OCONTO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

WORST STORM IN OEC HISTORY!

Major storms rolled through on the evening of Friday, July 19, and created widespread damage across our service territory. The areas hit the hardest stretched from Gillett/Suring to Coleman and north.

The weather stations described the storm as a macroburst. A macroburst is an outward burst of strong winds at or near the surface with horizontal dimensions larger than 2.5 miles. It occurs when a strong downdraft reaches the surface. Macroburst winds can be as strong as an EF-1 tornado (80–100 mph) or a category 2 hurricane (96–100 mph).

The destructive winds uprooted and broke trees, caused structural damage, and busted over 50 power poles, resulting in 5,000 households, or 50 percent of our members, without power.

How the Process Starts

OEC utilizes the Cooperative Response Center (CRC) to answer our telephones after normal business hours. By allowing CRC to answer incoming calls, we are able to concentrate on getting service restored as quickly as possible.

Extreme Outage

OEC responded immediately by sending out our linemen and line clearance crew to start restoring power to members. Due to the extreme damage, Line Superintendent Jack Pardy made the decision to call in assistance from the ROPE (Restoration of Power in an Emergency) program around 2 a.m. on Saturday.

ROPE is a very unique program of co-ops helping co-ops. It is managed by Dairyland Power Cooperative. In the event that a major storm causes extensive damage to a cooperative's distribution system, that co-op can call Dairyland Power to ask for help through the ROPE program. Dairyland Power will then call neighboring co-ops that were unaffected by the storm to help restore power to the affected co-op's system.

Power Restoration Process

On Saturday morning the outside crews started to roll

in and were eager to help. As Pardy continued to patrol the system, more and more damage was discovered. Roads were blocked and trees needed to be removed before our crews could even start to make repairs. Pardy also requested more crews and equipment from ROPE so we could get the power restored in a more timely manner. Pardy broke the outage territory into three quadrants. Each quadrant was then assigned a restoration crew.

Karcz Utility Services, LLC, contacted Pardy to see if we needed help. Karcz is the company we use to inspect our poles and transformers, so they were very familiar with our system. When they found a broken pole, they would relay the location to our operations assistant, Amy Winkler, who would contact Diggers Hotline for locates. We then had our mechanic, Justin Schenkoski, drop the new pole at the location so it was there for the linemen. This process saved our crews a lot of time.

We utilized our meter technician, Ken Clausen, and master electrician, Mike Hillberg, to patrol the system as well. They would let Winkler know of broken poles and electrical masts and meter sockets that were damaged. Winkler would then contact those members to alert them that they needed an electrician to fix the broken services before we could restore the power on our end.

Old Highway 64 was so heavily damaged that Pardy called in Thomson Excavating to clear the debris away with their high-hoe. This greatly reduced man hours and ensured the safety of our crews. Pardy then had Holtger Brothers, Inc., our underground contractor, come in and bury the line.

Behind the Scenes

You hope and pray that a severe storm never wipes out half of your service territory, but the possibility is always there. So how do you prepare for that type of disaster? By having a plan in place that is reviewed and practiced—and that's just what we did.

While the crews were busy working 14–16 hour days, staff and volunteers were busy behind the scenes. Hotel accommodations were hurriedly made for the linemen and tree-clearance crews that were coming in from outside of our co-op.

Each day, a hot breakfast was prepared and the crew would come in early to eat, get their work orders for the day and head out with a prepared bag lunch. After a very long day, they

would return at night to a hot meal.

"Not having to sit at a restaurant and wait for a meal after a long day of work was great. We came back to the office, had a great meal and returned to our hotel room for a hot shower and went to bed. It was very convenient," said one of the ROPE crew workers.

Let there be Light

Some of our members were without power for a few days, while others were without for a full week. On Friday, July 26, crews were able to get the lights back on for the remaining residential members.

The cleanup process will take several months, maybe even longer. As storms continue to pass though our service territory outages are likely to happen due to trees that were damaged and hanging over power lines.

Thank You

We would like to thank you, our members, for your patience during the outages!

Our CEO, Byron C. Nolde, told the crews, "Our number one priority is to work safely. I want each and every one of you to go home to your families at the end of the day, and if that means it take a little more time to do the job right and safely, then so be it." Our crews did just that!

Outside Agencies that Helped

Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative
8 linemen, 4 bucket trucks

Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association
2 linemen, 1 bucket truck

Bugle Tree Service
4 men, 2 bucket trucks

City of Oconto Falls
5 linemen, 1digger, 2 bucket trucks

Holtger Brothers, Inc.
10 men and equipment

Jackson Electric Cooperative
2 linemen, 1 digger

Karcz Utility Services, LLC
5 men, 2 pickup trucks

Oakdale Electric Cooperative
2 linemen, 1 bucket truck

Rock Energy Cooperative
2 linemen, 1 bucket truck

Thomson Excavating
1 lowboy with excavator

THANK YOU

We would like to say thank you to those who took the time to stop and tell us "thanks for all your hard work," offered us words of encouragement, or delivered us food and drinks.

We truly appreciated it!

OEC Employees

GENERATOR SAFETY

Portable or permanently installed standby generators can come in handy during long-term power outages. However, if you do not know how to use them properly, they can be dangerous. Contact a qualified vendor or electrician to help you determine what generator is best suited to your needs. Before using, read and follow manufacturer's instructions.

If you are installing a permanent generator, it must have a transfer switch. The transfer switch prevents energy from leaving your generator and going back into the utility electrical equipment, where it could be dangerous to a lineman or others near downed power lines, a process known as "back feed." A qualified electrician should install your generator and transfer switch.

Safe Electricity has the following tips for using portable generators safely:

- Operate it outdoors in an area with plenty of ventilation. Never run a generator in a home or garage. Generators give off deadly carbon monoxide.
- Do not plug a generator into the wall to avoid back feed. Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances to the outlets on the generator.
- Turn the generator on before plugging appliances to it. Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit. Remember, generators are for temporary usage; prioritize your needs.
- Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated in wet conditions. Use a generator only when necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- Be sure the generator is turned off and cool before fueling it.
- Keep children and pets away from portable generators. Many generator components are hot enough to burn you during operation.

Safe Electricity suggests these safety guidelines and basic operating instructions be posted in the home and with the generator.

FROM THE EYE OF A LINEMAN'S DAUGHTER

Written by Brandy Hoffman, daughter of OEC Line Superintendent Jack Pardy

On August 3, my kids had fun at Oconto Electric where Grandpa works. Grandpa did a high-voltage demonstration at the OEC Member Appreciation Picnic. Maddox got to be the foreman and supervise Grandpa. Then the kids got to check out all the cool equipment that he and the linemen get to use. Grandpa is their hero because they think he turned their lights back on. We are proud of him and the work he does

Appreciation of Linemen/Women

The last couple of weeks I saw how under-appreciated these linemen are. People complained about how their power was out and it was not getting put back on fast enough. Someone even complained about the linemen getting to go home and take a shower and were upset they did not have power yet.

The linemen have to deal with people yelling at them and being upset about their power being off. This last storm caused devastating damage to not only people's homes and possessions but to the power lines, power poles, transformers and more. The linemen worked day and night to restore power. Some of the power restored Friday night went out again on Saturday and had to be fixed a second time.

These men and women work in conditions most people would never dream of going out in....snow, rain, ice, sleet, hail and tornadoes. They do it climbing poles, where bucket trucks don't reach, which can range between 30 feet to 120 feet in the air. They put themselves at risk every single day working with high-voltage electricity, but even more while working in storms.

Being a police officer or firefighter is a dangerous job, but this job is just as dangerous. The families of these linemen worry about the safety of their husband, dad, brother, sister, mother, son, or daughter. They hope and pray that these loved ones come home safe and alive at the end of the day. Some people are even upset that the line crew are showering and sleeping—but they need to! If a person does not get enough sleep, they go into a state which is kind of like being intoxicated, and that is not safe. To those of you upset that these linemen are showering and sleeping, I hope after reading this you understand and appreciate what these men and women do.

On Friday, July 19, around 9:15 p.m., I talked to my dad, who just arrived at work because so many people were out of power. I talked to him again on Monday afternoon and he had only gotten about five to six hours of sleep. Crews from around Wisconsin came to help OEC restore power for OEC's members. Crews got maybe about five hours of sleep a night. Around 3:40 p.m. Friday, July 26, the last members of OEC had their power restored. The damage was so bad it took almost a week to restore power, but the crews will be cleaning up and fixing damage for months to come.

I have experienced my dad doing this job since I was a baby. He was called out in the middle of the night, missing my brother's, sister's and my sports, and missing activities

OEC Line Superintendent Jack Pardy with his grandson Maddox at the OEC Member Appreciation Picnic.

and other family events sometimes. This is the life of having a lineman in the family and you adapt and love it. He had to be on call (when this first started he carried a big bag phone) and leave these events or not make it at all. My dad would never hesitate to leave to go help people who needed his help with restoring their power. My dad has always been hardworking, dedicated and good at what he does.

When I was in high school, he left Wisconsin to go to South Dakota after the ice storms. He left to help other co-ops restore power for their residents. Last year he went with OEC and other co-ops from the state to Florida to help when they had their huge storm. My dad did not have to do this, but that is what these men/women do. They help and work together so that everyone can enjoy the luxuries of having power for lights, heat, air, and all of the other reasons you need power.

I am proud of my dad! Even though he had to miss some of those things in my life, I would never change who he is, ask him to not leave or ever be upset that he was out helping others. I am happy he went. Someone had to do it and he is the kind of person to do that.

Thank you, Dad, for your dedication and love of what you do! We are proud of you!

Thank you to all the linemen/women who leave their families near or far, sometimes living out of hotels in other states, and putting your life in danger every day. You are appreciated!

SAFETY AFTER THE STORM AND DURING POWER OUTAGES

Severe storms are devastating to homes, properties, and lives. These storms can also take down power lines—creating a dangerous situation for all of us, including the line crews working hard to get your power turned back on.

How long it takes to get your power restored depends on the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and the point when it is safe for utility personnel to get to the damaged areas. There are many steps in the assessment and restoration process—clearing downed power lines; ensuring public health and safety facilities are operational; checking power stations and transformers; repairing transmission lines, substations, and distribution lines; and getting power restored to customers within the damaged areas.

Contact your electric utility to report the outage and use caution if venturing outside after a storm:

- Just because power lines are damaged does not mean they are dead. Every downed power line is potentially energized and dangerous until utility crews arrive on the scene to ensure power has been cut off. Downed power lines, stray wires, and debris in contact with them all have the potential to deliver a fatal shock. Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines.
- Never enter a flooded basement if electrical outlets are submerged. The water could be energized. Do not turn power off if you must stand in water to do so. Call your electric utility and have them turn off power at the meter.
- Before entering storm-damaged buildings, make sure electricity and gas are turned off.
- Do not use water-damaged electric appliances, electronics, and other items before having them inspected and properly restored. Electric motors in appliances should be cleaned and reconditioned before use. It may be necessary to replace some appliances and electronics.
- If you clean up outdoors after a storm, do not use electric equipment in wet conditions.
- If you are driving and come across a downed power line, stay away and keep others away. Do not drive over it, as snagging the line could pull a pole and other equipment to the ground. Contact emergency personnel or your utility company to address the downed power line.
- If you come in contact with a downed power line, do not leave the car. Wait for utility and emergency professionals to make sure the power line is de-energized before exiting the car.

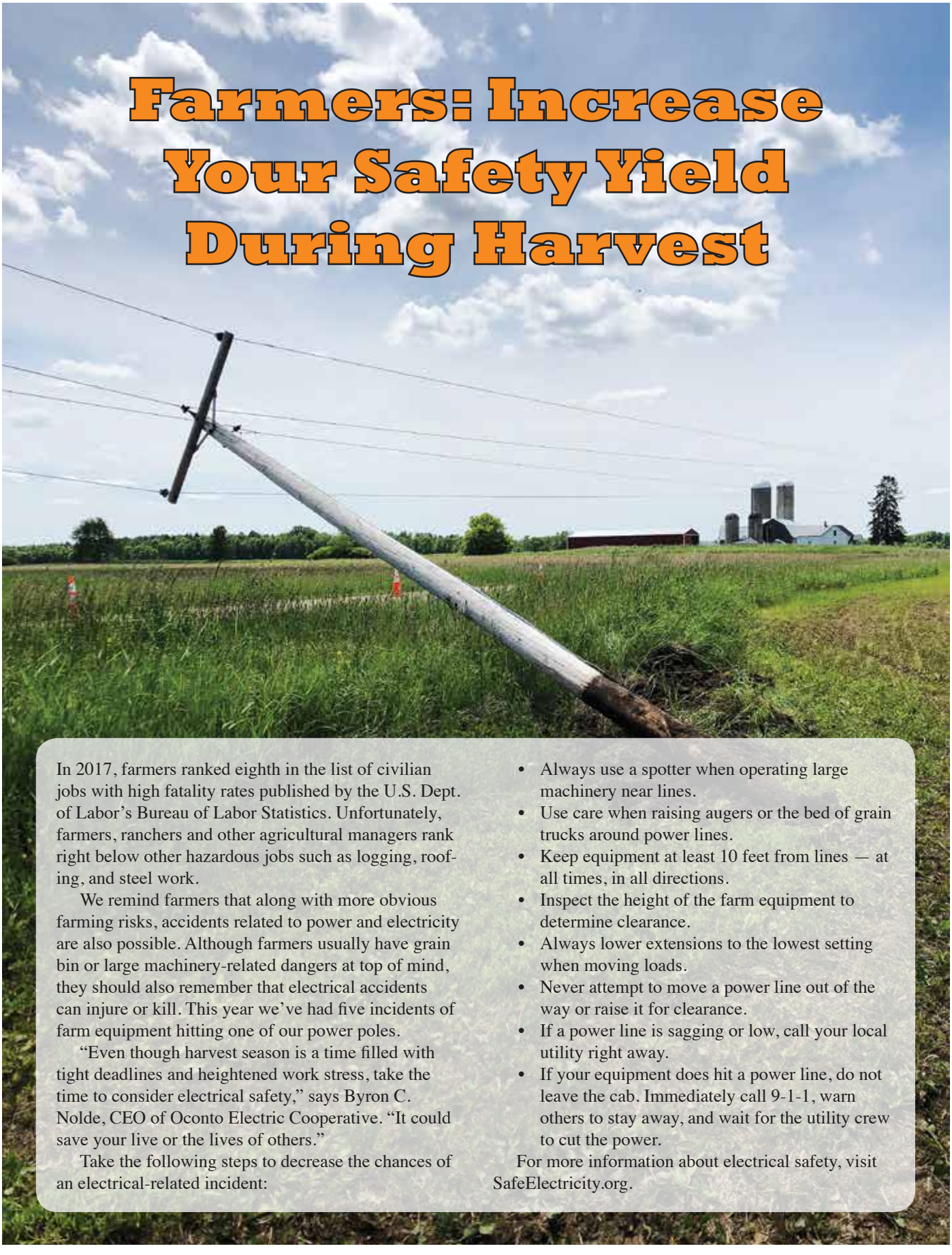
During an outage, Safe Electricity recommends turning off electrical appliances and unplugging major electronics, including computers and televisions. Power sometimes comes back in surges, which can damage electronics. Your circuits could overload when power returns if all your electrical items are on. Leave one light on to indicate that power is back on. Wait a few minutes and then turn on other appliances and equipment—one at a time.

If you use a standby generator, take proper safety precautions. Always read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions. There should be nothing plugged into the generator when you turn it on. This prevents a surge from damaging your generator and appliances. Operate generators in well-ventilated, outdoor, dry areas. Never attach a temporary generator to a circuit breaker, fuse, or outlet; plug items into the generator once it's operating.

Permanent generators should be wired into a house by a qualified electrician and include a transfer switch to prevent feeding electricity back into overhead lines, which can be deadly for linemen.

To help you get through, have a storm kit prepared. Keep the kit in a cool, dry place, and make sure all members of the family know where it is.

Farmers: Increase Your Safety Yield During Harvest



In 2017, farmers ranked eighth in the list of civilian jobs with high fatality rates published by the U.S. Dept. of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Unfortunately, farmers, ranchers and other agricultural managers rank right below other hazardous jobs such as logging, roofing, and steel work.

We remind farmers that along with more obvious farming risks, accidents related to power and electricity are also possible. Although farmers usually have grain bin or large machinery-related dangers at top of mind, they should also remember that electrical accidents can injure or kill. This year we've had five incidents of farm equipment hitting one of our power poles.

"Even though harvest season is a time filled with tight deadlines and heightened work stress, take the time to consider electrical safety," says Byron C. Nolde, CEO of Oconto Electric Cooperative. "It could save your live or the lives of others."

Take the following steps to decrease the chances of an electrical-related incident:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call your local utility right away.
- If your equipment does hit a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

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

Labor Day

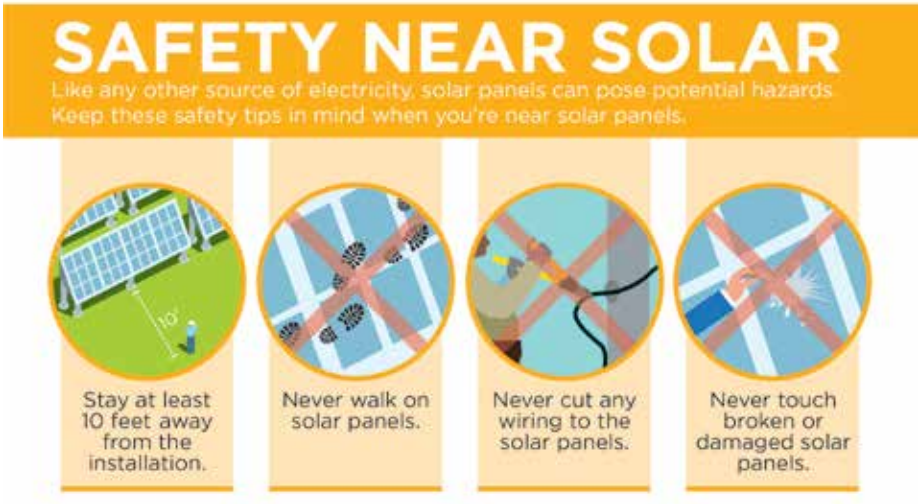
OEC's office and OEC's RadioShack store located on Highland Drive in Oconto Falls will be closed on September 2.

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Cookware Efficiency Tip: Copper-bottomed pans heat faster on the stove. In the oven, ceramic and glass dishes are better than metal. With ceramic and glass dishes, you can turn the oven down about 25 degrees, and your meal will cook just as quickly.

Source: energy.gov



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 July account numbers belonged to Ronald Parsons, Abrams, and Jessie Landree, Pound.

Recipe Corner

Captain Morgan Rum Cake

Submitted by Karen Friedman, OEC Employee

1 Box Yellow Cake Mix
1 Small Box Instant Vanilla Pudding
1/2 - 1 Cup Chopped Walnuts
4 Eggs
1/2 Cup Vegetable Oil
1/2 Cup Water
1/2 Cup Captain Morgan

GLAZE
1 Stick Butter
1/4 Cup Water
1/2 Cup Sugar
1/2 Cup Brown Sugar
1/2 Cup Captain Morgan

Spray and flour bundt pan. Sprinkle nuts on bottom. Mix all cake ingredients, pour into pan and bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes (test at 35).

For glaze: melt butter, add sugars and water. Bring to a boil and boil 5 minutes. Remove from heat, add Captain Morgan. Return to a boil and boil 1 minute.

Cool in pan 5-10 minutes, invert onto plate, poke holes, drizzle glaze over.

If you have a recipe that you would like to share, please email kjagiello@ocontoelectric.com or mail it to Oconto Electric Cooperative, PO Box 168, Oconto Falls, WI 54154. If your recipe is printed, you will receive a gift.

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