

Since 1940

# WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* January 2025 NEWS

OCONTO ELECTRIC  
**OEC**  
COOPERATIVE



DASHING THROUGH  
THE SNOW

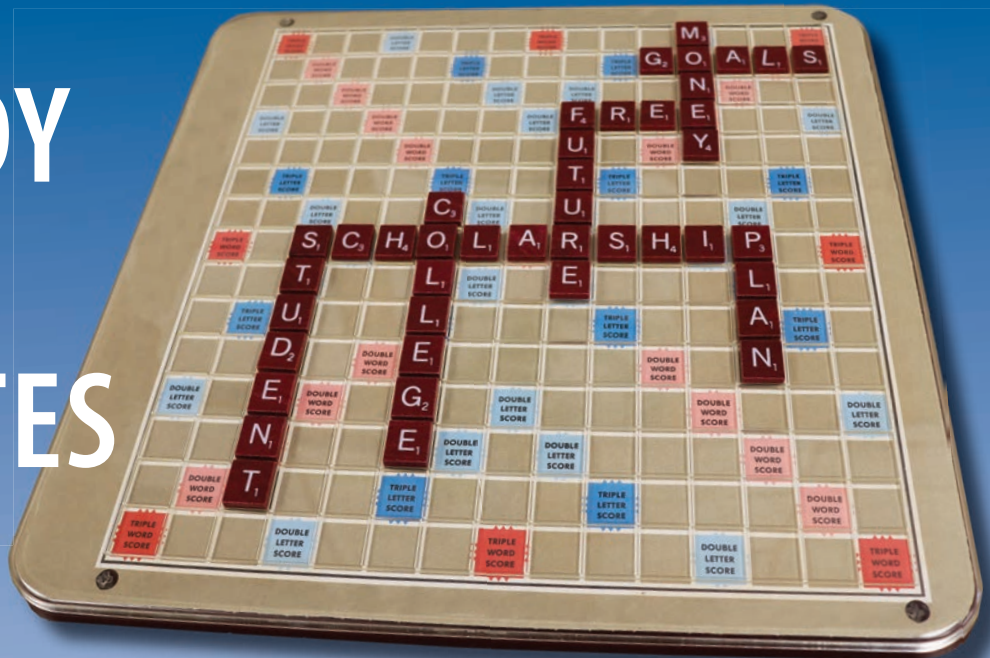
**A NEW YEAR FOR NUCLEAR**

**EVER-CHANGING, FAST-GROWING  
DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY**

**KIDS AND CRITTERS**

# GET READY 2025 GRADUATES

**Scholarship  
applications  
are now available**



Graphic by: Katie Jagiello (910800)

**W**ould you like to learn how to apply for a scholarship towards a post-secondary education? Oconto Electric Cooperative has two scholarship opportunities available. Scholarships are funded directly through the Federated Youth Foundation by unclaimed capital credits. These funds have no impact on members' bills. A volunteer, member-appointed scholarship committee will review and select scholarship recipients.

## #1: Youth Scholarship

Oconto Electric Cooperative is offering twelve, \$2,500 scholarships to graduating seniors who plan to continue their education beyond high school in an accredited college or technical school.

## #2: Lineworker Scholarship

Oconto Electric Cooperative is also offering one \$2,500 scholarship to a graduating senior who is attending Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in the Electrical Power Distribution program.

## Eligibility

Any graduating high school senior whose parent or guardian is a residential member of Oconto Electric Cooperative is eligible (residential is defined as having the primary residence within OEC's service territory). Scholarship awards will be paid out upon entry into the second full-time semester of post high school education.

## Application

Scholarship applications are available from local high school guidance counselors or online at [www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com).

## Deadline

Completed scholarship applications should be at OEC's office no later than Wednesday, February 12, 2025.

Recipients will be asked to attend the cooperative's Annual Meeting on April 12, 2025 to receive recognition from the membership.

## Questions?

Information can be found at [www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com). If you have questions, you can also call OEC at 800-472-8410 or email [bficrton@ocontoelectric.com](mailto:bficrton@ocontoelectric.com).



## 20 YEARS OF CHARITABLE GIVING

Co-op principle number seven: commitment to community. Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) employees really take this principle to heart. In 2004, employees of OEC awarded their first donation to Community Healthcare Foundation (HSBS St. Clare) towards an MRI unit. Since 2004, the OEC Employee Charity has awarded \$206,500 to charities and organizations.

The grants were made possible in part through fundraising and from CoBank, one of the co-op's lenders, who will match funds as part of its Sharing Success Grant program.

We look forward to continuing giving in 2025. Grant applications can be found at [www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com). Grant deadline is February 7, 2025.



In May, Victory Olympics was held at Zippel Park in Gillett. Victory Olympics invites students in all grades with cognitive and/or physical disabilities from Oconto and surrounding counties to participate in a day of Olympic like games. Pictured is OEC employee Robin Banaszynski (L) and Victory Olympics representative Jane Gondeck (R).



The Oconto Falls American Legion Eick-Sankey Post 302 was awarded \$5,000 to upgrade uniforms for their Honor Guards to be worn when providing military funeral services.



The Nurse's Nook program provides students in Oconto County with basic needs and other resources to improve their overall health, wellness, and school attendance. We awarded them \$7,500 to help support their program.

### 2004

Community Healthcare Foundation (MRI Unit) — \$1,200

### 2005

Oconto Area Humane Society — \$2,500

### 2006

Kingdom Come Food Pantry — \$1,000

### 2007

Friends of the Oconto Falls Firefighters — \$1,200

### 2008

Oconto County K9 Unit — \$3,000

### 2009

Oconto County Home Respite Care — \$2,400

### 2010

Oconto County Chapter DAV — \$2,200

### 2011

Old Glory Honor Flight — \$3,500

### 2012

St. Anthony Fire Fund — \$9,000

### 2013

Panther Pride — \$10,000

### 2014

Lena Tech Ed — \$5,000

Gillett Tech Ed — \$2,500

Coleman Tech Ed — \$2,500

### 2015

Lena Public Library — \$5,000

Little Hearts for Life, Inc. — \$5,000

### 2016

Lena Area Volunteer Fire Department — \$6,000

Rainbow House — \$6,000

### 2017

Old Glory Honor Flight — \$7,000

Patriot Guard Riders — \$7,000

### 2018

Bridge the Gap, Inc. — \$7,000

Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin — \$7,000

### 2019

Meals on Wheels Program — \$8,500

Oconto County Law Enforcement — \$8,500

### 2020

Little River Fire Department — \$10,000

Morgan-Green Valley Fire Company — \$10,000

### 2021

Abrams Fire Department — \$5,000

Oconto Falls Area Cycling Coalition — \$5,000

Under Hill Volunteer Fire Department — \$5,000

Shawano Area Matthew 25, Inc. — \$5,000

### 2022

New View Industries — \$10,000

Sportsman with Heart — \$10,000

### 2023

Oconto County Youth Fair — \$7,500

Oconto River Kids — \$7,500

Oconto Falls Youth Baseball/Softball — \$5,000

### 2024

Victory Olympics — \$1,000

American Legion Eick-Sankey Post 302 — \$5,000

The Nurses Nook — \$7,500



# HELP SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE FOR 2025

Auto Pay is free, secure, and guarantees your payment will be made on time, every time. After the initial setup, you won't have to spend any time paying your bill each month and will have more time for other activities.

## Sign up by January 31, 2025 for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit.

We're giving away two \$50 bill credits: one to existing Auto Pay enrolled members prior to January 1 and one to NEW Auto Pay members who enroll within the month of January.

*\*Members currently enrolled in Auto Pay are already entered and do not need to do anything.*

Enter drawing by signing up for Auto Pay within SmartHub:

### Sign into SmartHub > Click Bill & Pay > Auto Pay Program

Don't have SmartHub? Sign up today by scanning the QR code on the bottom of the page. SmartHub provides a convenient and FREE way to access your account via your computer, tablet, or mobile device.

**For additional questions or assistance, call 1-800-472-8410 Monday-Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.**

*Employees and directors of Oconto Electric Cooperative are not eligible.*



## The Center of Customer Engagement

SmartHub provides convenient account access and two-way communication to OEC online or via your mobile device. Manage payments, notify customer service for account and service issues, check your usage and receive special messaging from OEC all at the touch of a button.

- Bill reminders
- Safe and secure
- Contact customer service
- Bill payment
- Service usage details
- Free



### Account Management at your Fingertips



Check Usage



Pay Bill



Report Service Issues



Secure



Customer Service

### Safe & Secure



SmartHub provides a safe and secure environment for bill payments and transaction between OEC and your financial institution.

### How do I get SmartHub?

From your device or computer, go to [www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com).

Click on the SmartHub icon.

### iOS Users



Scan this QR code to access SmartHub in the Apple iTunes App Store.

### Android Users



Scan this QR code to access SmartHub in the Android market.





## Safety Achievement

**S**afety first is priority number one when keeping our employees, members, and the community safe. Oconto Electric Cooperative participates in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) to help stress the importance of electrical safety.

Monthly safety meetings are held for our employees where they complete training on a variety of safety topics and equipment testing. One meeting a year is dedicated to linemen pole top and bucket rescue training.

Every three years RESAP representatives will show up unannounced to do in-depth inspections of the co-op's safety records, facilities, equipment, underground and over head lines. RESAP visited OEC this year and we passed with very high marks.

Pictured (L to R) are: Katie Jagiello, CEO Ryan Miller, Amy Winkler and Kriss Krause who were instrumental in ensuring OEC's compliance with all safety measures.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Taking steps to help your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills. Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains or other items. (1182000) Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks to form. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions.

Source: energy.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 December account numbers belonged to Leonard and Lois Zaidel, Lena and Francis Toutloff, Krakow.



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