



# 2017 OEC EMPLOYEE CHARITY FOCUSES ON VETERANS THIS YEAR

Since 2004, the Oconto Electric Employee Charity effort has awarded \$68,000 to charities and organizations. Each year the Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) employees choose a different organization as the recipient of its fund-raising efforts.

Several events are held throughout the summer, with the donations being made to the recipients in late fall or after the new year. Employees have held charity lunches, bag lunch to go, jean days, a motorcycle ride, golf outings, and candy bar sales.

This year OEC asked for grant applications and had a great response. The funds raised will be split between Old Glory Honor Flight and Patriot Guard Riders – Wisconsin. (452201)



completely free of charge to the vet!

Old Glory Honor Flight is proud to announce that it is now accepting Vietnam Veteran applications and expect to begin flights in 2017.

Old Glory Honor Flight is funded primarily from individuals across Northeast Wisconsin who recognize the great accomplishments and sacrifices of veterans and want them to have the chance to visit their nation's capital.

Old Glory Honor Flight is dedicated to transporting our local WWII and Korean War veterans to Washington, D.C., to see the memorials built in their honor. It is a one-day trip and



monies and events to welcome our troops home from overseas or to give them a resounding show of support when they leave the states for foreign countries. They are completely funded by donations and other than minor administrative expenses, all funds go directly to benefit those they serve.

Funds raised by OEC employees will go towards their Help on the Homefront Services. Under their Help On The Homefront program, they provide the essentials for veterans who have completed rehabilitation programs and are again contributing to society.

Most often, veterans leaving the VA recovery programs leave with little more than the clothes on their backs. Patriot Guard Riders provide veterans with a bed, tables, chairs, TV, entertainment center, kitchenware, bed and bedding, all usually donated by individuals. When there is a lack of donated goods, Patriot Guard Riders will use monetary donations to purchase items for the veterans.

Past recipients of the OEC Employee Charity include: Oconto Area Humane Society, Oconto Falls Friends of the Firefighters, Lena Public Library, and many more.

The Patriot Guard Riders – Wisconsin is an all-volunteer organization that provides support for active military personnel and veterans and their families. Their main mission is to honor our fallen heroes, their families, and communities by attending memorial services and funerals. They also participate in cere-



# KEEP YOURSELF FROM HAVING TO DIG OUT OF TROUBLE

If you had a new fence to install at home, you would likely research property lines, ordinances, and fence types. Then you would get to the point of purchasing, prepping, and assembling materials to get work started. However, you would still not be ready to dig. There is a very important step missing—calling 811.

811 is a free service that will have buried public utilities marked on your property so that you can safely dig around them. Just call 811, or submit an online request at [call811.com](http://call811.com), at least a few business days before you plan to dig.

Digging without having utility lines marked can result in damage to electric, gas, communications, water, and sewer systems. According to the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), every six minutes an underground line is damaged because someone began to dig before calling 811.

When contacting 811, make sure that you have clearly identified your planned digging area and outline it in white paint if possible. The service uses ground-penetrating radar to search for and locate the buried public utility lines that are on your property. Lines

will be marked with flags or paint. The color indicates the type of utility located. After the area has been marked, the CGA reports that you have less than 1 percent chance of causing damage if you respect the markings.

If you have any private utilities, you will need to hire a private utility locator. Some examples (863403) of private utilities include: underground sprinkler system, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas piping to a garage.

If you do not know what facilities are on the property, look for clues to tell you what might be under ground, like a propane storage tank, gas meters, a detached garage or outbuilding with lights, a grill or pool on the property, manhole lids, storm drains, and pavement patches.

Even if you have had an area marked before, call to have the area checked again. Natural changes to the soil, such as erosion or root growth, can alter the depth and location of buried lines. Once all buried lines have been marked, respect the boundaries, and dig carefully.

For more safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

an underground line is **damaged**  
every **six minutes**



**call 811 before you dig**

Information collected from the Common Ground Alliance

## LIVES ON THE LINE

Every year, we take the time to thank our extraordinary linemen who dedicate their lives to keeping the lights on in our local communities. Six linemen maintain 1,423 miles of line in Oconto Electric Cooperative's service territory, and without them, our world would be dark.

We depend on our entire staff to keep OEC running smoothly, but on April 10, 2017, we honor all linemen who often find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations, so our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day. These brave men and women repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for our communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op would not thrive. No matter the

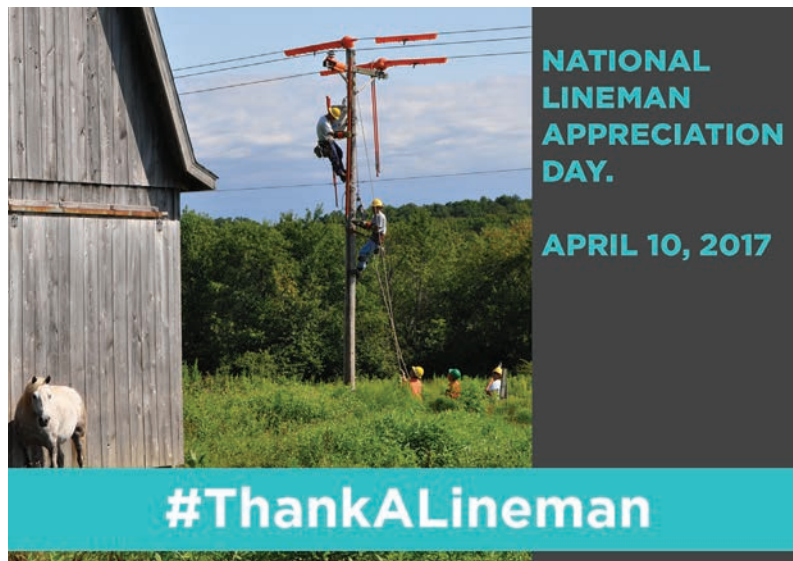
time—day or night, weekday or weekend—if the lights go out, so do they.

Perhaps you have seen them raising their bucket trucks in howling winds and torrential rains, or in freezing, icy conditions. They work around the clock near high-voltage power

lines until electricity is restored to every member in our co-op community.

In addition to aiding members in our local service territory, linemen are always willing and eager to volunteer when a neighboring community, county, or state is in need after a major outage occurs.

We hope you will join us in thanking the many lineworkers—both locally and around the world—who light our lives. Remember, your power works because they do!



# THUNDERSTORM SAFETY TIPS FROM THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

When thunderstorms are rolling your way, stay safe with these helpful tips from the American Red Cross:

- Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes, or increasing wind.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur. Many people struck by lightning are not in the area where rain is occurring.
- If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors! The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.
- Avoid electrical equipment and telephones/cellphones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.
- Shutter windows and close outside doors securely. Keep away from windows.
- Do not take a bath, shower, or use plumbing.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.
- If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground; water; tall, isolated trees; and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts, and sheds are NOT safe.



## Appliance Recycling

### Get \$35 for your old fridge!

Make room in your garage or basement by getting rid of that extra fridge or freezer taking up space and hogging energy. Focus On Energy will pick it up from your house for FREE, responsibly recycle it, and give you \$35. Plus, you'll save up to \$150 per year in energy costs.

Appliances must meet all program guidelines in order to qualify for the program.

- \$35 incentive per qualifying unit
- Refrigerators and freezers eligible
- Must be working
- Must be 10–30 cubic feet (Mini fridges are ineligible)
- Two units allowed per household, per year

**Schedule it today for a free pick up. Go to [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com) or call 800-354-1898.**



## BE PREPARED BEFORE A STORM STRIKES

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping the following items in an easy-to-find emergency supply kit.



### ■ WATER

Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.



### ■ TOOLS

Flashlight, extra batteries, manual can opener, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.



### ■ FIRST AID KIT AND PRESCRIPTIONS

First aid supplies, hand sanitizer and at least one week's supply of prescriptions and medications for the family.

Learn more at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)



Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.





## Sign Up for Our AC Load Management Program

Oconto Electric Cooperative is offering a one-time \$25 credit on your electric bill for new participants in our AC Load Management Program (central air-conditioning units only, NOT for room units). You will also receive an \$8 credit on your electric bill during the months of June, July, August, and September, provided that you have used at least 400 kilowatt hours during the billing month. If you sign up for the program, we will install a Load Management Receiver (LMR) on your air conditioner just like the receivers we install on electric water heaters.

If you are concerned about having your air conditioner controlled all day, that is not how it will work. There will be cycles of approximately 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off during the control periods. Your home will still be cool, and OEC will still be saving money. Control periods are Monday through Friday, approximately 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

We have over 1,475 satisfied members already on the program. This equates to an approximate overall co-op savings of \$54,000 per month in demand charges, and we are trying to increase that savings.

If you are interested in this program and would like to receive the \$25 bonus, please call us at 800-472-8410.



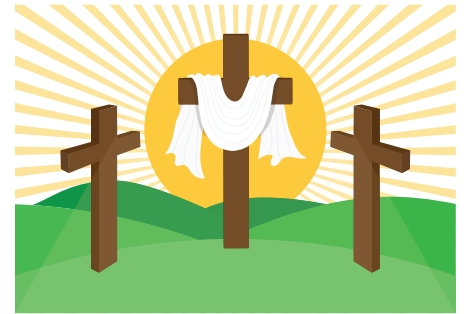
## HIDDEN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

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 Marleen Mizorek, Oconto, and Aleece Dean, Little Suamico.

**Byron C. Nolde, CEO**

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**Katie Jagiello, Editor**



**OEC will be closed April 14  
to observe Good Friday**

**HAPPY EASTER!**

**How would you like  
to win a \$25 credit on  
your OEC electric bill?**

During the month of  
April OEC members just  
need to go to  
Facebook and like OEC's  
RadioShack page to be  
entered to win.

facebook/radioshackocontofalls



Winner will be selected on  
Friday, May 3rd

