

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

April 2026

OCONTO ELECTRIC
OEE
COOPERATIVE

89th Annual Meeting Saturday, April 11

Two seats on the board are up for election
See candidate information inside



Please detach this mailing label
along the dotted line and bring it
with you to the annual meeting.

THIS IS YOUR PRIZE STUB

One gift per membership

OFFICIAL NOTICE

of Oconto Electric Cooperative's 2026 Annual Meeting

The 89th annual meeting of the members of Oconto Electric Cooperative will be at the Oconto Falls High School Performing Arts Center at 210 N Farm Road, Oconto Falls, on Saturday morning, April 11, 2026. Registration opens at 9:00 a.m. The business meeting will begin promptly at 10:00 a.m.

Registration opens at 9 a.m.
(NO EARLY ENTRY)

Meeting begins at 10 a.m.
Registration for door prize entry
closes at 10:15 a.m.



ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Saturday, April 11, 2026 • 10 a.m.
Oconto Falls High School Performing Arts Center

The following items of business will be conducted:

- Call to order/determination of quorum
- Invocation
- Introduction - Chairman
- Meeting notice and proof of mailing
- Waive or read minutes of the 2025 annual meeting
- Treasurer's Report
- Approve/ratify reports and actions of officers & directors for 2025
- Election of directors
- Old business
- New business
- Dairyland Power Cooperative
- Community Change
- Cooperative update
- Scholarship recipients
- Final announcements
- Adjournment
- New Annual Meeting Cash Drawings – \$500, \$300, \$200
- Raffle prizes (purchased from OEC members)



IMPORTANT:
THIS IS YOUR
REGISTRATION CARD

This card will assist OEC employees in registering you at the annual meeting and for the prize drawings.

Only OEC members and their immediate family members are eligible for prize drawings.

You MUST be present to win for all prizes.

Oconto Electric Cooperative's 88th Annual Meeting Highlights

On April 12, 2025, at precisely 10:00 a.m., Chairman Todd Duame called the meeting to order with a quorum of 158 registered members in attendance.

Father Ben Johnson of St. Anne's Catholic Parish, Lena, WI provided the invocation.

Chairman Duame presided over the meeting and called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction of directors and CEO were recognized. Cooperative Attorney James Timm will conduct the meeting following Roberts Rules of Order. All member questions will be limited to three (3) minutes.

Secretary Ronnie Kruse was called upon to provide the reading of the official meeting notice and proof of mailing. On March 24, 2025 each member of the Cooperative received the meeting notice published in the April 2025 issue of the WEC News magazine.

Motion made and seconded to waive the reading of the April 13, 2024 OEC annual meeting minutes and accept as published. Motion Carried.

Treasurer Dennis Langenberg was called upon and introduced himself as the new treasurer. Langenberg provided the 2024 Financial Report stating the cooperative continues to be in very good financial standings. OEC received a clean opinion letter after the 2024 financial audit was completed by Bauman Associates, Ltd. Capital Credits in the amount of \$802,417 were refunded to members in 2024. The total capital credits refunded since OEC began was \$20,943,686. A copy of the 2024 cooperative's audit report is available on OEC's website: www.ocontoelectric.com and was published in the March issue of the WEC News magazine.

Chairman Duame called for a motion to approve and ratify the reports and actions taken by the officers and directors for 2024. Motion made and seconded to approve as presented. Motion Carried.

Attorney Timm called for a unanimous voice vote from the membership for incumbent directors David Hischke, District 2, Ronnie Kruse, District 5, each running unopposed, and Carl Tennie, District 3, who was the sole nominee at the district meeting, during which long time director Tony Wagner announced his retirement from the board. A unanimous voice vote was cast, thus electing each to serve a three (3) year term.

Chairman Duame called for any old or new business to be brought before the membership. Hearing none, Duame called upon Attorney Timm to provide the bylaw language update.

Attorney Timm reviewed the minor language updates concerning Article III, Section 1 – Annual Meeting and Article III, Section 3 – Notice of Member Meetings of the bylaws approved by the Board of Directors. No objections from the membership were received concerning the minor bylaw language updates presented.

Chairman Duame introduced Wisconsin Electric Cooperative President and CEO Rob Richard to give a legislative update on issues happening within the state and on a federal level. Main issues that the statewide has been focused on are: the Right of First Refusal (ROFR), eradicating wild parsnip, reliability in nuclear energy research and technology, warnings about 2 third-party community solar schemes, AI (artificial intelligence), and the new

data centers and their effect on load & power reliability.

On the Federal level elected officials are repealing the unworkable power plant rule, creating policies that maintain a reliable power grid, and evaluating how tariffs affect the electric industry and supply chain.

Chairman Duame called upon Pam Langlay, retired OEC employee and Secretary/Treasurer of Community Change to provide the Community Change annual report. A brief video was shared saying, "Thank You" from those who received awards in 2024. Since the program began in 1999, the organization has awarded 502 grants, totaling \$274,094.00.

Chairman Duame and CEO Ryan Miller provided reports on the following issues affecting the cooperative:

- Effective June 1, 2026, OEC is switching to Dairyland Power as their wholesale power supplier.
- New Oconto Falls Substation is being built. Completion to be the end of May 2025.
- FEMA Grant exceeding \$788,000.00 received by the Menominee Nation/OEC Underground project – this grant helped reduce OEC's cost to just over \$105,000.00 for the project.
- Home generators are on the increase. Safety remains priority #1 when installing units.
- An informative video was shared showing the history of electric cooperative in the country and the importance of supporting them in rural communities.
- Right-of-Way tree clearing remains a vital and critical role for the cooperatives to maintain safe lines for linemen and cooperative members.

CEO Miller extended a thank you and recognition to the OEC team who work together to make the cooperative successful. A special thank you was extended to Line Superintendent Jack Parody who announced his retirement for July 31st, 2025 after working 26 years at OEC and a total of 42 years working in the utility industry.

Chairman Duame recognized the 2024 OEC Scholarship recipients in attendance and concluded the business meeting with a special tribute to retiring director Tony Wagner. Tony was presented a plaque and given a standing ovation for his 36 years of dedicated board service to the Cooperative. A slide show depicted the many events and areas of service Tony was involved in during his 36 years of board service. At 11:38 a.m. a Motion was made and seconded to adjourn. Motion Carried.

Before members dispersed the annual membership drawing of \$1,000 dollars was conducted (all co-op member names are entered in the drawing — member must be present to win). Member Adam Cole, 8168 Gray Lake Rd, Oconto Falls, WI was drawn, but was not in attendance. The second drawing was the \$100 cash drawing for members in attendance. Attending member, Peter Andrews was the winner of the \$100 cash. Final drawing of gifts donated by vendors was conducted. Chairman Duame extended a final thank you to all for attending the meeting and encouraged members to stay for the luncheon.

Respectfully submitted,
Secretary, Ronnie Kruse

COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS

	AUDITED 2024	AUDITED 2025
UTILITY PLANT:		
Electric Plant in Service	\$73,730,441	\$77,234,075
Construction Work in Progress	\$3,607,457	\$3,018,300
	<u>\$77,337,898</u>	<u>\$80,252,375</u>
LESS:		
Accumulated Provision for Depreciation	\$32,421,431	\$33,663,400
Net Utility Plant	\$44,916,467	\$46,588,975
OTHER PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS:		
Investments in Associated Organizations	\$2,008,795	\$2,042,808
Other Investments	\$2,235	\$8,235
	<u>\$2,011,030</u>	<u>\$2,051,043</u>
CURRENT ASSETS:		
Cash - General	\$913,842	\$848,559
Temporary Cash Investments	\$500,000	
Accounts Receivable	\$2,584,541	\$2,692,776
Materials and Supplies	\$1,125,473	\$1,127,227
Prepayments	\$124,450	\$133,154
Other Current Assets	\$5,191	\$5,153
	<u>\$5,253,497</u>	<u>\$4,806,869</u>
DEFERRED CHARGES		
	\$166,349	\$133,753
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$52,347,343</u>	<u>\$53,580,639</u>

EQUITIES & LIABILITIES

	AUDITED 2024	AUDITED 2025
EQUITIES AND MARGINS:		
Other Margins & Equities	\$3,093,545	\$2,738,708
Patronage Capital	\$18,383,853	\$18,364,319
	<u>\$21,477,398</u>	<u>\$21,103,027</u>
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES:		
RUS Mortgage Notes	\$12,084,998	\$11,694,210
Other Long-Term Debt	\$16,341,306	\$18,383,133
	<u>\$28,426,304</u>	<u>\$30,077,343</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Notes Payable	\$0	\$0
Accounts Payable	\$1,387,019	\$1,284,365
Customer Deposits	\$141,608	\$139,557
Other Current & Accrued Liabilities	\$470,506	\$502,177
	<u>\$1,999,133</u>	<u>\$1,926,099</u>
DEFERRED CREDITS		
	\$444,508	\$474,170
CONTINGENT LIABILITIES		
	\$0	\$0
	<u>\$52,347,343</u>	<u>\$53,580,639</u>

STATEMENTS OF REVENUE & PATRONAGE CAPITAL

	AUDITED 2024	AUDITED 2025
OPERATING REVENUE & PATRONAGE CAPITAL		
	\$19,498,065	\$21,014,673
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Power Production Expense	\$113,865	\$124,341
Cost of Purchased Power	\$10,492,875	\$11,676,498
Transmission Expense	\$66,124	\$7,615
Distribution Expense-Operations	\$900,892	\$1,255,488
Distribution Expense-Maintenance	\$1,349,027	\$1,497,966
Customer Accounts Expense	\$491,708	\$493,420
Customer Service & Informational Expense	\$314,334	\$337,432
Sales Expense	\$25,818	\$29,445
Administration & General Expense	\$1,565,200	\$1,482,147
Board of Directors Per Diem*	\$44,734	\$48,080
Board of Directors Education & Travel Expense*	\$81,675	\$97,083
Miscellaneous Board Expense	\$12,377	\$16,117
Depreciation Expense	\$2,238,205	\$2,333,608
Taxes	\$294,187	\$300,043
Interest on Long-Term Debt	\$946,180	\$1,051,786
Other Interest	(\$8,410)	(\$8,432)
Other Deductions	\$5,961	\$5,632
	<u>\$18,934,753</u>	<u>\$20,748,270</u>
Total Operating Expense & Interest		
Net Operating Margin	\$563,312	\$266,403

NON-OPERATING MARGINS

Interest Income	\$78,116	\$55,503
Other Non-Operating Margins	\$18,456	\$15,877
Total	<u>\$96,573</u>	<u>\$71,380</u>

CAPITAL CREDIT ALLOCATIONS

	\$295,162	\$166,864
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NET MARGINS

	\$955,047	\$504,647
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PATRONAGE CAPITAL AT BEGINNING

Retirement of Capital Credits	(\$802,417)	(\$936,403)
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PATRONAGE CAPITAL AT END

	\$19,231,211	\$18,799,455
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*In accordance with the cooperatives bylaws, directors do not receive a salary for their services. Instead, each director receives a fixed fee compensation (per diem) of \$400 per full day and \$200 per half day for attendance at board meetings, training seminars and while performing cooperative business. Directors are reimbursed actual out-of-pocket travel expenses when traveling for cooperative business purposes.

In accordance with our mortgage agreements with National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUCFC), Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and CoBank, an independent audit is conducted of the cooperative's records each year. Our most recent audit was completed for the period ending December 31, 2025, by the auditing firm of Bauman Associates, Ltd. of Eau Claire, WI.

The audit included a complete examination of the past year's operations and the income and expense entries to determine if they are made in accordance with generally accepted auditing and accounting standards. Other tests are made of accounting records and procedures as considered necessary by the auditors.

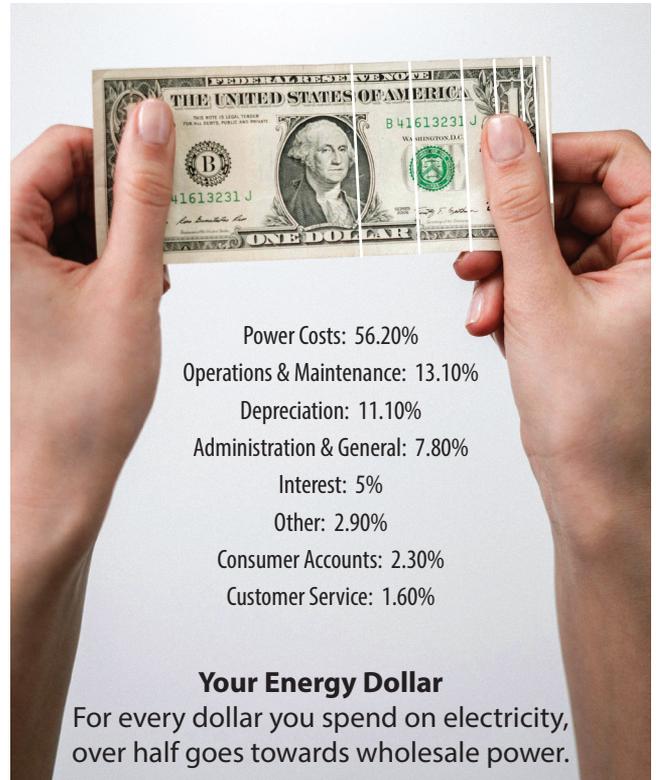
The auditing firm will present its report directly to the OEC Board of Directors at a regularly scheduled board meeting. Copies of the completed audit are sent to NRUCFC, RUS and CoBank and are available for review at the office of the Cooperative.



OPERATING STATISTICS

	AUDITED 2024	AUDITED 2025
Net equity due members	\$19,231,211	\$18,799,455
Interest paid RUS/CFC/CoBank	\$941,679	\$1,051,786
Total paid to RUS/CFC/CoBank (principle & interest)	\$2,307,591	\$2,100,747
Total kilowatt hours generated	5,582,796	5,273,195
Total kilowatt hours purchased	136,466,000	147,882,000
Average kilowatt hour usage per month (residential only)	1,008	1061
Average cost per kilowatt hour to member (residential only)	\$.1512	\$.1532
Average member's bill per month (residential only)	152.41	\$162.55
Number of connected services	10,354	10,424
Highest system demand	29,963	32,616
Cost per kilowatt hour generated in mills	35.754	42.042
Cost per kilowatt hour purchased in mills	76.761	78.717
Number of meters per mile	7.60	7.61
Miles of distribution line	1,464.97	1472.00
Miles of transmission line	59.29	59.29
Total capital credits refunded during year	\$802,417	\$936,403
Total capital credits refunded to date	\$20,943,686	\$21,880,089

2025 EXPENSE DOLLARS



ANNUAL REPORT COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

	2015	2020	2025
Kilowatt hour sales	108,559,504	118,752,725	141,165,727
Operating revenue	\$15,653,308	\$16,309,364	\$21,014,673
Cost of power	\$8,322,331	\$8,238,529	\$11,800,839
Power cost as percent of revenue	53.17%	50.81%	56.16%
Operating & Maintenance expense	\$1,426,748	\$1,429,507	\$2,753,454
Operating & Maintenance expense as percent of revenue	9.11%	8.76%	13.10%
General & Administrative expense	\$1,159,814	\$1,322,219	\$1,643,427
General & Administrative expense as percent of revenue	7.41%	8.11%	7.82%
Consumer Accounting expense	\$336,034	\$435,288	\$493,420
Consumer Accounting expense as percent of revenue	2.15%	2.67%	2.35%
Depreciation	\$1,643,450	\$1,962,967	\$2,333,608
Depreciation expense as percent of plant total	2.99%	3.14%	2.91%
Interest (long term debt)	\$940,608	\$773,695	\$1,051,786
Interest as percent of revenue	6.01%	4.74%	5.01%
Total Costs	\$14,492,555	\$14,911,771	\$20,748,270
Total Costs as a percent of revenue	92.58%	91.43%	98.73%

MEET YOUR DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

Co-op Principle #2: Democratic Member Control

As a member-owned business, OEC is governed by a board of directors, elected by the membership. Two seats on the board are up for election and each elected director will serve a three-year term on the seven person board. You can vote for one person from each district (4 and 6), regardless of where you live. Each member has one vote. Joint memberships constitute one (1) member and one vote.

DISTRICT 4



Jan Stranz

Incumbent Director

Member of OEC for 41 years

Professional background and experience:

I have a lifetime of utility experience, first at Northern States Power Company (now Xcel Energy) followed by 25 years at OEC, retiring as VP-Member Services. During those years, I led energy conservation and energy management efforts, participated with others to relicense the Stiles hydroelectric plant, managed OEC's stray voltage mitigation efforts, guided the development of a retail store and cellular business, and worked closely with members on a variety of topics.

Skills and expertise:

In order to be an effective board member, one must understand the role and responsibilities of being a board member. I have now completed my initial three-year term as an OEC board member. During that time, I have taken 14 classes developed specifically to ensure that I am continually refreshing my knowledge base about the role of a board as well as staying current with issues that electric cooperatives face.

Other boards or committees:

Over the years, I have had the privilege of serving 24 years on the HSHS St. Clare Hospital Board, including during its transition from Community Memorial Hospital to its current identity. I also served 18 years on the Oconto Falls Board of Education, stepping down after the successful approval of funding for a new middle school. In addition, I spent roughly 15 years on the Oconto County Economic Development Corporation board.

Through these experiences, I've learned the importance of staying well-informed about each organization's issues and goals, and of valuing the diverse perspectives of fellow board members. These principles have consistently guided us toward making the best decisions possible.

Motivation for running for the board:

While working for OEC, I learned that I truly believe in the effectiveness of the cooperative business model, especially when the goods or services provided are essential to everyday life. After retiring, I realized that my understanding of cooperatives and my experience as a board member for other organizations made me a viable candidate to continue to serve OEC, but now as a board member rather than an employee.

What I value most in being a part of OEC:

First and foremost, I value my membership in OEC. While membership comes with responsibilities, it also offers meaningful benefits. The co-op's small size makes it easy for members to have their voices heard, and OEC clearly incorporates member input into the programs it provides. It is also deeply community-minded, as shown through the many charitable initiatives it leads. And, of course, OEC's electric reliability is incredible.

Active in community:

I am currently a member of the Oconto Falls FFA Alumni and Supporters organization, work-



ing to help students develop leadership skills and support agricultural education. I am also a longtime member of the Oconto County Dairy Promotions Committee. In addition, I serve on several committees at my church.

Values that guide my decision-making:

Honesty, integrity, fairness. Those are the top-tier values that guide my decision-making. In the OEC board room, decisions often are tough. These decisions affect the member on the other side of the meter, so it is essential to think and act honestly, consider the fairness to the members in all aspects of the issue, and then to have the integrity to continue to learn and do even better when the next topic is addressed.

How I see OEC contributing to the community's future:

I define "community" as all of OEC's service territory, plus all the cities, towns, and villages in the vicinity. I look forward to OEC having a positive impact by continuing and expanding its influence in sharing safety messaging, charitable projects, energy use education, scholarship opportunities, and assistance wherever help is needed. These things and more demonstrate "Commitment to Community," which is one of the seven cooperative principles.

DISTRICT 4



William LaPointe

Member of OEC for 45 years

Professional background and experience:

I bring more than five decades of hands-on experience in the power and construction industries, along with a lifelong commitment to safety, quality, and service. For 39 years, I worked as a millwright, installing power systems, building power plants, and setting turbines, transformers, and other critical equipment. My expertise also includes work in paper mills and precision optical alignment of industrial machinery.

Skills and expertise:

I understand all about the power industry and the distribution as well as the safety aspects.

Other boards or committees:

As a member of Local 1056 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, I have been a dedicated union member for 58 years. I also served two years on the District Council for the union, where I gained valuable experience in leadership, collaboration, and representing the interests of fellow members.

Motivation for running for the board:

My decision to run for the board comes from a desire to strengthen communication and bring democracy, common sense and continued safety.

What I value most in being a part of OEC:

I can't put my finger on just one part, they supply my power for me.

Active in community:

I live here and I do what I can for everybody.

Values that guide my decision-making:

Democracy, common sense, safety, and looking out for the betterment of the brothers and sisters of the co-op and my district.

How I see OEC contributing to the community's future:

My goal is simple: to help the cooperative continue providing safe, dependable electricity while upholding the principles that put members first.

DISTRICT 6



Duane Jagiello

Member of OEC for 40 years

My name is Duane Jagiello, and I am proud to have lived in Oconto County my entire life. I graduated from Lena High School in 1981 and began my career working alongside my father on our family farm. My parents, Don and Marlene Jagiello, instilled in me the values of hard work, responsibility, and community service.

In the late 1980s, I served a term as Lena Town Constable and worked as a part-time Deputy Sheriff for Oconto County, all experiences that deepened my commitment to serving others. Eventually, I returned to farming full time, where I found my true calling.

In 1989, I married Sherry Valenta, who recently retired after dedicating 40 years to teaching in the Oconto Falls School District. We have one son, Donnie, who is now part of the next generation helping continue our family's farming tradition.

In 1996, my siblings—Bruce and Marla—my brother-in-law Troy Wagner, and I formed Jagiello Dairy Farms, LLC. Together, we worked hard to maintain financial stability and ensure the farm continued to grow. It is extremely rewarding that we are currently transitioning the daily operations to the fifth generation.

I have been a proud member of OEC since the mid-1980s, and our dairy has been a member even longer. Over the past 30 years, I've worked with a wide range of people—from employees to local business leaders—and those experiences have shaped my understanding of teamwork, leadership, and long-term planning.

After speaking with Dan Kanck about his years of service, I felt inspired to step forward. I believe my decades of hands-on experience managing a multi-generational family business have prepared me well to serve OEC and its members. I understand the importance of reliability, fiscal responsibility, and working together for the benefit of our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Duane Jagiello



Tony Sailer

Member of OEC for 46 years

Professional background and experience:

Patz Corporation (1979 – 2021)

Over a 42-year career at Patz Corporation, I held roles including Quality Control Supervisor, Maintenance Department Supervisor, Production Manager, and ultimately Vice President of Manufacturing for 17 years. In these positions, I led all aspects of manufacturing operations, including budgeting, workforce leadership, supply chain coordination, and continuous improvement of safety, quality, and productivity.

Skills and expertise:

I bring extensive experience in developing and managing operational budgets that align with customer expectations while maintaining cost efficiency. I also have a strong background in establishing and improving safety, quality, and productivity standards through structured training.

Other boards or committees:

Patz Corporation Board of Directors (2004 – 2021)

Patz Corporation Safety Committee - Chair (2004 – 2021)

Serving provided a greater understanding of a board member's responsibility in setting



strategic direction and management oversight while ensuring financial integrity of the organization. In addition, working as a team toward a common goal is key to success. By listening and learning from customers, suppliers, and team members the best plans can be developed.

Motivation for running for the board:

My interest for serving on the board of directors has grown because of the recent news involving AI Data Centers and the huge amounts of electricity they require. How will this impact OEC members and what can be done to mitigate the impact? I also want to see continuous improvement of the infrastructure and will support initiatives to make our electrical grid more robust and reliable.

What I value most in being a part of OEC:

I believe in the cooperative business model and the core principles it holds. Our cooperative is member owned and directed, OEC's staff and all cooperative members are invested together in providing and using safe and reliable electricity. We share many of the same community experiences and work together. I'm very thankful for the safe and reliable electricity we receive from OEC. I also appreciate the impact OEC makes with financial support of local community projects and student scholarships. Our members deserve credit for making this possible.

Active in community:

My wife, Barb, and I have lived in rural Pound for over 46 years. I have served on church boards and taught youth Sunday School Classes. As a father I participated in coaching my children's Little League and Babe Ruth Baseball teams. Today as a grandfather, I'm investing time into my grandchildren's lives. Children are the future. As a son, I'm blessed and honored to assist my mother daily in her golden years to live safely and with dignity.

Values that guide my decision-making:

My decision making is based on faith and ethical values such as honesty, integrity, fairness, responsibility, and accountability. OEC members expect and deserve decision-making that is in their best interest.

How I see OEC contributing to the community's future:

Oconto Electric Cooperative began in 1937 as a trusted energy provider dedicated to innovation and member services. I see OEC continuing to live out its mission to provide safe and reliable electricity at a reasonable rate to current and future members, while remaining community minded. I'm excited to learn more about the challenges OEC faces and am prepared to invest my time and experience to represent you, the OEC members, to carry this mission forward.

Congratulations to Dan Kanack on 51 Years of Dedicated Service

Oconto Electric Cooperative proudly celebrates and honors Dan Kanack for an extraordinary 51 years of service on the Cooperative's Board of Directors. Dan's leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the cooperative principles have shaped the direction of our organization for half a century.

Throughout his remarkable tenure, he held several key leadership roles, including Board President for 17 years, guiding the Cooperative through change, growth, and innovation. His steady leadership and thoughtful decision-making earned him deep respect from fellow board members, and the cooperative community statewide and nationally.

Dan's contributions have been recognized through several prestigious awards. In 2009, he received the Co-op Builder Award, honoring his impact on the cooperative movement. In 2014, Dan and his wife Sue were named the Rural Urban Honorees, acknowledging their long-time community volunteer service that has benefitted citizens of Oconto County.

His influence extended well beyond Oconto Electric Cooperative. Dan served on the Wisconsin Electric Coop-

erative Association Board, the NRECA Board, and contributed to the National Safety Accreditation Program. His passion for advancing cooperatives also took him abroad, where he volunteered in Monteagudo, Bolivia, assisting the local people in bringing electricity to their village.

Dan's deep knowledge, historical insight, and wisdom have been invaluable assets in the boardroom.

As Dan retires from the Board, we extend our heartfelt appreciation for his 51 years of extraordinary service. His leadership will be missed, but his impact will continue to guide our Cooperative for many years to come.

Thank you, Dan, for your dedication, service, and vision. We wish you all the best in your well-deserved retirement.





“Change” Matters Grant

Community Change is a project of Oconto Electric Cooperative. Members can sign up to have their electric bills rounded up to the next whole dollar, with the extra money going into the Community Change fund. In addition, due to the generosity of the former Bay Lakes Cooperative, Community Change has additional funding available for this special grant. To be considered, an organization should show through this grant application how an innovative idea for funding could provide far-reaching enhancement for a neighborhood or community. Awards will be made up to \$9,000 (grant total could be split based on the nature and scope of applications received).

Grant application deadline is May 15, 2026. Application and grant criteria can be found at www.ocontoelectric.com.

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Don't fall victim to power outage scams. When widespread outages occur, scammers may target affected utility customers. They can contact you via call, text or email, urging you to act quickly and provide personal information to restore service. Always communicate with your utility through official channels, such as their website, mobile app or phone number listed on your bill. (64403) Your safety and personal information are worth taking a moment to pause and verify unknown senders.

Source: ftc.org



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 March account numbers belonged to Matthew Woodworth, Gillett and Shirley Micoley, Lena.



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. | Monday-Friday

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

Non-emergencies: 920-846-2816

Emergencies & outages: Toll FREE 800-472-8410

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Lineworkers are Ready When it Matters Most

When people flip a light switch, they may not give much thought to why or how the light comes on. Electric lineworkers provide an essential service: they work hard to install and maintain overhead and underground power lines that keep electricity flowing. These specialized workers are on call 24/7 in case severe storms or other circumstances cause the power to go out, often in challenging conditions. A lineworker must be committed to their career—because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle.

This month, as we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 13, I thought I'd share some interesting facts about electric lineworkers with you.

To become proficient, most lineworkers go through a technical training program and first learn on the job as apprentices under the careful eye of seasoned lineworkers who have earned journeyman status. Did you know that to become a journeyman lineworker it can take more than 7,000 hours of training (or about four years)? That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience and an ongoing mental toughness. Short-

cuts are not an option, and there is no room for error in this line of work.

Although everyone at Oconto Electric Cooperative works hard to provide reliable service, we salute our lineworkers who work around the clock to keep the power on. Their safety, as well as yours, is our top priority.

Lineworkers' top priority is ensuring we have reliable electricity for everyday life. Thank you to our line crew.

John Havemeier - Foreman/Journeyman - Since 1989

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