

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* December 2024 NEWS

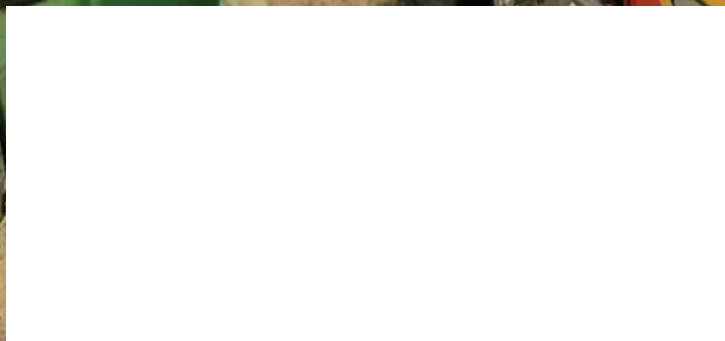
OCONTO ELECTRIC
CEE
COOPERATIVE

THESE ARE A FEW OF
MY FAVORITE THINGS

**SURGE OF SUPPORT
FOR LIGHT UP NAVAJO!**

BE AN ENERGY STAR

**BEST OF 2024
KIDS AND CRITTERS**





DISTRICT MEETINGS AND DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

At district meetings, you can exercise the privilege, responsibility, and benefit of being a member of Oconto Electric Cooperative—because you're not just a customer, you're a member-owner too. To make the cooperative system work, it is your responsibility to attend the district and annual meetings to have your vote count.

As a member-owner of OEC, you share in the profits through capital credits. Our board of directors oversees the cooperative's operation and decision-making. The seven people on our board are all local people who live and work in this area and are elected by you. The decisions they make affect their lives as much as yours and mine. You, our member-owner, can help decide who guides our cooperative.

Meetings are staggered so members in a particular district meet once every three years at a location within the district. Information is provided on new programs and services, as well as updates on electric utility industry issues that could affect your cooperative. The district meeting serves as a prelude to the upcoming annual meeting on April 12. The district meeting is held to place names on the ballot

for director positions.

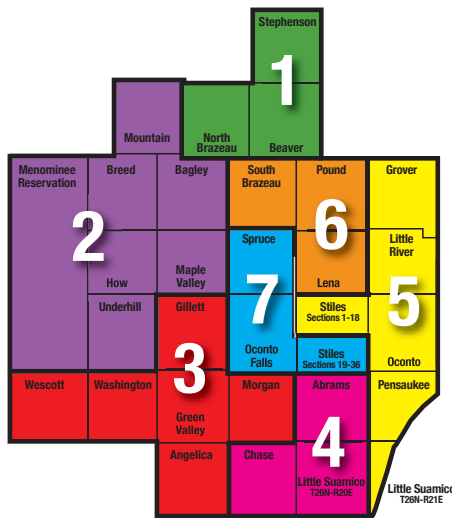
In January, members in Districts 2, 3, and 5 will be able to nominate candidates for election for the upcoming board of director terms. The persons nominated must reside within the district they are running for. If there are two nominations, those names will be placed on a ballot, and every member of OEC is entitled to vote at the upcoming annual meeting.

District 3 board director Tony Wagner is not seeking reelection. Wagner has served on Oconto Electric's Board of Directors, representing District 3, for 35 years.

Members in Districts 2, 3, and 5 will receive an official notice of the meetings in the mail. All OEC members are welcome to attend district meetings, but only the members from the specific district will be eligible to vote.

Any interested OEC member residing in Districts 2, 3, or 5 wishing to be nominated to represent your district should stop in and see Kriss Krause, executive assistant, for more information and to complete a Director Qualification Form.

After the meeting, door prizes will be awarded and a name will be drawn to win \$100 cash!



OEC DISTRICT MAP

Districts 2, 3, and 5 are all up for nominations to be elected onto the OEC board of directors.

DISTRICT 2 — Incumbent director — David Hischke

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Registration begins 6:00 p.m.; Meeting begins 6:30 p.m.

How Community Center on State Hwy 32 west of the Village of Suring

District 2 consists of the Townships of Bagley, Breed, How, Maple Valley, and Underhill in Oconto County and the Menominee Reservation.

DISTRICT 3 — Open Seat

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Registration begins 6:00 p.m.; Meeting begins 6:30 p.m.

Morgan Town Hall • 3276 County Rd C, Oconto Falls

District 3 consists of the Townships of Gillett and Morgan in Oconto County and Angelica, Green Valley, Washington, and Wescott in Shawano County.

DISTRICT 5 — Incumbent director — Ronnie Kruse

Monday, January 6, 2025

Registration begins 6:00 p.m.; Meeting begins 6:30 p.m.

Oconto Town Hall • 6120 Cream City Road, Oconto

District 5 consists of the townships of Grover in Marinette County and Little River, Oconto, and Pensaukee in Oconto County. It also includes sections 1-18 in Stiles Township and that part of Little Suamico Township that lies in T26N-R21E also in Oconto County.



Cooperative Principle #2

Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Elected representatives (directors/trustees) are elected from among the membership and are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote); cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

WHEN YOUR CO-OP FAMILY IS IN CRISIS YOU ANSWER THE CALL

One of the key benefits of being part of an electric cooperative is a mutual assistance program known as ROPE (Restoration of Power in an Emergency). This program demonstrates Cooperative Principle #6, Cooperation Among Cooperatives. It allows us to extend a helping hand to restore power for fellow cooperative members. When Winter Storm Cora hit our service territory in April we called on ROPE to come and help us.

A few short days in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, Aiken Electric Cooperative in South Carolina made a call to the ROPE program for aid to repair the widespread damage caused by the high winds and rain that came through with this catastrophic storm.

On October 2, Oconto Electric was among 15 Wisconsin electric cooperatives that sent linemen to aid in storm recovery. Two of our linemen, journeyman Ben Wilcox and apprentice Maguire Girtz, volunteered to go to South Carolina for up to two weeks to help with rebuilding and restoration of the electric infrastructure.

Aiken Electric's service territory covers 2,500 square miles in nine counties. There are 5,700 miles of line. Following Helene, roughly 49,000 of the co-op's members, more than 90%, were without power. 27 of their 29 substations lost power. Thanks to 922 workers, power was restored to their members in 15 days.

"We volunteered to go because people were in need and we could help. It isn't that often that you get the chance to go and help another co-op out and work with brother linemen from Wisconsin," said Wilcox.

"The damage was the worst I'd ever seen. If you took our worst spot that got hit by Storm Cora, that was their whole system wiped out. We worked 15-17 hours a day just rebuilding their three-phase lines. They had approximately 1,500 broken poles that needed replacing," said Girtz.

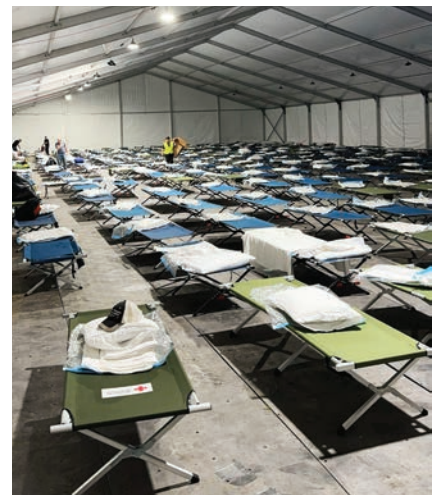
"The folks in South Carolina were so great, the southern hospitality rings true. We would go up to their house after turning the power on, and they would say that we are their heroes," said Wilcox. "We're not heroes, just ordinary people doing our job, helping those in need."



Apprentice lineman Maguire Girtz (L) and journeyman Ben Wilcox (R) traveled to South Carolina to help rebuild and restore power after Hurricane Helene.



OEC members signed a poster at the Member Appreciation event. (795100)



Above: the caravan of Wisconsin trucks heading to South Carolina. Center: crews spent their days repairing/rebuilding three-phase and single-phase lines, setting poles, and untangling wires. Right: a "tent city" was set up for the linemen to stay in. They slept on cots, used porta-potties, and had access to hot showers, meals, and laundry service.

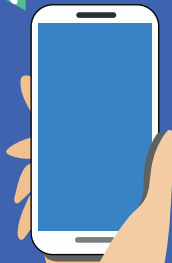


Secure payments over the phone just got quicker and easier

Did you know that you can make secure payments 24/7 on your account?

Call our NEW secure payment number at 1-855-953-3499

Have your OEC account number handy



Easier prompts to follow

Help us congratulate the following employees on their years of service with Oconto Electric Cooperative.

Thank you for your dedication to the cooperative and helping keep the lights on.

35 YEARS

John Havemeier
Foreman/Journeyman Lineman

25 YEARS

Robin Banaszynski
Manager of Member Services

Ron Friedman
Journeyman Lineman

10 YEARS

Katie Jagiello
Communications and Marketing Specialist

5 YEARS

Jodi Dettman
Collections & Accounting Specialist

Mike Hilberg
Master Electrician



Happy Holidays!

MAY YOUR SEASON BE MERRY AND BRIGHT

The office will be closed
Tuesday, December 24
Wednesday, December 25
Wednesday, January 1



Witch way to the candy?

Saturday, October 26, over 500 little ghosts and ghouls attended the Oconto Falls Trick or Treat Trail. Children were invited to dress up in their favorite costumes and explore the west side trail that was filled with treats and surprises along the way.

Oconto Electric Cooperative was one of 30 vendors that participated in this incredible event, which was free to families thanks to all of the sponsors and donors. Many other activities included glitter tattoos, door prizes, treats, giveaways, free pumpkins, games, s'mores station, and photo areas.

OEC's booth was creatively set up by OEC Member Services employees Robin Banaszynski (L) and Jodi Dettman (R). Congratulations on taking second place for the best decorated vendor booth.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

If you're planning to purchase electronic gifts this holiday season, look for the ENERGY STAR® label, which indicates higher energy efficiency (835700) performance.

Electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating are up to 25% more efficient than standard products.

This holiday season, give the gift of energy savings with ENERGY STAR®-rated electronics and equipment.

Source: energystar.gov

HIDDEN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

Oconto Electric Cooperative hides two account numbers in the local pages of the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* each month. If you spot your account number, call our office before you receive the next issue, and OEC will give you a \$15 credit on your electric bill or a \$25 credit if you have a load management receiver. The November account numbers belonged to Darrell and Susan Cwiak, Little Suamico, and Mark Wolf, Crivitz.



Ryan Miller, CEO

Katie Jagiello, Communications and Marketing

7479 REA Road, P.O. Box 168, Oconto Falls, WI 54154
www.ocontoelectric.com

Hours of Operation: 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Hours of Lobby: 9:00 a.m.– 3 p.m. Friday

Non-emergencies: 920-846-2816

Emergencies & outages: Toll FREE 800-472-8410
24 hours a day, 7 days a week