

DOES YOUR HEALTH RELY ON ELECTRICITY?

What will you do if the power goes out?



A sudden power outage due to severe weather or a nearby accident could leave you without power for hours or even days. Do you have an emergency plan?

Talk with your family and friends about what you would do in the event of a long power outage. Do you have an alternative place to stay? Does your town or city have an emergency shelter?

Many medical devices use electricity or are battery dependent, including: breathing machines, power wheelchairs, oxygen and home dialysis equipment. Some equipment is vital to keeping you alive! Read the equipment instructions and talk to the equipment suppliers about your backup power options.

Cellphone Keep your cellphone charged so that you are able to call for help or be reached by someone else.

Batteries

- If your devices are battery-operated, make sure you have extras on hand.
- Do you periodically check your backup batteries? Unused rechargeable batteries may need charging.
- Portable battery packs will supply hours of back-up energy.

Use the Car Can your devices be plugged into or recharged through the power outlet in your vehicle? If you plan on using this for your backup power make sure that you keep your vehicle's fuel tank at least half full.

Generator Maybe you need to invest in a generator and know how to use it safely. There are two types of generators for homeowners to choose from: portable and standby.

Standby Generator:

Standby generators are installed directly to the house and are typically powered by natural gas or propane.

- These generators start automatically when the power goes out.
- An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your generator separate from the electric co-op lines, should be installed by a professional.

Portable Generator

A portable generator is usually gas powered and can be moved around.

- You can power your home by plugging appliances directly into it.
- Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows and vents. The carbon monoxide generated can be deadly.
- Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.
- Start the generator first before connecting appliances.
- It is recommended that you operate your generator once

a month for at least 10 minutes to ensure that it is running properly.

- Keep the generator where it will be easily accessible and weatherproof.
- It is advisable to have enough fuel for at least 24 hours.

Begin by identifying your basic electrical needs in the event of a power outage and calculating the number of watts needed. You may want a generator that produces more power than all the equipment combined plus the initial surge when it is turned on. (77902) Contact an electrician to determine your energy needs.

Medications Do you have medications that need to stay in a cool, dry place?

- If the power goes out, a refrigerator should generally hold its temperature for two to four hours, if you are not opening and closing it.
- After four hours, empty the ice from the freezer into a cooler and keep your medication in that cooler. It should be safe in there for a day or two.

OEC deeply cares about the health and safety of our members. We encourage you to do the same and have an emergency plan in place. If you ever have a question, please call us at 1-800-472-8410.



PORTABLE GENERATORS

Connecting a portable generator directly to your household wiring can be deadly to you and others. A generator that is directly connected to your home's wiring can "back feed" onto the power lines connected to your home and injure neighbors or utility workers. The only safe way to connect a portable electric generator to your existing wiring is to have a licensed electrical contractor install a transfer switch.

The power is in your hands...be safe.

The power is in your hands.



54TH ANNUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

On July 26-28, Oconto Electric Cooperative sponsored four students to attend the 2017 Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) at UW-River Falls with over 120 other students. They were Jamey Gruszynski, Beth Gannigan, McKenna Kriescher and Alyssa Langlay.

YLC is a fun, educational, and unique event that is planned by and for teens. Six students are selected each year to serve the Wisconsin Electric Cooperation Association Youth Board, which then plans and conducts the next year's program. Youth Board members are eligible to attend the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour held in Washington, D.C. in June.

The event is focused on educating students about cooperatives, helping them develop or improve leadership skills all while experiencing college life.

There were a variety of workshops, hands-on activities, group discussions

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and team-building exercises. These opportunities gave students the freedom to test out their own leadership skills.

Nationally acclaimed motivational speaker Craig Hillier returned for another

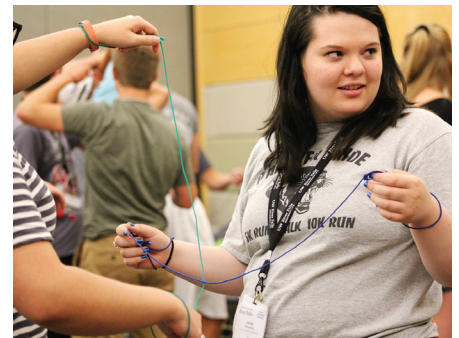
year. He focused on inspiring students to exceed their potential and motivate their peers to do the same. He reminded students that you don't have to be great at something, but you have to try something to be great.

One evening, the students were treated to a show by hypnotist Dr. Al Snyder. On the last night of the event, UW-River Falls professor Melissa Wilson led a formal, five-course etiquette dinner where students learned the basic principles of proper dinner table etiquette. The dinner was then followed by a dance.

The conference wrapped up mid-morning on Friday. Everyone had a great time and many new friendships were made.



(L to R) Alyssa Langlay, Jamey Gruszynski, McKenna Kriescher and Beth Gannigan dressed for the etiquette dinner.



FUN AND FOOD FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



On Saturday, August 5, OEC held our annual Member Appreciation Day Picnic to show members that their patronage is greatly appreciated.

It started out as a gorgeous, sunny day that brought over 1,350 members out to enjoy the festivities, and ended with a rain shower at the very end of the event.

A picnic style lunch was served from 10 am-2 pm. Music was provided by DJ Scott from Tequila Jukebox. Brazeau Rescue Squad was busy doing blood pressure checks. Numerous vendors had displays set up and were available to

answer questions.

We had many activities for the kids to enjoy, from face painting to having their picture taken as an OEC lineman. Holtger Brothers Inc., a contractor for OEC, provided a bounce house for the kids.

Chuck Wellens and Kent Lyng presented a hot-line demonstration to remind members just how dangerous electricity can be. The demonstration illustrated what can happen when objects like kites, trees and animals make contact with a live wire.

Employees held a raffle and bake sale raising money for the 2017 employee

charity that will benefit the Old Glory Honor Flight and Patriot Guard Riders of Wisconsin.

1st Prize: \$200 cash – Cheryl Werner

2nd Prize: Handmade Quilt – Karen Stranz

3rd Prize: \$75 OEC Credit – Susan Kanack

4th Prize: Back to School Basket – Byron Nolde

5th Prize: Sundae Funday Basket – Jean Eastman

Thank you to all the OEC employees, directors, friends and families who helped make the day a success.



STAY FOCUSED ON SAFETY DURING HARVEST

During harvest season, many farmers reap the benefits of advancement in agricultural technology. With the help of GPS auto-steer devices, farmers are able to decrease driver error and maximize productivity. Yet despite these advances, safety risks remain. To help farmers stay out of harm's way, Safe Electricity, a program of the energy education council, shares tips for a safe harvest.

GPS with auto-guidance provides farmers with real-time location data about a field, which can be used for crop planning, map making, navigation assistance and machinery guidance. During harvest, this technology allows drivers to have their hands off the steering wheel as the combine maneuvers itself through the field. Thanks to this technology, farmers can more easily and efficiently maintain accuracy even during low-light conditions, which enhances productivity.

"One critical part of safety around electricity is awareness," explains Kyla Kruse, communications director of the Safe Electricity program. "It's important to remember that farm machinery is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its large size, height and extensions. Being aware of the location of overhead power lines and planning a safe equipment route can help reduce accidents."

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering,

which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. However, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings.



Putting safety first requires alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and safety steps. Varying pass-to-pass accuracy levels and potential issues, such as power poles not being correctly plotted (32400) in the system, reinforce the need for drivers to stay focused on the location of the farm equipment while in the field and to be ready to take action if necessary.

Regardless of the technology used on the farm, keep the following electrical safety guidelines in mind:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.

- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines—at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead power lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact OEC.

If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

The only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire, which is rare. However, if this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

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. There were no hidden account numbers in the August edition.

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