

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* December 2025 NEWS

OCONTO ELECTRIC
OEE
COOPERATIVE



REINDEER ACRES HOLIDAY CHEER TAKES FLIGHT

"NOT-FOR-PROFIT" MEANS "ALL FOR YOU"

WATER HEATER WOES

BEST OF KIDS AND CRITTERS

Your Voice Matters: Be an Active Member

At Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC), you're more than just a customer—you're a member-owner. That distinction comes with privileges, responsibilities, and real benefits. One of the most important ways to exercise your role is by participating in district and annual meetings, (1430000) where your voice and vote help shape the future of your cooperative.

Why Your Participation Counts

OEC operates under the cooperative model, which only works when members are actively involved. Attending meetings ensures your vote is counted and your perspective is heard. As a member-owner, you also share in the cooperative's financial success through capital credits—a direct reflection of your stake in the organization.

Local Leadership, Local Impact

Our Board of Directors is made up of seven individuals who live and work in our communities. They are elected by you and make decisions that affect all of us—including themselves. Each director represents all OEC members and is responsible for approving general policies, annual budgets, special contracts, capital credit retirements, bylaw amendments, rate schedules, and delegating authority to the CEO to manage daily operations. And you have the power to help choose who sits at the table.

Your Opportunity to Engage

District meetings are held every three years in each dis-

trict, providing updates on cooperative programs and industry issues. These meetings also serve as the starting point for board elections and lead into the annual meeting, scheduled for April 11, 2026.

In January, members in Districts 4 and 6 will have the opportunity to nominate candidates for upcoming board terms. Nominees must reside in the district they wish to represent. If two candidates are nominated, their names will appear on the ballot, and every OEC member will be eligible to vote at the annual meeting.

District 6 Open Seat

District 6 board director Dan Kanack is not seeking reelection. Kanack has served on the OEC Board of Directors for 50 years, representing District 6 with dedication and leadership.

A term is three years. From monthly board meetings, OECs Annual Meeting, trainings, member events, to workshops and travel, the typical time commitment for board members is approximately 24-30 days/evenings per year.

How to Get Involved

Members in Districts 4 and 6 will receive official meeting notices by mail. While all OEC members are welcome to attend district meetings, only members from the specific district may vote.

If you live in District 4 or 6 and are interested in serving on the board, we encourage you to step forward. Visit Kriss Krause, Executive Assistant, to learn more and complete a Director Qualification Form.

DISTRICT 6 — Incumbent director —Open Seat

Tuesday, January 6, 2026

Registration begins 6:00 pm; Meeting begins 6:30 pm
Lena High School, 304 E Main Street in the Village of Lena

District 6 consists of the Townships of Lena and South Brazeau in Oconto County, and the township of Pound in Marinette County.

DISTRICT 4 — Incumbent director —Jan Stranz

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Registration begins 6:00 pm; Meeting begins 6:30 pm
St. John's Lutheran Church, 1253 County Road J in Little Suamico

District 4 consists of the townships of Abrams and Little Suamico township that lies in T26N-R20E 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) 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.

OEC Redraws District Map to Better Serve Members

In a move aimed at improving representation and service equity, the Oconto Electric Cooperative Board of Directors has completed a redistricting initiative that affects nearly all of its service territory. The board reviewed the seven existing districts and determined that adjustments were necessary to ensure each director represents a more balanced number of cooperative members.

After careful analysis and planning, the board approved a new district map that redistributes the cooperative's service areas. (1060800) The goal was to create a fairer structure where each district has a more equal share of the membership, enhancing the cooperative's ability to serve its members effectively and equitably.

What's Changed?

All districts have undergone changes—except District 6, which remains unchanged due to its already balanced membership and geographic considerations. The new map reflects

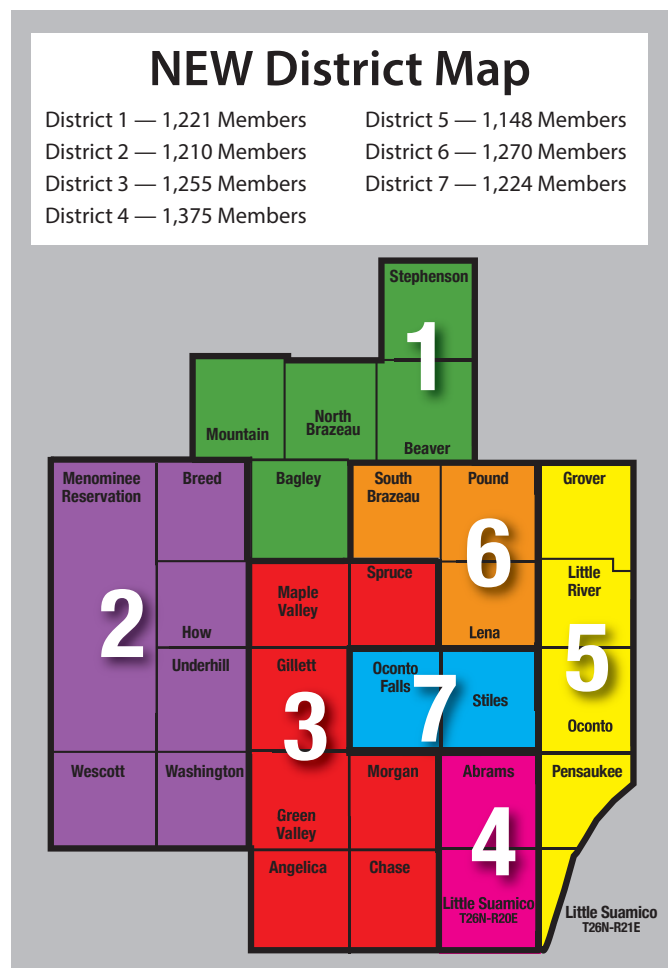
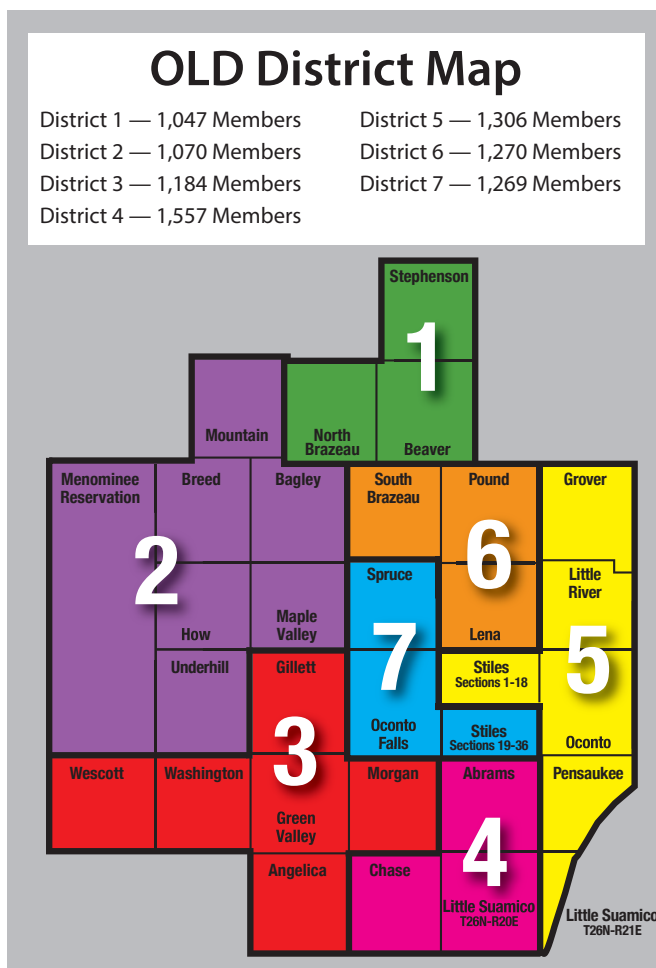
these updates and is designed to better align with current population patterns and service needs.

Included in this article are both the old district map and the newly adopted map, allowing members to see how their representation may have shifted. Members are encouraged to review the new map to understand which district they now belong to and who their board representative is.

Why It Matters

Redistricting is a vital part of maintaining a fair and functional cooperative. As populations shift and service demands evolve, it's important that each board member represents a similar number of members. This ensures that every member's voice carries equal weight in cooperative decisions.

The board thanks all members for their continued support and engagement. As always, Oconto Electric Cooperative remains committed to transparency, fairness, and service excellence.



District representatives: 1 – Dennis Langenberg, 2 – David Hischke, 3 – Carl Tennie, 4 – Jan Stranz, 5 – Ronnie Kruse, 6 – Dan Kanack, 7 – Todd Duame



Reindeer, Magic & Memories: A Christmas Dream in Wisconsin

Nestled in the snowy countryside of Coleman, a unique farm brings the magic of Christmas to life year-round. Owned and operated by Jilane Kostreva and her two sons, Aurora Acres is home to eight majestic reindeer — each with a Scandinavian name and a personality as vibrant as the holiday season itself.

“I’ve always loved the outdoors and animals,” Jilane shares. “The dream of owning a deer farm started early, but discovering reindeer was pure serendipity. One encounter, and I was hooked.” That spark ignited a passion that grew into a full-fledged farm, now three years strong and filled with joy, hard work, and plenty of antlers.

Jilane’s love for Christmas made reindeer events a natural fit. From tree lightings and church gatherings to birthday parties and bustling holiday markets, her reindeer bring wonder wherever they go. “People often think reindeer are just part of stories,” she says. “Watching children light up when they meet one in real life — that’s the magic.”

Each reindeer — Hygge, Essi, Onni, Jupiter, Norse, Fjord, Tomte, and Lumi — has a distinct personality. Some are clingy, some vocal, and others just love to bounce. “They’re cartoon-like in how they express themselves,” Jilane laughs. “They grunt, zoom around, and even have best friends within the herd.”

Outside the holiday season, life on the farm is relaxed but carefully managed. Reindeer enjoy lounging, grazing, and playing in water — yes, they’re excellent swimmers and even hydrate by eating snow. Their health is closely monitored, with a specialized diet and regular vet care ensuring they’re in top shape for the busy winter months.

Training is key to their success at events. “They’re halter-broke and some are sleigh-trained,” Jilane explains. “Reindeer have been pulling sleighs for centuries in Scandinavia, so it’s in their nature.” Transporting them safely is a smooth process, thanks to livestock trailers, she simply loads and unloads them by walking them on with a lead rope.

Despite the long days and unpredictable weather, Jilane wouldn’t trade this life for anything. “Leading my reindeer in a sleigh through fresh snow — the sound, the motion, the peace — it’s unforgettable.”

For Jilane, Christmas is more than a season. “It’s magic,” she says. “A time when the world feels lighter, brighter. I hope our reindeer help people pause, breathe, and feel joy — even if just for a moment.”

To book a reindeer visit or simply learn more, reach out at 920-591-1739 or visit www.theauroraacres.com. Whether you’re planning an event or just curious, Jilane is always happy to talk reindeer. — *Photo from Aurora Acres, LLC*



Congratulations on your **WORK ANNIVERSARY**

We celebrate your dedication, hard work, and the positive impact you've made on our cooperative and the communities we serve. Your commitment to excellence and service is truly appreciated. Thank you for being an essential part of our team — here's to many more successful years ahead!

25 YEARS

Brenda Friction

Member Services Assistant Manager

Kriss Krause

Executive Assistant/Human Resources Manager

Stephanie Paitl

Chief Financial Officer

10 YEARS

Stachia Desterheft

Operations Assistant

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

To maximize your fireplace's efficiency, always keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use. An open damper is like an open window, allowing warm indoor air to escape and cold air to enter. Consider installing a fireplace insert, which improves heat output by circulating warm air into the room rather than letting it escape up the chimney. Also, burn only seasoned hardwood to ensure a hotter, cleaner burn. Regularly clean and inspect your chimney to maintain safe and efficient operation.

Source: energy.gov



HOLIDAY LIGHT RECYCLING

Recycle your used holiday lights
in our lobby for free!

December 1 - January 15

STRING LIGHTS ONLY

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 Karl Rouse, Green Bay and Rodney Kostreva, Coleman.



Ryan Miller, CEO

Katie Jagiello, Communications and Marketing

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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