive into your daily, weekly, and monthly energy habits to make smarter choices and spot potential issues before they become costly surprises.

What Is the Usage Explorer?

The Usage Explorer is an interactive tool built right into SmartHub, Jackson Electric’s free online portal. It provides a clear, detailed breakdown of your energy use over time, allowing you to zoom in by day, hour, or billing period.

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Current Service Detail

Facility Charge		34.50
Facility Charge		5.00
Commitment To Community		1.40
Energy Charge	592 kWh @ 0.1306	77.32
DF Energy Charge	329 kWh @ 0.1	32.90
Demand Charge	9.936 kW @ 0.0	0.00
PCA	921 kWh @ 0.0	0.00
Area Light (Qty: 1)		12.00
Wisconsin State Tax		7.49
La Crosse County Tax		0.75
Total Current Charges		171.36

JACKSON ELECTRIC YOUTH AMBASSADORS

SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

Black River Falls High School



Lauren Beck

Why did you join youth ambassadors? “I joined youth ambassadors because I saw it as a great opportunity to involve myself in our community and strengthen my leadership skills with people I may not know.”

Future career interest/career path: UW-Eau Claire—Elementary Education

Hobbies: Knitting, hunting, fishing, going to the beach, and hanging out with friends.

Extracurricular activities/jobs: Volleyball, figure skating, dance, track, figure skating coach for the Black River Falls Figure Skating Club, National Honor Society, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, science club, pep band/band, and class officer.

What’s something you are most proud of? “The years of community service have helped me with reaching my goal of winning the Miss Jackson County title.”



Kenley Brown

Why did you join youth ambassadors? “I participated in the youth ambassador program as a junior and really enjoyed it as we did lots of community activities and volunteering, so I joined again my senior year.”

Future career interest/career path:

Edgewood College—Nursing

Hobbies: Basketball, volleyball, softball, baking, and spending time with family and friends.

Extracurricular activities/jobs: National Honor Society, Science Club, lifeguarding, Certified Nursing Assistant.

What’s something you are most proud of? “Becoming a CNA in order to be ahead as I enter college and the nursing profession.”



Connor Carlson

Why did you join youth ambassadors? “I joined youth ambassadors because I wanted to be more involved with the community and do service projects.”

Future career interest/career path: UW—Madison—Accounting

Hobbies: Traveling, shopping, hanging out with friends and family.

Extracurricular activities/jobs: Cross country, track, volunteering at the hospital, National Honor Society, student senate.

What would your warning label say? “Contains high amounts of sugar.”



Daniel Gerdes

Why did you join youth ambassadors? “I joined for a learning experience and to meet new people.”

Future career interest/career path: UW-Stout—Construction Management

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, and baseball.

Extracurricular activities/jobs: Baseball, lifeguard, Family Career and Community Leaders of America.

What’s something you are most proud of? “My baseball career.”



Cherelle Gunderson

Why did you join youth ambassadors? “I joined the youth ambassador program because I wanted to grow as a community member. I wanted opportunities to get involved in my community and to make a difference. I wanted to help lead others while learning from them as well.”

Future career interest/career path: UW-Madison—Biology-Dermatology

Hobbies: Hanging out with friends and loved ones, girls day with my mom, baking, being at the beach, and watching my two younger brothers play sports.

Extracurricular activities/jobs: Volleyball, basketball, softball, class officers, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, Science Club, Raise Your Voice, Pep Club, National Honor Society, Big Paws Little Paws, Karner Blue Butterfly court, Christkindl court, and Miss Black River Falls court.

What’s something you are most proud of? “My continuous drive to be the best I can be. It has driven me to get involved and strive to always do good for not only me but for others as well.”



Noah Larkin

Why did you join youth ambassadors? “I thought it would be a good learning experience.”

Future career interest/career path: UW—LaCrosse—Health Services/Pre-Physical Therapy

Hobbies: Playing sports, hanging out with friends, and being with family.

Extracurricular activities/jobs: Football, basketball, baseball, Waaksik Wacek, and Future Business Leaders of America.



Karolann Mann

Why did you join youth ambassadors?

"The reason I wanted to join is because I want

to have the experience of meeting new people and making new friends with kids you normally would not interact with on a day-to-day basis."

Future career interest/career path: UW—Plattville—Forensic Science

Hobbies: Clarinet, swimming, basketball.

Extracurricular activities/jobs: Track, basketball, band, swimming, handbells, science club, Waaksik Wacek.

What's something you are most proud of? "I was awarded most improved swimmer. This award showed all my hard work."



Lily Olson

Why did you join youth ambassadors? "This is my second year with the youth ambassadors. I

thoroughly enjoyed my time during my junior year and wanted to return for the 24-25 year to further make these connections and partake in these opportunities."

Future career interest/career path: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor — Journalism—Creative Writing

Extracurricular activities: Editor-in-chief, school yearbook; class officer; Family, Career and Community Leaders of America; musical; Science Club; Raise Your Voice; Pep Club; Student Reporting Labs; Black River Falls school morning announcements.

What is something you are most proud of? "I am a marketing intern for the School District of Black River Falls."



Lauren Slosser

Why did you join youth ambassadors? "I wanted to be a youth ambassador because I really wanted a chance to

be able to interact with my community, and I also wanted to meet new people."

Future career interest/career path: UW—Madison—Psychology/Pre-Med

Hobbies: Reading, hanging out with my friends, and pickleball.

Extracurricular activities: Tennis, basketball, track, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, National Honor Society, Pep Club, Raise Your Voice, Science Club, Blood Drive Coordinator.

What is something you are most proud of? "My academic achievement. I've worked hard to get good grades throughout my academic career, and I'm proud to say that it has paid off in all aspects of my life."

SmartHub's Usage Explorer, continued

With just a few clicks, you can:

- Track trends: See how your energy use changes month-to-month or seasonally.
- Spot spikes: Identify unusual usage patterns, like a faulty appliance or an overworked HVAC system.
- Compare days: Discover which days or times use the most energy and uncover the "why."

Why It Matters

Knowledge is power. The more you know about when and how you use energy, the easier it is to make small changes that lead to big savings. Notice a spike during a certain time? You can

trace it back to a device or habit—and make adjustments that reduce your bill and prevent energy waste.

Access Anytime, Anywhere

The SmartHub app is free and available on mobile and desktop, so you can track your usage from the couch, the grocery store, or even while traveling. It's not just about reading your bill after the fact, it's about actively managing your energy in real time. The Usage Explorer in SmartHub puts you in control.

Ready to explore your usage? Log in to SmartHub and start tracking today! Need help with enrollment or using these features? We're here to help. Contact Jackson Electric's office.



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