

GIVING BACK IS THE CO-OP WAY



MY CO-OP

As some of you might know, cooperatives across the globe adhere to the same Seven Cooperative Principles that guide all of our decisions—from how we run the co-op, to how we engage with our local communities. Concern for Community is the seventh principle, and it is one that the employees and directors of Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) value year-round.

OEC members help us give back, too. Through the Community Change program, members can round up their energy bills to the next dollar amount, and the extra change goes toward helping those in need, right here in our community.

Cooperatives believe in the power of human connections

and know that the difference we make in our local communities is powerful. That's why they were pleased to work with Rebuilding Together New Orleans to sponsor their 12th annual Community Service Project in conjunction with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Annual Meeting in February. Rebuilding Together New Orleans' mission is repairing homes, revitalizing communities, and rebuilding lives.

OEC Director Ronnie Kruse and his wife, June, volunteered while attending the NRECA Annual Meeting. The home they worked on had an electrical fire in 2016, and the family had slowly been working on repairs when funds were available. The owner was so appreciative and was looking forward to moving back in and having her whole family over to visit.

In 2018 the Kruses volunteered when they were in Nashville for the NRECA Annual Meeting. June also volunteered her time while Ron was attending a conference in Minnesota. She helped fill bags with gifts that were available to parents who couldn't afford birthday gifts for their children. (237401) These were then dispersed to local food pantries.

No matter how great or small the act, every time we give back, we strengthen our community.



Reflect and Honor: May is Military Appreciation Month



After eight years of planning and fundraising, the Oconto Falls Area Veterans Monument was dedicated on November 9, 2019. The monument is located just south of the Oconto Falls School District administrative office. The monument features an 8-foot-high main wall that tapers on each side. A large courtyard extends from the wall, with seven flag poles on the edge. The seals of the five branches of the military can be found in the center of the wall. Currently the wall has 450 sponsored bricks with the names of veterans and their years of service.

While enjoying various Memorial Day festivities this month, I hope you will join me in pausing to reflect on the sacrifices of our country's veterans and their families. I am especially thankful for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy the freedoms in this great country of ours.

May is Military Appreciation Month, and in the words of John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

At Oconto Electric Cooperative, we are grateful to have veterans within our ranks, and we are proud to serve veterans and their families within our local community. In addition to providing safe, reliable, and affordable energy, we care for the veteran community and show our appreciation through our actions and ongoing commitment to them and their families.

We are not alone in our efforts to honor and serve veterans. OEC is part of a network of more than 900 electric cooperatives across the country that support and honor our nation's veterans of all generations. As part of our national association of electric cooperatives, spanning 48 states and serving 13% of U.S. consumers, there are countless programs that our family of electric co-ops has initiated.

At the national level, we support the Vets Power Us program, which is aimed at employing and honoring veterans, active military and their spouses. This effort helps veterans understand potential career paths with electric co-ops and in turn, provides co-ops with best practices in attracting, on-boarding, and retaining veterans. (3001)

Not only do we pause on Memorial Day to remember the

sacrifice and service of those who gave all, but the month also holds several other military anniversaries and events, including Military Spouse Appreciation Day on May 8, and Armed Forces Day on May 16.

OEC is proud to be a part of the electric cooperative network that honors and supports veterans of all ages, ranks, and branches of the military. Please join us in taking a moment to show your appreciation to a veteran—not just this month, but every month.

Here are a few sites in our area that you could visit this May: Lena Community Veterans Memorial Park (by the library), Oconto County Veteran's Memorial (located in a small plaza directly in front of the Oconto County Courthouse, facing Washington Street), Veterans Memorial Park in Gillett (corner of Main St. and Elm Ave.), and the Marinette County Veterans Memorial (located at the entrance to the Peshtigo Riverside Cemetery.)





Employee Charity

Oconto Electric Cooperative

Oconto Electric Cooperative is committed to the communities we serve. We support local schools, community organizations, and agencies through donations and programs that OEC offers. Many OEC employees are active with local groups and organizations, which enriches the cooperative's relationship with the people and communities we serve.

Our employees are dedicated to co-op principle number seven: Commitment to Community. Our employees have distributed \$113,000 to local charities and organizations since 2004. Employees organize several fundraising efforts throughout the year, with funds awarded in late fall.

Funds raised in 2020 will be split between Little River Fire Department and the Green Valley-Morgan Fire Company.

Turnout Gear

Little River Fire Department was established in 2013. Fire Chief Jonathon Ladwig and 15 dedicated personnel currently serve the community. The department is in need of nine new sets of turnout gear. The gear costs \$2,057 per set and expires every 10 years. Currently the department has nine firefighters who are using expired turnout gear, which means they are unable to enter burning structures. The gear not only helps protect them from fire, but protects them from sharp jagged metal and broken glass while working at vehicle accident sites.



Air-Packs

Green Valley-Morgan Fire Company is lead by Fire Chief Leonard Wahl. Twenty-three fire personnel and six support personnel currently make up the fire department. Funds that are raised will go toward the purchase of five new Scott SCBA-Air Packs. This equipment is essential for a firefighter to enter a burning structure. Each pack will cost the department \$4,595. We hope to raise enough money to cover the cost of two.

ANNUAL MEETING RESCHEDULED

In light of Governor Evers declaring a health emergency in response to COVID-19, and OEC's concern for our membership and employees' well-being, we postponed the Annual Meeting of Members that was scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2020.

The meeting will now take place on Saturday, May 16, 2020. We will continue to monitor the situation with COVID-19 and the date may be subject to change.

Please stay safe and practice social distancing!

WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

SmartHub

- Pay your bill
- Store payment information
- View usage/payment history
- Report an outage
- Contact our office
- Select paperless option
- Available 24/7

Automatic Bill Payment System

- Payments can be deducted from your checking or savings account
- Payments can be deducted from a debit or credit card (Visa, Mastercard, Discover)
- Automatically withdrawn from your account the third of every month (If the third falls on a weekend it will be withdrawn on the following Monday. This is not considered past due)
- Statement will still be mailed or you can choose paperless option

Secured Payment by Phone

- Call 1-855-356-6335
- Use your OEC Account Number
- Available 24/7
- Payments can be deducted from your checking account
- Payments can be deducted from a debit or credit card (Visa, Mastercard, Discover)

By Mail

- With check or money order

Night Deposit

- Located at the main entrance of OEC office building (7479 REA Road, Oconto Falls)
- Very secure and payments in the night deposit are processed the next business day
- Cash, check, money order

In Person

- Due to COVID-19 the lobby has been closed. During the pandemic, please call ahead.





BUSINESS SHOWCASE

TIMBERLINE TREES, LLC

The tree farm officially started in 1985, near Oconto Falls. Prior to establishing Timberline Trees, LLC, founder Al Tillmann spent over 30 years—the majority of his life—landscaping, and growing and selling trees. He recognized a need for higher quality trees. He began growing for those who knew there was a difference in quality.

Al passed this philosophy down to his children, Dave Tillmann and Barb Peckumn, who now own and operate the nursery. They have a tremendous amount of pride knowing that their customers are receiving very high-quality trees.

Dave has also dedicated the majority of his life working in landscaping and growing trees. Barb's background and focus remain in sales and marketing. She enjoys working with landscapers and other professionals in the nursery and green industries.

The attitude of Timberline Trees, LLC has always been a “get your feet muddy” one. They spend a lot of time out on the tree farm and know their trees personally. The customers have always complimented them for their hands-on approach. And at the end of the day, their boots are usually dirty!

Whatever it is you are looking for, they will listen closely, remember, and deliver it with no unexpected surprises. If you are picking up your own trees, just give them a heads-up of when you will be arriving at the nursery and the trees will be ready.

Timberline Trees, LLC is consistent, reliable, and readily available to meet your needs at 4288 Elm Lawn Road, Oconto Falls, WI 54154. If you have any questions you can call 920-846-8106, email barb@timberlinetreesllc.com, or check them out at www.timberlinetreesllc.com.

If you have suggestions for businesses that are on OEC's power lines, call Katie at 920-846-2816.



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. April account numbers belonged to Richard Richter, Oconto, and Cindi Wautier, Lena.

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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Katie Jagiello, Editor



Rhubarb Cake Mix

Submitted by Katie Jagiello, OEC Employee

- 1 - Yellow Cake Mix
- 3 Cups Cut Rhubarb
- 1 1/4 Cup Sugar
- Cinnamon
- 1 Pint Heavy Whipping Cream

Mix cake as directed on the box. Pour cake into a 9x13 greased cake pan. Cut rhubarb into small pieces and mix with sugar, distribute evenly over cake. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Pour whipping cream over cake. Bake at 350 degrees for 45–50 minutes. Let cool in pan for 30–45 minutes. Place serving tray on top of the cake and flip it over. Let cake settle by itself.

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.

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month



When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.

