

# \$32,500 IN SCHOLARSHIPS WILL BE AWARDED IN 2017

## Get ready 2017 graduates, Oconto Electric Cooperative will be awarding twelve \$2,500 scholarships to area students.

In past years OEC has awarded ten \$1,000 scholarships. Since the scholarship fund continues to grow (see below to find out where the funds come from), the OEC board of directors has agreed to increase the dollar amount and number of scholarships awarded this year.

### Additional 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.

### Applying For a Scholarship

Scholarship applications are available from local high school guidance counselors, online at [www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com), or call OEC at 800-472-8410 to have an application mailed.

A parent or guardian of the applicant must be a residential member of Oconto Electric Cooperative. (Residential is defined as purchasing power from OEC for your primary residence.)

### Application Requirements

Along with the application, students are required to submit the following:

- Copy of high school transcripts (with current grade point average).
- Copy of SAT/ACT test scores.
- Summary page of your school, group, club, community and employment activities including awards and accomplishments. Please include any OEC events you may have participated in or volunteered at.
- One-page essay on future school, life, and career goals.
- One third-party recommendation (reference letter).

Completed scholarship applications should be at OEC's office no later than Friday, February 17, 2017.



Scholarship  
applications  
now available

MY CO-OP

Scholarship recipients are selected by a volunteer committee of OEC members who are not employees or directors of the co-op. Recipients will be asked to attend the cooperative's annual meeting on March 25, 2017, 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 [planglay@ocontoelectric.com](mailto:planglay@ocontoelectric.com).

**Apply on or before February 17, 2017.**

## WHERE DOES SCHOLARSHIP MONEY COME FROM?

At the end of each year, when the financial books are closed and OEC determines that year's profit margins, those margins are allocated back to the members in the form of capital credits. That money stays at the co-op and is used for approximately 20 years, at the end of which time it is retired back to the members.

As capital credits are retired, members who still purchase

power from Oconto Electric after 20 years will receive either a bill credit or refund check when a retirement is made. For anyone who no longer purchases power from OEC, the co-op will mail their checks to the last known address.

After a number of attempts to get the funds to the people they belong to, any money that is not claimed goes into the scholarship fund.



## CO-OPS YES! YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE MARCH 6–7

The annual two-day Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference is being held in Eau Claire from March 6–7. Oconto Electric Cooperative invites four high school students (sophomores, juniors, seniors) to collaborate, laugh, develop leadership skills, and learn about cooperatives with other students from Minnesota and Wisconsin.

### Did You Know?

- Minnesota and Wisconsin lead the NATION in cooperative businesses?
- What the difference is between a credit union and a bank?
- When you join a co-op, you are not only a member but also an OWNER?
- Cooperatives are found in virtually every community and in every business sector?

From your local electric cooperative to international companies, discover what makes the cooperative business model successful and different. Learn from the experts! Is a co-op career in your future? You will have the opportunity to work with cooperative leaders and business professionals to learn about what interests YOU!

### Program Highlights

- Get motivated! Whether you struggle with peers or simply want to become a better leader, learn life lessons that will hit home and move you to action.
- Have fun! Work as a team and share some laughs with fellow students from across Minnesota and Wisconsin. (964700) There will definitely be a T-shirt and maybe even some dancing (or singing) involved.
- Those interested will have the chance to run for the Co-ops Yes! youth board.
- Renowned youth motivational speaker Craig Hillier will entertain you with his stories, make you work as a team, and inspire you with his message.

### Interested in Attending?

The co-op will pay the registration fee, hotel accommodations, meals, and will provide transportation. An OEC employee chaperone will also be at the conference.

If you would like to be one of the four high school students attending this compelling, all-expenses-paid leadership conference, please contact Katie at 800-472-8410 or [kjagiello@ocontoelectric.com](mailto:kjagiello@ocontoelectric.com). **Deadline date is Monday, February 13.**



## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

“Oconto Electric Cooperative” is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF), found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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## KEEP YOUR HEAT OFF THE STREET: HEATING EFFICIENCY

The U.S. Department of Energy reports that heating a home typically accounts for 45 percent of energy bills. The Energy Education Council shares tips to help consumers be more efficient in their winter energy use to reduce energy waste and save money while staying warm.

Always be sure that your heating system is maintained regularly and serviced by a professional so that it is working at peak efficiency. Keep your furnace clean, and change the filter monthly. Also, regularly unblock and clean radiators, baseboards, and vents so that they work at peak efficiency.

If you have a fireplace, be sure to keep the damper closed when it is not being used. You may need to add caulking around the hearth so that heat is not lost. If you do not use your fireplace, plug and seal the flume.

Your home does not need to be kept as warm if no one is there. By installing a programmable thermostat, you can automatically lower the temperature in your home while you are away at work or school or while you are sleeping. According to the Department of Energy (DOE), lowering the temperature between 7 and 10 degrees for eight hours a day can reduce energy costs by up to 10 percent.

Windows and doors are common culprits for air leaks, accounting for around 10 to 25 percent of heating loss, according to the DOE. By adding weather stripping and caulking to windows and doors, you will be able to add an extra level of protection against heat loss. Also, make sure walls, attics, and flooring—especially above unheated spaces such as crawl spaces and garages—are properly insulated.

Employ the help of the sun to heat the home free of charge. Let sun shine in through open curtains during the day, but be sure to close all blinds and curtains after dusk to reduce heat loss.

Also, during cold winter months make sure you are running your ceiling fans in a clockwise direction. (65401) Doing so will push down and redistribute hot air that naturally rises up close to the ceiling.



Turn down the temperature of the water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This saves money on heating costs and is still warm enough to fit your hot water needs.

EnergyStar recommends having your heating system evaluated if it is over 10 years old or if it is not keeping your home comfortable. If your system needs to be replaced, talk to your installer about getting the most efficient unit you can afford. Doing so can help you save on your monthly heating bills.

For more information on energy efficiency, visit [EnergyEd-Council.org](http://EnergyEd-Council.org).

## SAFETY FOR SENIORS AT HOME



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**MainStreet Messenger allows seniors to be safe while being independent and living at home.**

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OCONTO ELECTRIC  
**OEC**  
COOPERATIVE

**(920) 846-2816**

Serving parts of Oconto, Marinette & Shawano Counties  
[www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com)



# ENERGY STAR Buyers Guide

Purchasing ENERGY STAR-certified appliances and electronics is a great way to save energy in your home. But how do you choose the right product? It depends on your energy-saving goals and how you use energy in your home.



Do you wash multiple loads of laundry each week? Investing in an ENERGY STAR-certified washer could save you around \$45 on your utility bill each year. Some of the top-rated ENERGY STAR-certified large washers come from LG and Samsung. Visit ENERGY STAR's "Most Efficient 2016" page to learn more.



Home computers can use a shocking amount of energy each year. If all computers in the U.S. were ENERGY STAR certified, we would save more than \$1 billion in energy costs per year. If you can't buy an ENERGY STAR-certified computer, consider updating the power management setting on your computer. Visit [energystar.gov/products/office\\_equipment/computers](http://energystar.gov/products/office_equipment/computers).



The larger TVs get, the more energy they use. But ENERGY STAR-certified TVs are, on average, 25% more efficient than conventional models. LG, Samsung and Vizio make the list of ENERGY STAR's most efficient 2016 TVs.

There are many different types of ENERGY STAR-certified products, including:

- Air purifiers
- Roof products
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- Decorative light strands
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- Pool pumps
- Vending machines
- Dehumidifiers

Learn more about ENERGY STAR products.  
Visit [energystar.gov/products](http://energystar.gov/products)



## 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 Karen Grosse, Pound, and Marvin Schellpfeffer, Shawano.

**Byron C. Nolde, CEO**

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**Katie Jagiello, Editor**



## Important Dates to Remember

- January 5** District 6 meeting at Lena High School, Lena
- January 6** Deadline for NRECA Youth Tour of Washington, D.C., application
- January 19** District 4 meeting at St. John's Lutheran Church, Little Suamico
- February 13** Deadline for Co-ops YES! Conference application
- February 17** Deadline for scholarship application
- March 6-7** Co-ops YES! Youth Leadership Conference, Eau Claire
- March 25** Oconto Electric Cooperative's 80th Annual Meeting