



### Oconto Electric Cooperative 79th Annual Meeting

- 1) CEO Byron Nolde with scholarship winner Laci Jespon.
- 2) Chairman Dave Hischke presents \$1,000 to progressive drawing winner Verna Peterson.

# OEC ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

Joined by two state senators, a U.S. Senate staffer, and several local elected officials, 420 Oconto Electric Cooperative members and guests gathered on April 9 in the Performing Arts Center at Oconto Falls High School for the 79th annual meeting. Board Chairman Dave Hischke, Treasurer Dan Kanack, and CEO Byron Nolde highlighted several points of interest from the past year and shared insight into the coming year's plans.

In his treasurer's report, Kanack indicated that \$550,000 in capital credits were retired in 2015, bringing the cumulative total returned to members to \$14.3 million. OEC ended the year in a strong financial position.

Hischke congratulated employees for maintaining the best job safety record among all the electric cooperatives in the state, with no lost-time accidents since 2004, a hefty 784,000 hours of on-the-job safety. Hischke also noted that OEC will hire a two-person crew responsible for right-of-way clearing—a job previously done by contractors.

On another topic, Hischke reported that OEC has given notice to its long-time wholesale power supplier,

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (now a part of WE Energies), that OEC will be exiting the current purchased power contract at the end of 2018. Requests for proposals (RFPs) for a new power supply contract will be issued later this year. The move to seek RFPs is driven by the board's commitment to ensuring the best, long-term power supply for the membership.

During his CEO report, Nolde echoed Hischke's praise for the employees' safety record, indicating that safety is the co-op's top priority. He further outlined on-going maintenance initiatives and reviewed the co-op's process in planning for various emergency situations, including cyber security. And, while there is no current plan to increase electric rates this year, Nolde expressed continued encouragement for members to be involved in legislative issues that affect the nation's power supply.

This year, two incumbents, Hischke and Tony Wagner, ran unopposed for their board seats, so both were re-elected by voice vote. Ken Cisar, after having served 21 years as the director from District 5, faced challenger Ron Kruse,

a dairy farmer and electrician. After votes were counted, Kruse was welcomed as the new director for District 5. Hischke praised Cisar for his years of selfless service to OEC, and the membership offered a hearty round of applause to thank him for that service.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the drawing for the progressive prize (\$1,000) was awarded for the very first time. Verna Peterson of rural Oconto Falls was present in the audience when her name was drawn, thus making her eligible to accept the prize. Congratulations, Verna!



Ronnie Kruse wins District 5 director seat.





# MEET THE 2016 OEC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



This year Oconto Electric Cooperative is very pleased to award eleven \$1,000 scholarships to area students whose parents or guardians are members of the co-op. Scholarship money comes from unclaimed capital credits. Recipients are selected by a committee of seven cooperative members who are not employees or directors of OEC.



**Nathan Bellow** – Nathan attends Pulaski High School. After graduation he will attend Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in the Gas Utility Construction and Services program and the Electrical Power Distribution program. Nathan stated in his essay, “All my life I have been taught to set specific goals, do my best and work my hardest. My parents have taught me how working

hard and having goals will allow me to be successful in school, in the community and in my life. I plan to live my life to the fullest which will include accomplishing my short- and long-term goals.” Nathan’s parents are Kym and Debbie Bellow.



**Liza Leja** – Liza is a graduate of Oconto Falls High School and this fall will be attending St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota. Liza will major in the ASL interpretation bachelor of arts degree program. About her future she states, “Since a young age, I have always had an interest in learning ASL and helping others any way I could. I plan to pursue this as my future career because I

can combine my passion for ASL with wanting to help people everyday when I go to work.” Liza’s parents are Ken and Pam Leja.



**Laci Jepson** – Laci currently attends Gillett High School. This fall she will begin her post-high school education at UW–Fox Valley, where she plans to acquire her freshman and sophomore general credits and then transfer to UW–Stevens Point to major in wildlife biology. Laci says, “I want to go into wildlife biology because things have been going downhill. I want to get an education to

try to help this. By having a career in wildlife biology I can work in labs, run rests, find data to try to save the animals.” Laci’s parents are Lonnie and Corrinne Jepson.



**Ally Magnin** – Ally was a student at Oconto Falls High School. This fall she will be pursuing a degree in the engineering field at the UW–Madison. While describing her future she says, “I have grown throughout high school. I have developed, worked toward, and met numerous goals that will grant me a prosperous future. It is my primary goal moving forward to live a life abundant

in happiness and success. I plan to achieve this broad vision in my life with a healthy lifestyle, honorable education, and strong career as a highly respected business woman.” Ally’s parents are Duane and Danna Magnin.



**Breeana Kittredge** – Breeana is a graduate of Lena High School. In the fall she will attend the UW–Green Bay to pursue a career in the medical field. Breeana states, “I feel I will be very successful as a doctor because I have the drive, character, compassion and goodwill to keep me going and to keep pushing me forward. I am not one to give up or settle for “okay” or “good enough.”

Breeana’s parents are Travis and Kim Kittredge.



**Carolyn Malcheski** – Carolyn graduated from Oconto Falls High school and plans to attend UW–Madison to obtain either a bachelor of science in nursing, a biology degree, or both. In the future Carolyn wants to fulfill her dream of being a surgeon. In that career, she hopes to work at a prestigious hospital, do research projects, and also provide medical services to countries and people

in need of medical care. Carolyn’s parents are Martin and Terry Malcheski.



**Derek McMullen** – Derek is a graduate of Coleman High School and plans on attending UW–Marinette, majoring in business administration. Derek says, “Without college, there is little chance for me to climb the ladder to success that my grandma says I must start at the bottom of, and take one rung at a time, so I do not fall off; and one day I will see the view from the top.” Derek’s guardians are James and Merle Hanna.



**Ryan Petter** – Ryan attended Pulaski High School and this fall he will be attending Milwaukee School of Engineering where he plans to major in computer engineering or software engineering. When talking about his future goals Ryan says, “I am motivated to complete each one no matter the obstacles I must step through. John F. Kennedy once said, ‘Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly,’ and this is exactly how I plan to live my life.” Ryan’s parents are Ken and Lisa Petter.



**Brittany Russell** – Brittany is a graduate of Oconto Falls High School and plans to attend the UW–Madison to major in biomedical engineering. Brittany says, “It is my goal to be on the forefront of the evolutionary stem cell research, collaborating with other scientists, doctors, and engineers to advance the remarkable capabilities of stem cells.

I aspire to make an impact in the world we live in by applying my education and knowledge and pioneering further applications of stem cells in medical treatments.” Brittany’s parents are Bruce and Elizabeth Russell.



**Cassandra Stoll** – Cassandra Stoll graduated from Oconto High School. In the fall she will attend UW–Green Bay for her general education classes. The following year she will then attend UW–La Crosse to pursue a bachelor’s degree in radiation therapy. Cassandra is very excited about becoming a radiation therapist. She likes the idea of having an ongoing relationship with her patients and not just a one-time visit. A few of her future goals include continuing her studies in Spanish to become fluent and to learn sign language, as well as continuing to get good grades. Cassandra’s parents are Donald and Kristine Stoll.



**Alex Zeitler** – Alex is a graduate of Gillett High School and plans to attend UW–Oshkosh or Wisconsin Lutheran College to earn a degree in nursing. Alex says, “ Making a difference in people’s lives is something I wanted to do ever since I was young. Hospital staff has had a huge impact on my life especially in my early years when I was treated for an extended period of time at Children’s Hospital. I want to make a difference in patients’ lives just as the hospital staff did for me.” Alex’s parents are Greg and Lynda Zeitler.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Avoid setting your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when



you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## CHILL OUT: TIPS FOR AIR CONDITIONING SAFELY AND EFFICIENTLY

According to the Department of Energy (DOE), two-thirds of American homes use an air conditioner, which accounts for \$11 billion in annual costs. Since air conditioners run much more in the summer months, there is also a potential cost to safety if an air conditioner malfunctions. The Energy Education Council knows that energy safety and efficiency often go hand in hand, and offers the following tips to help keep your home safe and your cooling bills lower.

The National Fire Protection Association reports that between 2006 and 2010, an average of 2,500 fires occurred annually as a result of air conditioner malfunction, with 49 percent of these accidents occurring during the peak summer months of June, July, and August.

Common problems leading to air conditioner malfunctions often include faulty installation and inadequate maintenance. (411001) For this reason, always check to be sure that your equipment is being used in compliance with manufacturer instructions.

Before running your air conditioner, inspect the equipment and be sure that all coils, filters, and circuit breakers are clean and functioning properly. According to DOE estimates, dirty air filters can block airflow, cause air pollution, and increase energy consumption by 5 to 15 percent, so be sure to clean and replace them regularly.

Consider upgrading your air conditioner to a more energy efficient model, which can save 10 to 15 percent in energy costs. When looking at various units, check for the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating (SEER), the most well-known efficiency rating. Also, check that the air conditioner has a label indicating that it has been tested by a certified laboratory. To help with costs, look for available government or utility incentives.

While running your air conditioner, always be sure that all windows and doors are closed to increase operating efficiency. Sealing ducts, increasing insulation, and plugging leaks in the home can also help improve the overall efficiency of the air conditioner. A leaky home can account for a 25 percent increase in cooling costs. Exhaust and ceiling fans can increase the air flow in the home and reduce humidity in rooms that are often warmer, such as bathrooms and kitchens.

Trim foliage at least two feet around the air conditioner. Clearing the area around the unit ensures that airflow to the appliance is not blocked.

Get more tips on keeping your home safe and cool this summer at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



## OEC INSIGHT

### Dedication to our schools

The fifth cooperative principle is Education, Training, and Information. OEC is committed to helping educate area students in many different ways.

During the 2015–2016 school year we taught 311 students in grades 3–5 about electrical safety. The demonstrations are conducted to increase awareness about electrical safety and to teach children the potential dangers of contacting a power line. Grades 3–5 also participated in our 16th annual safety poster contest to promote electrical safety month.

In April, we participated in a career day at Washington Middle School in Oconto Falls, telling students what a typical day is like for a lineman. Students had the chance to try out some of the equipment.

And this year we awarded \$11,000 worth of scholarships to area high school graduates.



OEC Journeyman Lineman Scott Bancroft conducted a safety demonstration at the Oconto Falls Elementary School.



OEC Journeyman Lineman Scott Bancroft and City of Oconto Falls Journeyman Lineman John Salscheider worked together to bring the students information about their careers.

## 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 May account numbers belonged to Art Skarda, Coleman, and Gerald Schneider, Cecil.

**Byron C. Nolde, CEO**

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