

\$10,000 IN OEC SCHOLARSHIPS WILL BE AWARDED IN 2016



Applications available January 4

Get ready 2016 graduates: Oconto Electric Cooperative will again be awarding ten \$1,000 scholarships to area students.

Additional Scholarship

Oconto Electric Cooperative is also offering one \$1,000 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 after January 4, 2016, from local high school guidance counselors, online at 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 26, 2016.

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 April 9, 2016, to receive recognition from the membership.

Questions?

Information can be found at www.ocontoelectric.com. If you have questions, you can also call OEC at 800-472-8410 or email planglay@ocontoelectric.com.

Apply on or before February 26, 2016.

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 it belongs to, any money that is not claimed goes into the scholarship fund.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN 2016?

Since 1999 Oconto Electric members have had the opportunity to participate in a wonderful program called Community “Change”. 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.

All co-ops adhere to the seven cooperative principles, including “Concern for Community.” The Community “Change” program is the perfect embodiment of this core principle. The average co-op member donates \$6 per year. There is an option to give more by adding an extra dollar amount to the rounded-up change. For example, you can choose to round up your electric bill and donate an additional \$2 each month. This may not seem like a large amount, but when combined with 1,043 other participants it adds up to make a significant impact.

Community “Change” has a board of directors (a group of seven individuals not employed by OEC) that meets to look at applications for Community “Change” funds. Grants are awarded based on how much money is available and whether or not the purpose of (1125100) the request is consistent with Community “Change” guidelines.

The program is always voluntary, and at any time, members

can change their minds about participating. Once folks see the good work the program does in their community, they almost always keep contributing.

To date, Community “Change” has distributed over \$140,000 for a wide range of activities. This can include helping a family in need after a house fire. Assisting the local food pantry. Providing funds so that the local fire department can get a needed piece of equipment. Or dozens of other humanitarian efforts that bring electric co-ops even closer to the communities we serve.

OEC is pleased to offer Community “Change”. If you would like to be a Community “Change” contributor, please fill out the form below and mail to OEC or simply click the box on the bottom of your payment stub.

If you know of a charitable or service organization, civic group, or individual with special needs, you can encourage them to apply for a Community “Change” grant. Applications can be found at www.ocontoelectric.com or in our lobby.



Please sign me up for Community “Change”

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone Number _____ OEC Account Number _____

Mail to: Oconto Electric Cooperative • P.O. Box 168 • Oconto Falls, WI 54154

HEATING PAD AND ELECTRIC BLANKET SAFETY

Heating pads and electric blankets cause almost 500 fires each year in the United States. Almost all of these fires involve electric blankets that are more than 10 years old.

There are two types of personal heating appliances: heating pads that are placed directly on the mattress and electric blankets. They are not meant to be used interchangeably or at the same time.

Safety Tips

- Look for dark, charred, or frayed spots on the heating pad or electric blanket. Also check the electric cord for cracks or frays. Replace any worn or old heating pad or electric blanket.
- Do not allow anything on top of a heating pad or electric blanket when it is in use. When covered by anything, including other blankets or pets, electric blankets may overheat.
- Never fold electric blankets when in use. Folded or

tucked-in blankets could overheat and cause a fire.

- Heating appliances should never be left unattended or used while sleeping.

Source: *Electrical Safety Foundation International*



National Electrical Safety Month
Tip of the Day

Make sure that smoke detectors are installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home. Smoke detectors should be tested every month to ensure they are working properly.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

CO-OPS YES! YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE MARCH 7-8

The annual two-day Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference is being held in Eau Claire from March 7–8. 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?
- There's a difference 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

Attendees will learn from the experts! From the local electric cooperative to Fortune 100 companies, students will discover what makes the cooperative business model successful and different. Participants will also have the opportunity to work with cooperative leaders and business professionals to explore career opportunities. 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. Whether you struggle with peers or simply want to become a better leader, Craig's life lessons will hit home and move you.



Interested in attending?

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. **Deadline date is Monday, January 18.**

SAFETY FOR SENIORS AT HOME



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

- You're never really alone with this personal emergency response program
 - Help is only moments away with push of a button
 - Installation within days

PEACE OF MIND FOR ONLY A DOLLAR A DAY!

OCONTO ELECTRIC
OEC
COOPERATIVE

(920) 846-2816

Serving parts of Oconto, Marinette & Shawano Counties
www.ocontoelectric.com



RECOGNITION FOR YEARS OF SERVICE ON OEC BOARD

OEC Chairman Dave Hischke recently presented certificates to Ken Cisar for 20 years of service and Dan Kanack for 40 years. (L to R: Ken Cisar, Dave Hischke, and Dan Kanack)

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, 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.

Revised: 4/23/2014

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 Nicholas Wold, Stiles, and Rose Wawiorka, Krakow.

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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Katie Jagiello, Editor



- January 4** **Scholarship applications available**
- January 4** **District 3 meeting at St. John Lutheran Church, Morgan**
- January 5** **District 5 meeting at First American Lutheran Church, Oconto**
- January 7** **District 2 meeting at How Community Center**
- February 26** **Deadline for scholarship applications**
- March 7-8** **Co-Ops YES! Youth Leadership Conference, Eau Claire**
- April 9** **Oconto Electric Cooperative's 79th Annual Meeting**