

# WHY WE CELEBRATE COOPERATIVES

Every October, cooperatives from all sectors across the country celebrate National Cooperative Month. The purpose of this annual celebration is to recognize the cooperative difference and remind you, the members of the co-op, about Oconto Electric Cooperative's purpose.

I must admit that occasionally, I too have been somewhat cynical of the many different "days" and "months" that are celebrated, but National Cooperative Month is truly an opportunity to celebrate.

Celebrating National Cooperative Month informs others about our unique business model, which is based on the Seven Cooperative Principles: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

For co-op employees and members that are familiar with the principles, the month of October is a great opportunity to renew our connection to each other and the purpose of our co-op.

In 1937, OEC was formed to serve electricity in rural northeastern Wisconsin. Currently OEC serves more than 9,600 members throughout Oconto, Marinette, and small portions of Shawano and Menominee Counties. OEC's goal is to provide safe and reliable electricity at a reasonable rate. OEC is committed to the communities we serve. We support local schools, community organizations, and agencies through do-

nations and programs that OEC offers. Many OEC employees are active with local groups and organizations, which enrich the cooperative's relationship with the people and communities we serve.

To celebrate National Cooperative Month, OEC will be serving cookies and refreshments in the lobby October 24-31, and members who stop in will also receive a gift.

In the United States, there are more than 29,000 co-ops serving in every single industry. Many co-ops from different sectors join together during the month of (5700) October to educate members in the community about cooperatives.

There are more co-ops in our local community than most people realize. NEW Credit Union, CHS Larsen Cooperative, Equity Livestock, Maple Valley Mutual Insurance Company, United Cooperative, and Country Visions are just a few of them. Co-ops are even represented on the shelves at our local stores, with brands such as Land O'Lakes, Welch's, Organic Valley, Sunkist, Ocean Spray, True Value, and many more.

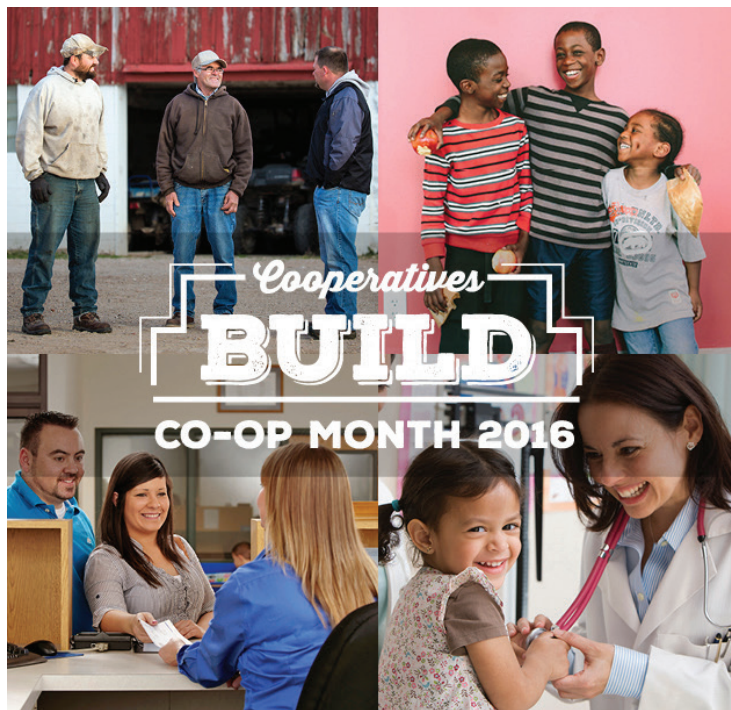
According to the latest data, more than 130 million people belong to a co-op in the U.S. alone, and co-ops employ more than 2 million Americans.

This speaks to the heart of why we must take every opportunity to celebrate and teach others about the cooperative business model. So, plan your own co-op celebration by purchasing co-op products, look to do business with co-ops right here in our local community, and be an active member of OEC.

## DEFINED BY PRINCIPLES

**There are more than 29,000 co-ops in the U.S. alone. All are guided by the same set of Seven Cooperative Principles.**

- 1. Voluntary & Open Membership**
- 2. Democratic Control**
- 3. Members' Economic Participation**
- 4. Autonomy & Independence**
- 5. Education, Training & Information**
- 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives**
- 7. Concern for Community**



*Cooperatives*  
**BUILD**  
**CO-OP MONTH 2016**

**CO-OP MONTH | OCTOBER 2016**



## WHAT WOULD LIFE BE LIKE WITHOUT ELECTRIC CO-OPS?

In the holiday movie classic, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” the lead character, George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart), wishes he had never been born due to financial troubles he is experiencing. Through the help of an angel, he sees how many lives would have been negatively affected if he didn’t exist. George comes to realize that, even with his problems, he has a wonderful life with great friends and family.

So what do you think life would be like if community leaders had not founded Oconto Electric Cooperative 79 years ago?

Living in the United States in 2016, it is nearly impossible to imagine life without electricity. So many of our modern conveniences that improve the quality of our lives are dependent on electricity as the “fuel” to make them work: the alarm clock that wakes us up, the refrigerator that keeps our morning milk cold and fresh, the HVAC unit that keeps us cool in the summer and warm in the winter, to the vacuum that lets us clean more ef-

ficiently, and all those kitchen appliances that save us time and physical energy. Of course, so much of our entertainment, whether it comes from the TV, radio or computer, depends on the kilowatt-hours that your electric co-op provides. Just think, there would be no smart phones or cell phones if there was no electricity.

Businesses of all kinds rely on electricity to produce and sell the products we need. So, it is no wonder that many electric co-ops feel that, while our primary product is electricity, we are really in the quality-of-life business.

As we celebrate the season that reminds us to be thankful for all that we have, it is important to remember the 1.3 billion people in the world that still live without reliable electric service. That is equal to about four times the U.S. population!

Many of the things we take for granted living in the United States are much harder and more time consuming for people in developing countries around the world. We are proud members of

the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) that is working through their affiliate, NRECA International, and the NRECA International Foundation to help bring power to people in developing countries like Haiti and Liberia. (<http://www.nreca.coop/it-starts-with-power/>)

We are thankful that our community ancestors right here had the vision and foresight to do for ourselves what needed to be done, gathering our friends and neighbors to form our electric co-op. As the electric business of the 21st century continues to evolve, you can count on OEC to meet all of your electric energy needs. More importantly, we are here to help improve the quality of *your wonderful life*.

*By Adam Schwartz*

*Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way, a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op.*



# THE BENEFITS OF CHOOSING AN ELECTRIC WATER HEATER



As expected, most people don't think much about water heaters. They take for granted that they make it possible to have hot showers and clean dinner dishes and enjoy load upon load of freshly laundered linens. The lonely water heater, tucked away in the basement or a utility closet, is out of sight and out of mind.

There are times, however, when your attention turns to that most essential of appliances: when

an existing water heater breaks ("Brrr. That water is cold!") or when building or renovating a home.

At those times, a homeowner will make a decision that has consequences that persist for a decade or two, maybe longer. Your water-heating choice will have implications for energy efficiency, cost of use, the environment, safety and reliability.

As a member of the cooperative, you might already know about many of the advantages and benefits of electric water heaters. First, electric water heaters are safe. There is no threat

of carbon monoxide poisoning, combustion or explosion. Electric water heaters are environmentally friendly and capable of using electricity generated from solar, wind, hydro, and other renewable sources.

Electric water heaters are also easy to install, requiring no expensive gas lines, exhaust flue or on-site fuel tanks. Compared to other fuels, the cost of electricity is stable.

In addition, electric water heaters are emerging as a building block of the future electric grid. These formerly mundane

**Electric water heaters are environmentally friendly, easy to install and emerging as a building block of the future electric grid.**

units are evolving into smart appliances and energy storage units that are helping the grid become more stable and more efficient. By heating water when demand for electricity is low and storing the thermal energy for later use, electric water heaters can save you money.

Since the 1970s, OEC members have been encouraged to actively participate in the water heater load management program. By allowing OEC to install a load management receiver on your electric water heater, you are part of the solution in keeping rates stable.

Not everyone acknowledges the superiority of electric water heaters. The fact is that propane is a fossil fuel, and prices tend to fluctuate wildly. If you install a propane heater today, you'll live with the consequences and risks for years to come. That's the inconvenient truth.

If you have questions about water heater options or other energy efficiency needs, give us a call at 1-800-472-8410. At OEC, we're here to be your trusted energy source.

## SAFETY FOR SENIORS AT HOME



**Fall  
Detection  
Buttons  
Available!**

**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](http://www.ocontoelectric.com)



# Cooperatives BUILD

## CO-OP MONTH 2016

To celebrate National Co-op Month, there are a few things going on at the office October 24-31

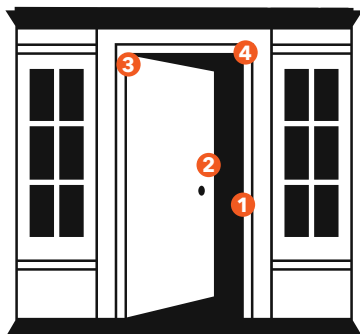
A gift will be available for every member who comes into the office.

Cookies and refreshments will be served in the lobby.

### WEATHER STRIPPING DOORS

Capturing Energy Savings by Sealing Air Leaks

Save energy and seal air leaks by weather stripping exterior doors. How do you know if you need to weather strip? If you can see any amount of light between the door frame and the floor, weather stripping should be applied to eliminate energy waste. This DIY energy-saving project is relatively easy and inexpensive depending on the type of materials selected. The most common weather stripping material is self-adhesive foam strips, although rubber, vinyl, metal, or a combination of materials may also be used.



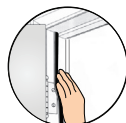
**1 CLEANING SURFACES** - Clean the door and door jamb to be weather stripped. For best results, weather stripping should be applied to clean, dry surfaces above 20°F.



**2 MEASURING DOOR & DOOR JAMBS** - To ensure greater accuracy, measure your space twice before cutting the material. It is best to plan for one continuous strip for each side of the door and door jamb.



**3 CUTTING FOAM** - Cut long pieces of self-adhesive weather stripping material (foam, vinyl, etc.) for each side of the door jamb and door.



**4 APPLYING WEATHER STRIPPING** - Peel back the self-adhesive foam. Apply one continuous strip of material snugly along each side. Make sure the weather stripping meets tightly at the corners and is pressed firmly onto the door and door jamb. The material should compress tightly between the door and door jamb, without making it difficult to shut.

SOURCE: Department of Energy

### 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 September account numbers belonged to Dave Bickel, Oconto, and Dennis Kohn, Gillett.

**Byron C. Nolde, CEO**

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**Katie Jagiello, Editor**

### OEC INSIGHT



### Kriss Krause Recognized for 15 Years of Service

Kriss Krause was hired at OEC as a staff assistant in 2000. She assisted the CEO, OEC board of directors, and handled employee benefits, collections, and capital credits.

Her current title is executive assistant/human resources. She continues to assist the CEO, board of directors and is in charge of HR/employee benefits.

Kriss says OEC is a great place to work, especially when you have such a great boss. Her favorite things about her job are the employee interaction and working with the board of directors.

Kriss and her husband Mike, enjoy riding in their 1956 Ford and spending time with family, friends, and her three precious grandsons.

Congratulations Kriss!

