

# Jim Coutts

## PUBLIC POWER ADVOCATE

### A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Cedarburg Light & Water (CL&W) Utility Commissioner Jim Coutts was acquainted with local government at a young age. His father, in addition to working full-time as a tool and die maker, was mayor of Waukesha, Wis. until Jim was 9 years old.

“He was mayor every night and on weekends, so basically, if I wanted to be with my dad, I just went with him to City Hall,” he says.

He credits his father for sparking his interest in government. When Jim became mayor of Cedarburg, Wis., he patterned himself after him.

“My dad was really a people’s mayor,” he says. “That’s basically what I tried to be.”

Jim was Cedarburg’s mayor from 1999 to 2003. During this time, he started the Greater Cedarburg Foundation (GCF), which supports cultural, artistic, educational and service-oriented initiatives.

“It’s a wonderful success,” says Jim’s wife Carol. “It’s been in existence 17 years and has \$4 million in assets.”



She also notes that Jim received the GCF’s 2012 Civic Award for his community service.

“...among other awards,” she laughs. “I mean, he has awards from everything. You should see it—we have a whole wall of his awards!”

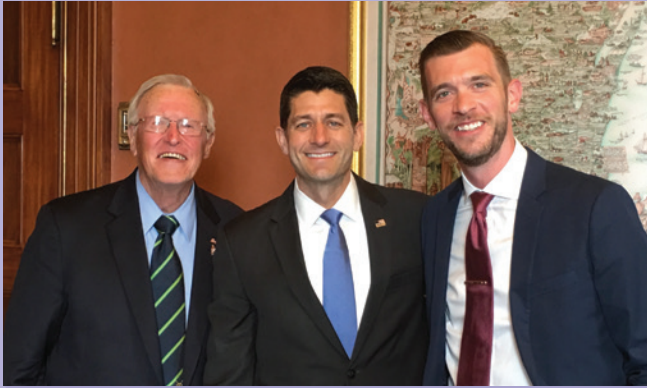
### PUBLIC POWER

As mayor, Jim was introduced to public power advocacy in 2000 when he joined representatives of CL&W at the American Public Power Association (APPA) Legislative Rally. Although he admits he didn’t know much about public power at the time, he quickly became “infatuated.”

Ever since, Jim has been a passionate advocate through his continued service on the CL&W Commission and his participation with groups including WPPI Energy’s Policy and Communications Leadership Council, the Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin, and the APPA Policy Makers Council.

Among Coutts’ many accolades are WPPI Energy’s Distinguished Service Award and the American Public Power Association’s 2015 Spence Vanderlinden Public Official Award presented by Paula DiFonzo of New Braunfels Utilities and Gary Stauffer of NMPP Energy. (Photo courtesy of APPA.)





Coutts and WPPI Energy Manager of Government Relations Joseph Owen met with members of Congress during the American Public Power Association Policy Maker's Council 2016 summer meetings. Pictured at left: Coutts, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Paul Ryan (center) and Owen; at right: Coutts, U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan (center) and Owen.



He has attended legislative rallies, met with state and national legislators, and helped shape sound policy as a valued member of these groups.

"It's been a great experience to be as involved as I have been with those organizations," he says. "It's been a really positive journey for me."

#### **"IT'S LIKE FAMILY"**

In 2003, Jim received the Distinguished Service Award for his many contributions to WPPI Energy. Joseph Owen, Manager of Government Relations at WPPI Energy, can attest that the award is well-deserved.

"Jim is one of the most optimistic, energetic and dignified guys I've had the pleasure to meet," he says. "He's a longtime leader in his community and adept at connecting with legislators and advocating for sound public power policy."

Jim, in turn, very much enjoys representing the member utilities of WPPI Energy and their customers.

"It is just an outstanding organization from top to bottom. Everybody there is like family. It's just been a joy to be involved and to feel that I represent WPPI," he says.

#### **A LIFETIME OF SERVICE**

Truly a man of the people, Jim has devoted his life to public service, activism, and enriching the Cedarburg community. His many contributions continue to make a significant difference in the lives of many.

Says Carol, "Jim is the most incredible man I've ever known."