

# OCONTO ELECTRIC CELEBRATES NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY



America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day. On April 11, 2016, OEC will honor the hard-working men who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on.

The full text of the resolution, which the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Board adopted unanimously, follows:

*"Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;*

*Therefore be it resolved that NRECA recognize the Second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day and make available to electric cooperatives, materials and support to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's Electric Cooperatives."*

We proudly recognize all electric linemen for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.

"Electric linemen do not often receive the recognition they deserve," said Byron C. Nolde/CEO. "They work all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions far from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. Our linemen, as well as linemen from across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition."

OEC invites members to take a moment to thank a lineman for the work they do.



**Brian Arndt**  
(Journeyman Lineman)  
Employee Since 1997



**Scott Bancroft**  
(Journeyman Lineman)  
Employee Since 2012



**Ron Friedman**  
(Journeyman Lineman)  
Employee Since 1999



**John Havemeier**  
(Journeyman Lineman)  
Employee Since 1989



**Tyler Schroeder**  
(Apprentice Lineman)  
Employee Since 2012



**Kevin Thomson**  
(Equipment Operator)  
Employee Since 1997



**Ben Wilcox**  
(Journeyman Lineman)  
Employee Since 2007



# OEC'S RIGHT-OF-WAY AND PLANTING GUIDE

## What is the right-of-way program?



When trees interfere with power lines, members experience outages; trees are the major cause of power outages.

Every year OEC budgets money for right-of-way clearing. In 1989 the co-op began cycle trimming. At that time, the co-op's entire system was divided into sections and each year the right-of-way of one section is cleared. This allows OEC to clear the right-of-way of the entire system every 8–10 years.

## Why is a clear row important?

A clear right-of-way improves power quality, reliability, and safety. We all enjoy trees, but when they interfere with power lines, reliability and safety are compromised. That's why it's important to remove trees, branches, and brush from the right-of-way.



When trees and vegetation grow into the rights-of-way, they can:

- Cause power outages
- Cause lights to blink
- Obstruct visual inspections, making repairs difficult and costly
- Block access for maintenance and repairs, causing delays
- Waste electricity by drawing it into the ground
- Become a fire hazard
- Become a safety hazard for utility workers and members
- Be energized if branches are touching the wires. Be sure no one climbs a tree near power lines. Even branches not touching power lines could become energized if a child's weight is added, causing contact with the wires.

## How is the right-of-way cleared?

The right-of-way is cleared by cutting, trimming, mowing, and where permissible, herbicides. OEC treats all members equally when removing vegetation. In most cases, all shrubs, brush, and trees are removed under primary (main), high-voltage overhead power lines. They are also removed, as necessary, underneath and around secondary, low-voltage power lines that bring power from the transformer to your meter.

Cutting and trimming is done by trained, professional utility tree trimmers using specific and proven standards typical to the industry.

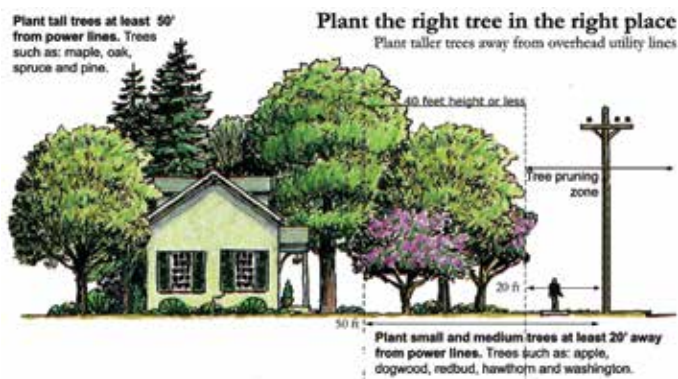
The electric system is regularly inspected for trees that are dead, dying, and leaning into the wires. When found, they are marked and then trimmed or removed to eliminate threat to power lines.

## What happens to the cut wood?

Logs are the property of the landowner. Branches and small debris are left to decompose where they are cut. (694900) In maintained yard areas, branches and small debris are chipped and removed unless otherwise requested by the member.

## Yard planting guide

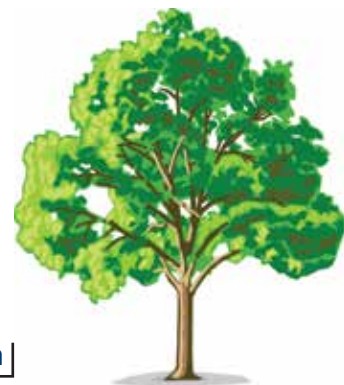
All vegetation must be planted away from power lines, so that mature branches cannot grow into the right-of-way. Vegetation that is planted or grows into the right-of-way needs to be cut or trimmed. Vegetation within 20 feet on either side of the power line is at risk for future removal due to power line maintenance, upgrades, replacement, etc. For safe, reliable electric service, follow these guidelines.



**The right-of-way program requires removing vegetation, typically, from a 20-foot corridor on both sides of power lines to ensure safe conditions and reliable power.**

## Underground planting guide

Before you landscape close to an underground transformer, remember, crews need a 12-foot clearance on all sides for repairs and maintenance.



**All Vegetation**  
**12 Feet Minimum**

● underground cable

## Before you dig call Diggers Hotline

If you plan on planting any trees this spring, make sure to call 811 before ever putting a shovel in the ground. The "Call Before You Dig" number is a free service that locates and marks your public underground utilities. Make sure to call a few days in advance of when you want to dig in order to provide enough time for a professional to locate such underground utilities as electrical, gas, water, cable, and telephone.



## STUDENTS LEARN COOPERATIVES, LEADERSHIP SKILLS AT CO-OPS YES! EVENT



Oconto Electric Cooperative sponsored two students to attend the 2016 Co-ops Yes! Conference in Eau Claire. They are Jadyn Stuart and Morgan Lisowe. Jadyn said, "Co-ops Yes! Conference is honestly one of the greatest experiences I have attended."

About 115 Minnesota, Wisconsin, and South Dakota high school students learned about cooperatives and honed their leadership skills at Cooperative Network's annual Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, March 7–8. Thirty-three area cooperatives, FFA chapters, and other organizations fully sponsored the students and several state FFA officers to attend. The conference teaches high school students about cooperatives and leadership through presentations, case studies, and networking with co-op professionals.

This year's participants heard from co-op speakers including Margie Hylkema from Organic Valley, who shared the cooperative's story and the meaning of democratic member control; William Nelson, recently retired from CHS Inc., who discussed the seventh cooperative principle, "concern for community"; and Natalie Locke from Aynah, who provided a very active introduction to cooperatives and had students conceive their own co-ops. Motivational speaker Craig Hillier returned with his interactive and inspiring message, helping students identify their leadership styles and learn how to work as a team to achieve their goals. Students also enjoyed a formal banquet followed by an entertaining hypnotist and dance.

After the conference, Morgan summed it up by saying, "As leaders, we can't all give directions, but we can work together to finish the task."

## DIRECTORS ACHIEVE GOLD CREDENTIAL CERTIFICATES



Board directors Dan Kanack and Doug Allen received their Director Gold Credential certificates at a recent board meeting. Both were recognized for having earned their Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate and Board Leadership Certificate credentials and have continued their educational efforts by earning a minimum of three additional board leadership credits. Congratulations to Dan and Doug on this achievement.

## OCONTO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S HAM GIVEAWAY DRAWS GOOD RESPONSE



Thank you to all members who entered Oconto Electric Cooperative's Ham Giveaway! We received 158 entry submissions! Thank you to everyone who submitted entries and included suggestions for magazine articles.

**This year's winners included:**  
Charlotte Ihde, Oconto  
Paul and Sue Kozloski, Oconto Falls  
Ronald Jaeger, Gillett



Ronald Jaeger and Charlotte Ihde pick up their hams from the Oconto Electric Cooperative office.



## MISSIONS OF HOPE AND GOODWILL

On April 16, Grace Lutheran Church in Oconto Falls will be hosting a collection drive to benefit veterans in need. They are looking for men's clothing and shoes, especially winter wear, and all household items including furniture. (Please see the ad below for more details.)

They are partnering with the Patriot Guard Riders, Inc, an international organization with just over 175,000 members, most in the continental United States. The Patriot Guard Riders help military and veteran families who, from time to time, find themselves struggling

and in unfamiliar territory, where they need someone to offer them hope and the means to keep going.

Some of the missions they perform are honoring fallen soldiers, welcoming troops home, sending troops off, assisting wounded veterans and their families who are in need, and getting veterans off the streets and into housing. (549901)

Please donate! There is no greater feeling knowing that you were part of bringing hope to another, especially one who has stood for you, fought for you, and sacrificed for you.

### SPRING INTO ACTION FOR OUR VETS

**APRIL 16 • 10 AM – 2 PM**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
As you think about spring cleaning and decluttering your life – consider donating your gently used items to veterans who are in need of help.

**Grace Lutheran Church is holding a collection drive  
501 S Main Street, Oconto Falls**

Questions? Please call Pam Langlay (920) 373-2731

What is being collected? Men's clothing and shoes, especially winter wear. All household items. Furniture, particularly beds and bedding. Freezers. All items can be new or gently used. DO NOT donate large tube-style televisions or large appliances.



Items donated will go to Patriot Guard Riders. They are a 501(c)3 charitable organization who will distribute the items to veterans who are in need.

## 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 John Schwittay, Abrams, and Diane Herald, Oconto.

### Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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### Katie Jagiello, Editor

## OEC INSIGHT



### Stephanie Paitl Recognized for 15 Years of Service

Stephanie Paitl started at OEC as a part-time consumer representative. Over time she became a full-time employee holding many positions: dispatch coordinator, operations coordinator, consumer relations, and her current position as accounting assistant. She is responsible for closing out work orders, working with accounts payable, assisting the CFO, and filling in for the operations assistant when needed.

Stephanie says, "The OEC office crew are like my second family!"

Co-workers describe Stephanie as a ray of sunshine in the office. She is very willing to help when asked, and ready to take on new roles when they are presented to her. She found her niche in accounting because she has such an eye for detail and organization.

In Stephanie's free time she enjoys racing her off-road buggy, traveling to warm places, relaxing at Kelly Lake, and most of all spending time with her husband and two sons.

