

# PLUG-IN POWER KEEPS HYBRID CAR ROLLING



Todd Koehne, left, and his cousin Bill Koehne stand by Bill's Chevy Volt outside of the Koehne car dealership in Oconto. Bill loves driving his sporty hybrid car. He purchases electricity from Oconto Electric Cooperative to run the car and rarely stops at the gas station.

Bill Koehne of Abrams has found an innovative way to use the electricity supplied by Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC). He uses it to power his electric car.

Bill, owner of Packerland Websites, drove one of the first Chevy Volts on the market, and now is driving his third Chevy Volt. Each one was available through the lease program offered by Koehne Chevrolet Buick GMC of Oconto and Marinette.

Bill's cousins Todd and Chad Koehne, owners of the dealership, encouraged him to test drive a Chevy Volt, saying a techie guy like Bill should be driving a techie vehicle.

They had a believer from the start.

The car's low center of gravity gives it a sporty feel. The car is responsive and shows all the pep and power of a gasoline-only vehicle.

"It felt really cool to drive—super quiet," Bill said. So quiet, in fact, that his first Chevy Volt came with a pedestrian horn in addition to the standard horn.

"It's really cool for a techie to be driving a hybrid car. I love the technology. It's like driving a giant iPad—touch-screen controls, Bluetooth devices, and hands-free commands. I also love the

incredible fuel savings."

In the summer of 2017, Bill estimates using 11 gallons of gas and 132 kilowatts of electricity each month to drive about 1,200 miles. A comparable gasoline-powered vehicle would use 40 gallons of gas. With gas at \$2.50 per gallon, it saves him about \$2 a day.

"What's that worth?" Bill said.

Bill estimates it costs 45 cents in electricity for a 50-mile Abrams-to-Green Bay round trip. When fully charged and with a full 9-gallon tank of gas, the Volt has a range of 420 miles. That's enough to get him to Eau Claire and back.

The Volt goes days on end without using any gasoline, especially in warm weather, when the car is most economical and can exceed 250 miles per gallon. By using the wall-mounted charging station in his garage, Bill's Volt is fully recharged within five hours, ready to go again. To make recharging more economical, Bill signed up for an advantageous rate program offered by OEC.

Like the family's water heater and air conditioner, the Volt is part of a load management program. This program allows OEC to manage electricity use during times of high demand and shut off electricity to the water heater, air

conditioner, and to the electric car. In exchange, electricity is available at a lower cost: 4.9 cents per kilowatt hour compared with the normal rate of 12–13 cents.

Jan Stranz, vice president of member services at OEC, said the cooperative encourages customers to register for the load management programs. While customers save on their electricity bills, the co-op benefits also by reducing the amount of electricity it purchases during peak usage when electricity is most expensive.

"We sell electricity at a time that makes the most sense for you and the co-op," she said.

In exchange for the lower rate, the power is sometimes interrupted when the Volt is recharging during the day. But if the Volt is plugged in overnight, it reaches a full charge by morning.

"When you factor in the fuel savings and fun of driving, the Volt is a great vehicle to purchase or lease," said Chad Koehne. "The Volt is an eco-friendly hatchback with snappy acceleration and a quiet ride that drivers love."

A friend once told Bill, "You must have a really long extension cord."

He just has a really cool car to drive, powered in part by OEC.—Joan Koehne



# KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE FROM ELECTRICAL FIRES

Your lights turn on in an instant and your plug slides into outlets without sparks or shocks. You can't see it, and typically don't think much about it. However, the electricity that we take for granted every day requires attention to potential hazards and taking steps to keep everyone safe.

Utility safety organization Safe Electricity offers these tips to help keep your home safe from electrical problems and fires:

- Have all work done by a qualified electrician.
- Get regular check-ups for older homes, which have older wiring and are often designed for fewer appliances and electronics. Have the electrical system checked every 5–10 years, depending on the age of your home. If your home is older than 30 years, make sure the wiring meets updated National Electrical Code standards.
- Watch for warning signs such as hot or discolored switch plates, cords, or plugs; dimming or flickering lights; buzzing or sizzling sounds. If you smell a burning odor, check it out immediately and unplug electric items in that area.
- Immediately repair loose outlets, and discard or replace cracked, cut, or broken insulation on electric cords.
- Keep cords out of walkways and high-traffic areas so they don't get stepped on and damaged, and cause a tripping hazard.

- Use extension cords temporarily, not as permanent wiring. Too many extension cords in one area create a risk of overheating or overloading circuits.
- Never use cords or appliances that have exposed, damaged, or faulty wiring. Have them repaired or replaced.
- Avoid using nails or staples to secure electric cords in place. When an electrical cord is punctured, it increases the likelihood of electric shock and fire.
- When you replace light bulbs, ensure that you match the recommended wattage for your lamp or other light fixtures. Using an incorrect wattage increases the likelihood for electrical fires.
- If small children are present, install tamper-resistant outlets or use outlet covers to reduce the risk of shocks and fire.
- Educate your loved ones on the dangers of electricity and provide guidance on care for your appliances and electronics.

Electrical safety can also reduce energy waste and save on the power bill. Turn off electronics and lights when they are not in use. This reduces heat as it lowers electricity use.

Learn more about home electrical safety at [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

## THE CO-OP COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE POWER

### New Power Contract in 2019

OEC's goal is to provide safe and reliable electricity at a reasonable rate. "We are always looking for ways to better the co-op and the members overall," says CEO Byron Nolde.

In December of 2015, we gave a three-year notice to our current wholesale power supplier, Wisconsin Public Service, that we would not be renewing our contract with them.

Next we issued a request for proposals. We received six bids that have been evaluated by our consulting firm, Power System Engineering, Inc. Due to an increase in the transmission capacity to transfer the electricity on the electric grid, OEC has more options in purchasing wholesale power.

The electric grid is a complex system of power plants, transmission lines, substations, and distribution lines that transmit electric power from the place where it's generated all the way to consumer-members at the end of the line.

OEC's board of directors and CEO are still in the negotiation process with the top three suppliers. Once a contract is signed, a rate study will then be done to help us see what kind of changes need to be made in 2019 when the new power contract starts. As soon as we have that information we will let you, the members, know.

**Transmission Lines: A Field Guide**

There is currently no efficient, cost-effective way to store electricity long-term. High voltage transmission lines are used to deliver electricity from generation plants to consumers.

**High-Voltage Transmission Lines**  
Large amounts of power, measured by watts, are delivered by transmission lines. These lines are energized with very high voltage in order to move the power long distances with minimal losses. Insulators on the towers prevent the power from flowing to the towers or the ground.

*Electric cooperatives own and maintain 65,000 miles (6 percent) of the nation's transmission lines!*

**Substations and Sub-Transmission Lines**  
Transformers at transmission substations reduce the voltage from transmission levels to sub-transmission levels, typically ranging from 115,000 volts to 34,500 volts. Sub-transmission lines deliver power over short distances to industrial sites and distribution substations.

The lines also deliver electricity to distribution substations, where transformers reduce the voltage, at distribution substations, transformers reduce the voltage to a lower level, typically 34,500 volts, 25,000 volts, or 12,500 volts.

**Distribution Lines**  
The lines typically seen along rural roads and next to homes are generally single phase distribution lines, energized at 7,200 or 14,400 volts. Transformers on the power poles lower the voltage to between 120 and 480 volts to serve residential homes and small businesses.

*Electric cooperatives own and maintain 2.5 million miles (42 percent) of the nation's distribution lines!*

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives


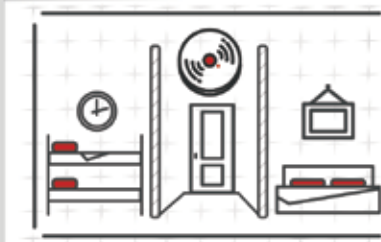



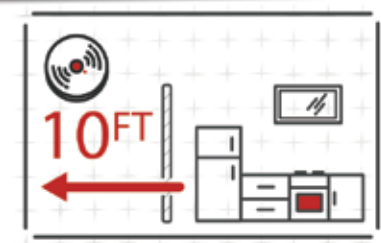
# SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

According to the **National Fire Protection Association**, an average of **1,450 fire deaths** occur every year in homes with missing or non-functioning smoke alarms.



   **2/3** fire deaths occur in homes with missing or non-functioning smoke alarms.

## INSTALL SMOKE ALARMS IN:

<p><b>Every bedroom</b></p> 	<p><b>Outside each sleeping area</b></p> 	<p><b>On every level of your home, including basement</b></p> 
<p><b>On levels without bedrooms, install in living room, den, or family room</b></p> 	<p><b>Install near stairways leading to upper levels</b></p> 	<p><b>Install smoke alarms 10 feet from cooking appliances to minimize false alarms</b></p> 



Use **interconnected smoke alarms** for additional safety and early warning



**Low pitch sound**, and vibration smoke alarms are available for those who are **hard of hearing**



**DO NOT INSTALL** near windows, doors, or ducts



**NEVER** paint smoke alarms

## REMEMBER TO:

**TEST** smoke alarms monthly    **CHANGE** battery yearly    **REPLACE** alarm every 10 years



[www.facebook.com/ESFI.org](http://www.facebook.com/ESFI.org)



[www.twitter.com/ESFIdotorg](http://www.twitter.com/ESFIdotorg)



[www.youtube.com/ESFIdotorg](http://www.youtube.com/ESFIdotorg)



Fire Prevention and Safety Grants: Funding provided through DHS/FEMA's Grant Program Directorate Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program



# Valentine's Day Word Search



Valentine's Day is February 14! Can you find the associated words in the puzzle below? Use the word bank to check your work.

- CANDY
- FLOWERS
- HUGS
- VALENTINE'S DAY
- CARD
- FRIEND
- LOVE
- CHOCOLATE
- HEART



754200

## 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 January account numbers belonged to Robert Walters, Little Suamico, and Wayne Meyer, Pound.

**Byron C. Nolde, CEO**

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**Katie Jagiello, Editor**



## Hygiene Drive

Collection box will be in the OEC lobby Feb. 18-March 11

### URGENT NEEDS:

- Soaps: Laundry, Dish, Soft, Shower Gel, 2-in-1 Shampoo
- Trash bags (shelters especially need these for bedrooms!)
- Diapers (sizes 3-6 and Pull-Ups)
- Deodorant (unscented)
- Wet Wipes for babies
- Toilet paper
- Toothbrushes & toothpaste
- Paper towels
- Disposable razors
- Tampons and pads (pads for young teens)

Donations received in the Oconto/Marinette area will be distributed locally.

More information at [thefamily.net](http://thefamily.net) or 800-236-9364



- February 9 Deadline for Co-Ops YES! Conference application
- February 16 Deadline for scholarship application
- March 5-6 Co-Ops YES! Youth Leadership Conference, Eau Claire
- March 24 Oconto Electric Cooperatives 81st Annual Meeting

