



October is National Co-op Month.

Electric co-ops are proud to power more than 20 million American homes, businesses, farms and schools in 48 states.

OCONTO ELECTRIC
OEE
COOPERATIVE

HELP US
CELEBRATE
NATIONAL
CO-OP MONTH

Oct. 28-Nov. 1 we
will have a gift for
members along
with treats and
refreshments at
the office

When you think of October, pumpkins, Halloween, and beautiful fall foliage naturally come to mind. But October is notable for another reason—it's National Co-op Month! This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC), celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve.

Cooperatives are different than other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, or does so at a very high price, co-ops intervene to fill the need. Similar to how OEC was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community, cooperatives are conveners for the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. OEC's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members (that's you!) have a valuable perspective. That's why we are continually seeking your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels, or the annual meeting, we want to hear from you.

Our close connection to the community ensures we get a firsthand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such

as solar programs, equipment and technology upgrades, and electric vehicle programs.

Another feature that sets our co-op apart from a traditional utility is one of our core principles, "Concern for Community." Since 2004, OEC employees have raised and awarded \$96,000 to charities and organizations in the community. We also have our Community Change program where members can sign up to have their electric bills rounded up to the next whole dollar, with the extra money going into the Community Change fund. Civic groups, charitable organizations, and people who have experienced a catastrophe in their lives (such as illness or fire) can apply for Community Change grants.

We participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action.

Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

We hope you will think of OEC as more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you—because your electric co-op was built *by* the community, *for* the community.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) sponsored four high school students to attend the 56th Annual Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) at UW-River Falls July 24–26. This three-day event is a unique opportunity for youth across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning the purpose, operation, and scope of cooperative business. OEC had Tai Crowell on the Youth Board this year.

DAY 1 Following dorm check-in and roommate introductions, students played ice breaker games, learned “What Is A Cooperative?”, and burned off energy during outdoor team-building activities. YLC provides an authentic college experience, which included dining in the cafeteria. The first night was capped off with guest speaker Shelby Gruss. When Shelby was a senior in high school her life took a turn when she had a snowboarding accident. She became paralyzed from the waist down. She talked to the students about her new challenges in life, and it wasn’t just the physical ones. She quoted Laura Jarrett, “Love the people who saw you when you were invisible to everyone else.” Shelby did a great job telling the students to be open to change—you might never be happy if you didn’t try it.



DAY 2 A busy second day began with Craig Hillier, motivational speaker and author, leading team-building activities and discussions on leadership. Group work and career panels took place during the afternoon, followed by an evening etiquette dinner and hypnotist entertainment.



DAY 3 Students contending for a 2020 Youth Board position presented speeches before their peers. If selected, they have the responsibility of planning next year’s YLC, and will attend the 2020 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.



WHAT HAPPENS TO CAPITAL CREDITS WHEN A MEMBER IS DECEASED?

One of the ways cooperatives obtain capital is to retain the capital supplied by members. That capital is used to fund projects that OEC determines will increase electric reliability. The co-op plans to use the capital for 20 years and then pay it back to the members. That is why most members who purchased electricity from OEC in 1999 received either a check or a bill credit last month.

There are certain conditions that allow members or former members to receive their capital credits earlier than the 20-year rotation. One of those conditions is if the member or former member passes away.

If a member passes away and does not have a spouse, the heirs of that

member can collect the capital credits. If a member passes away and has a spouse, the surviving spouse can collect the deceased spouse's half of the capital credits. In either case, the credits are paid out at their net-present value. The amount of money allocated to a capital credit account is the value of that money at the end of 20 years. The net-present value is the value of that money today. If there is an early payout, the difference between the allocated capital credits and the net-present value is retained by the co-op.

Anyone who is eligible to collect the capital credits of a deceased member always has the option to leave the money in the capital credit account, get the

normal annual payouts, and at the end of 20 years, will have received the full, allocated value of the credits. It is only if the person wants to receive the money early that they would receive it at the net-present value.

There are other conditions in which a member can receive their credits at the net-present value. They include purchasing an electric water heater, the purchase and installation of a dual-fuel home heating system, farm efficiency improvements, and commercial electric efficiency improvements.

The board of directors at OEC wants you to understand the choices you have regarding capital credits. You, as a member-owner, are truly appreciated.

FUN FOR ALL AGES AT THE OEC MEMBER APPRECIATION PICNIC

On Saturday, August 3, OEC celebrated our annual Member Appreciation Day Picnic to show members that their patronage is greatly appreciated.

A picnic-style lunch was served from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Numerous vendors had displays set up and were available to answer questions. We had a hot-line demonstration.

We had many activities for the kids to enjoy. Lena and Oconto Falls FFA chapters had a petting zoo, Lena Swamp Archery taught members how to shoot a bow and arrow, Sid's Balloons twisted and shaped some amazing balloon animals and objects, and we had a bounce house for the kids.

Employees held bucket raffles raising money for the 2019 employee charity that will benefit Oconto County Law Enforcement and Oconto County Commission on Aging Meals on Wheels Program.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

Source: energy.gov (964201)





BUSINESS SHOWCASE

FOX RIDGE GAME FARM LLC



Mike (L) and Bill (R) Kamke, owners of Fox Ridge Game Farm LLC, located in Oconto Falls.

I had the pleasure of visiting Bill and Mike Kamke at Fox Ridge Game Farm LLC. This father/son duo run their family game farm by treating every one of their members like family. I had just that feeling during my short visit.

Bill and his wife, Kathy, and their kids, Jen and Mike, were dairy farmers and times were getting tough. In order to make the dairy farm successful it was time to do updates, increase herd size, and change with the times. They were not ready to do that, so in 1986 they started the game farm on the side while the family continued to operate the dairy farm.

For three years they ran both farms when they finally decided to quit dairy farming. "It was the perfect storm to success. The game farm continued to grow and succeed. We started with 150 members and within three years we had 500 mem-

bers with a waiting list." said Mike.

September through March, members come from (4100) all over to hunt pheasants and chukar partridge at their 1,000-acre game farm.

For many hunters it is about getting away, relaxing, seeing their dogs at work, and watching their kids have fun.

Limited lodging is available for members. There is a bird-cleaning facility and so much more. Members are welcome to use the facilities year-round.

Fox Ridge also enjoys hosting benefits and business events throughout the year. An expansion is currently in the works to make it an even better experience.

Fox Ridge Game Farm LLC is located at 8585 Valley Line Road, Oconto Falls, WI, 54154. Phone: 920-846-2508. For more information go to www.frgf.com.

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. August and September did not have any account numbers published.

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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Katie Jagiello, Editor



Autumn Muffins

Submitted by Janna Hughes, OEC Member

3/4 Cup Brown Sugar
3/4 Cup White Sugar
3 Cups All Purpose Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Baking Soda
1 Tablespoon Baking Powder
1/2 Teaspoon Salt
2 Teaspoons Ground Cinnamon
1/2 Teaspoon Ground Nutmeg
1 Teaspoon Ground Ginger
1 Cup Butter, Melted (or applesauce to cut calories and fat)
2 Eggs, Beaten
1 1/4 Cup Milk
1 Cup Chopped Cranberries (fresh or frozen)
1 Cup Chopped, Peeled Apple
1/2 Cup Chopped Dried Figs
3/4 Cup Chopped Toasted Hazelnuts (any kind you like are fine)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease muffin pans or line with muffin liners. In a large bowl, stir together the brown sugar, white sugar, flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger. Make a well in the center and gently fold in the melted butter, milk and eggs. Fold in the cranberries, apple, fig and nuts. Spoon batter into the muffin cups filling at least 3/4 full. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into muffins comes out clean.

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.

