



EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR OEC MEMBER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Youth Leadership Congress at UW-River Falls



The annual WECA Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) is a dynamic three-day event for youth leaders from across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning about the purpose, operation, and scope of cooperative businesses.

Who is eligible to attend?

- Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) will sponsor up to four students to attend the 2018 YLC at UW-River Falls, July 25–27, 2018.
- Student must be a son or daughter (or under legal guardianship) residing in the same household of an active OEC member.
- Student must be entering his/her sophomore, junior, or senior year in the fall of 2018.

What does it cost?

All costs are covered by OEC, including transportation to and from UW-River Falls.

Interested? Here's how to apply...

Space is limited. Deadline to sign up is June 15, 2018. For details contact Katie Jagiello at OEC by calling 800-472-8410 or email kjagiello@ocontoelectric.com.

Take the opportunity to...

- See what makes the cooperative business model different and successful, then apply this knowledge to fun and challenging cooperative activities.
- Identify and learn how to develop your own leadership skills.
- Discuss cooperative careers with professionals in the industry.
- Be entertained and challenged by highly acclaimed motivational speakers who understand teens and address topics that are important and relevant in your life.

The Youth Leadership Congress is a “by teens, for teens” conference that is planned and developed by a youth board elected at the previous year’s event.





MAY IS NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH



From the CEO...

We all want the best for the people in our lives – our family, friends, community, and others. That includes you, our members.

It's why we make safety a top priority at OEC and devote time and energy to making everyone aware of important safety tips and equipment.

For instance, if you're working with tall ladders, cleaning gutters, trimming trees, or undertaking other projects outside, we remind you to look up for and stay safely away from overhead power lines, especially those connected to your home.

If a project involves digging, be sure to call 811 a few work-

ing days in advance to get underground utilities marked. This is a free service to you.

We don't want anyone to take a chance that could end in tragedy, and to help, we're a partner in the Safe Electricity program. We encourage you to visit SafeElectricity.org, where you'll find life-saving information (1139601) presented in videos, interactive games for children, online teacher resources, and more.

We are proud to have the safest, most reliable electric system of any country in the world, but we are not content to simply rest on these accolades. We will continue to provide our members with the latest advice and technology to use electricity in safer and smarter ways. After all, aren't you and the people you care about worth it? We think so. In fact, we know so.

Have a great, safe day!

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

MEMBERS GATHER FOR OCONTO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S 81ST ANNUAL MEETING

Sunshine and smiling faces greeted Oconto Electric Cooperative members at their 81st annual meeting on Saturday, March 24, in the Performing Arts Center at Oconto Falls High School.

The big news was a new wholesale power contract expected to yield hefty savings. After many years of purchasing wholesale power from Wisconsin Public Service Corp., Oconto Electric will be supplied by Minnesota Power beginning January 1, 2019, under a seven-year, fixed-rate contract.

Board Chairman David Hischke saluted the co-op's employees for working safely. "It's really exciting when I get to tell you that they ALL come home safely at the end of every day for 14 years straight! That's right, it has been 14 years since our last lost-time accident," said Hischke.

Thirteen \$2,500 scholarships were awarded to area high

school seniors. The amount, available through unclaimed capital credits, was increased from the previous \$1,000. In the meeting, Treasurer Dan Kanack reported the return of nearly \$774,000 in capital credits during 2017, for a total of \$15.7 million over the co-op's history.

The Community Change bill-rounding program provided 19 grants to support projects like warm quilts, literacy, and ensuring students have the tools they need to succeed, and also to families that were impacted by the loss of their homes to fires.

Re-election of two directors, the sole nominees at January district meetings, was approved by voice vote. Todd Duame and Vernon Gisenas will serve new three-year terms. Reorganization retained the lineup of board officers, keeping Hischke as chairman; Doug Allen, vice chairman; Duame, secretary; and Kanack, treasurer.



Cold weather didn't keep members away from their annual meeting.

Numerous door prizes were awarded at the end of the meeting.

Sam Virutes receives scholarship recognition from CEO Byron C. Nolde.





SURGE PROTECTION

Keeping your Electronics and Home Safe

The National Electrical Manufacturers Association estimates that **60-80%** of surges originate from **internal sources** (within a home or business). Keep your valuable electronics **safe** by protecting them from the surges that can **damage or destroy them**.

! What is a power surge? A power surge is a sudden and unwanted **increase in voltage** that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment. Surges can occur when large appliances, such as air conditioners, turn on and off. Surges can also originate from electric utilities or lightning.

LEVELS OF PROTECTION

GOOD



Point-of-Use Surge Protection

BEST

Whole Home Surge Protection



Easy to use
- just plug in.

Must be installed by a
qualified electrician.

Only protects electronics **plugged into the device**.

Provides protection for your **entire electrical system** at home including large appliances, outlets, and light switches.

Must be **replaced** over time or after a major surge event.

Protects against **larger surges** and provides **longer lasting** surge protection than point-of-use devices.

No surge protection can handle a **direct lightning strike**. **Disconnect** sensitive electronics if you suspect a surge is coming.

Power strips and surge protectors are **not the same**. Not all power strips offer surge protection.

MY CO-OP



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www.facebook.com/ESFi.org

www.twitter.com/ESFIdotorg

www.youtube.com/ESFIdotorg

MAY IS NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH



JAN STRANZ BIDS FAREWELL TO OEC AFTER NEARLY 26 YEARS OF SERVICE

Jan began her career at Oconto Electric Co-op in December of 1992 as the member services representative, focusing on electricity use and advising members of OEC programs.

Over the years she has worn many different hats at OEC, but one thing that never changed was working with the members. She has conducted home energy audits, managed appliance sales, worked with stray voltage efforts, helped relicense the hydro plant, planned the member appreciation picnic, managed the Community “Change” organization, and so much more.

The best part of her job was working with members and the co-op model. “Someone once told me to, keep your eye on the ball, and the ball is the member,” she said.

Jan recalled that one of her favorite project-based accomplishments was working with others to relicense the Stiles hydroelectric plant, resulting in a new 30-year license. “There were no procedures to follow,” she said. “I was learning on the fly. We had to figure it out and make sure it happened.”

The most significant change Jan has seen in her career is the shift in technology. She said the level of support from the board of directors, management, and employees to continually evolve with technology has been great. It has allowed OEC to serve more members with fewer employees. The advancement to computers, internet, automated meters, and smartphones has allowed OEC to deliver the best services to members while maintaining a personal touch.

Jan is looking forward to her retirement and spending more time kayaking on the Oconto River. She plans to stay involved with local organizations and continue to serve on the HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital board and the Oconto Falls School board, and the Oconto County Economic Development Corporation board.

“We are very sad to lose someone with such a great amount of institutional knowledge. She has been here for 25 years, and knows a great deal of the history of this cooperative. I have never seen anyone that truly cares more about the work that she does at the co-op, and the members that she serves. She will surely be missed, but we are very happy for her and her husband, Al, and wish them many happy years of retirement,” said OEC Chairman Dave Hischke.



“I am going to miss her calmness and voice of reasoning.” — Pam, Member Services Rep.

“Her dedication and willingness to listen and make a difference to those around her will be missed.” — Brenda Friction, Lead Member Services Rep.

“Jan had such dedication to the members’ needs and requests.” — Ken Clausen, Meter Technician

“Congratulations on a wonderful career, and best wishes for the next phase—it has been our pleasure to know you and to work with you.” — Katie Jagiello, Communications & Marketing Specialist



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 April account numbers belonged to Laura Beck, Oconto, and Robert Ray, Suring.



**Oconto Electric Cooperative and
OEC’s RadioShack in Oconto Falls
will be closed on
Monday, May 28,
in honor of Memorial Day.**

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

7479 REA Road, P.O. Box 168, Oconto Falls, WI 54154
800-472-8410 • 920-846-2816
www.ocontoelectric.com

Katie Jagiello, Editor

