



"CHANGE" MATTERS GRANT IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Community Change is a project of Oconto Electric Cooperative. 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. In addition, due to the generosity of the former Bay Lakes Cooperative, Community Change has additional funding available for this special grant. To be considered, an organization should show through this grant application how an innovative idea for funding could provide far-reaching enhancement for a neighborhood or community.

Grant(s) will be awarded to projects being done in the footprint of the former Bay Lakes territory and the current Oconto Electric service territory. Request not to exceed \$4,000 (grant total could be split based on the nature and scope of applications received). Grant application deadline is March 1, 2021. Applications can be found at www.ocontoelectric.com.



2021 STARTS OFF CHARITABLY Oconto Electric Co-op Employees Distribute \$20,000



Employee Amy Winkler and CEO Byron C. Nolde present a check of \$10,000 to the Green Valley-Morgan Fire Company fire chief Leonard Wahl.

OEC employees are grateful for those who participated in our fundraising efforts for our 2020 employee charities. We reached an all-time high this year raising \$10,000. CoBank, one of the co-op's lenders, also donated \$10,000 as part of its Sharing Success matching grant program.

Employees presented \$10,000 to Little River Fire Department. The department will be using the funds to replace expired turnout gear.



OEC employees Katie Jagiello and Brenda Friction present a check of \$10,000 to the Little River Fire Department fire chief Jonathon Ladwig.

Green Valley-Morgan Fire Company also received \$10,000. Their funds are going towards the purchase of new air packs.

Since 2004, OEC employees have awarded \$133,000 to charities (248001) and organizations.

We are accepting applications for our 2021 Employee Charity until Monday, March 1, 2021. Applications can be found on www.ocontoelectric.com.



MOTHER NATURE'S WRATH CAN MEAN SERVICE DISRUPTIONS

Although we work hard to maintain our equipment, monitor power delivery 24/7, and do all we can to keep the lights on, there are circumstances beyond our control that can interfere with power delivery. Winter weather is one example.

Winter storms can impact the distribution of electricity due to ice, heavy winds, sleet, and other extreme conditions.

Regardless of the reason, know that when the lights go out—even during extreme weather—we are doing all we can to safely and efficiently restore power.

Along with causing outages, wintery conditions can cause hiccups with power delivery that include blinking lights or ebbs and flows in the amount of power that comes into your home. Although blinking lights can be a symptom of other problems such as loose wiring connections or overloaded circuits, they can also be caused by extreme weather conditions.

Wintery conditions include: Ice/Freezing Rain

Ice accumulation on power lines makes them heavy. One-half an inch of ice can add as much as 500 pounds to a power line. This added weight can impact power distribution and even bring down a power line. Ice that forms on power lines also increases its surface area, which means gusts of wind have more to catch. The weight of ice on tree limbs can cause them to fall on power lines as well.

Wind

Wind can cause tree branches to brush power lines, which can result in blinking or flickering lights. This is why it's so important for us to keep trees cleared around power lines and poles. In addition, heavy winds (or extreme wind plus ice) can cause lines to move and sway. If they gain enough momentum, they can gallop or jump. This, in turn, can cause disruptions in service since the extreme motion can cause lines to either break or make contact with each other, which they are not meant to do.

Melting Ice

Melting ice can be extremely heavy, putting extra strain on power lines and causing the lines to touch or rest on one another. Because of this, melting ice can cause outages even though the temperature is rising. Depending on conditions, melting ice can cause as many or more problems than the ice itself.

Wind or Ice + Tree Branches

In any weather condition (or even in calm conditions), tree-related issues cause the most power outages in many service areas. Branches, limbs, or even tree trunks can fall into power lines and cause problems. Add wind, freezing rain, or ice to the mix for an increased potential for problems.

Icy Roads

Vehicles sliding on ice or that collide with one another can strike a power pole or pad-mounted transformer, causing an outage or other problems.

Blizzards

Heavy snowfall, icy roads, or reduced visibility can make it a little more difficult for our crews to get out and fix problems, although we do all we can to get out there to address service issues as soon as possible.

Be sure to have a storm preparedness kit ready before a storm strikes to help get you and your family through a power outage. Items to gather include bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, hand sanitizer, first aid kit/medicine, flashlight, radio, back-up phone chargers, extra batteries, and toiletries.

To learn more about preparing for storms and electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.

FIVE WAYS TO STAY COZY THIS WINTER

Baby, it's cold outside! When you're feeling chilly at home, there are several budget-friendly ways you can keep comfortable without turning up the thermostat.

Here are five easy ways to stay cozy this winter.

1. Whether you're experiencing extremely cold winter temps or you simply "run cold," an electric blanket can deliver quick warmth like a regular throw or blanket cannot. Electric blankets can include a variety of features, like timers and dual temperature settings (if your cuddle buddy prefers less heat). This winter, consider an electric blanket instead of turning up the heat, and your energy bill will thank you.

2. One of the easiest ways to stay cozy at home is to keep your feet warm. Our feet play a critical role in regulating body temperature, so when your feet are warm, your body automatically feels warmer. Try a pair of comfortable wool socks or house slippers to stay toasty.



3. On winter days when the sun is shining, take advantage and harness natural warmth from sunlight. Open all curtains, drapes, and blinds in your home to let the sunshine in—you'll be able to feel the difference.

4. Another way to make your home cozier is to use a humidifier. Cold air doesn't hold water vapor like warm air, so by adding humidity inside your home, you can feel a little warmer. A favor-

able level of humidity inside your home can also help clear sinuses, soften skin, and improve sleep.

5. Beyond adding visual appeal to your home, area rugs can also provide extra insulation and a warm surface

for your feet on cold winter days. Use large area rugs in rooms where you spend the most time. You'll enjoy the new colors and textures of the rug, and the additional warmth will help keep your home comfortable.

These (62801) are just a few ways you can stay cozy this winter without turning up the thermostat. Don't forget the hot chocolate!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Use wool or rubber dryer balls in the clothes dryer to reduce drying time and static.

Wool dryer balls can also absorb extra moisture. These are an efficient alternative to dryer sheets, which can create buildup on the dryer's filter and reduce air circulation. If you prefer dryer sheets, scrub the filter once a month to remove buildup.

Source:
www.energy.gov



MY CO-OP

SAFETY FOR SENIORS AT HOME



MainStreet Messenger allows seniors to be safe while being independent and living at home.

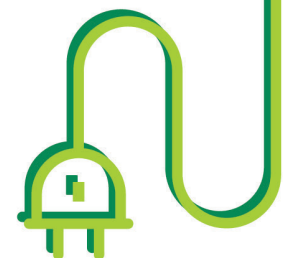
- You're never really alone with this personal emergency response program
- Help is only moments away with push of a button
- Installation within days

PEACE OF MIND FOR ONLY A DOLLAR A DAY!

Call OEC at (920) 846-2816

Serving parts of Oconto, Marinette & Shawano Counties

www.ocontoelectric.com





BUSINESS SHOWCASE

RAY'S BONEYARD SALOON



In 1903, the McGuire family opened a bar on Main Street in Lena and started welcoming customers until their closing in 1976 when they turned it into housing. In 1995, fourth-generation Ray McGuire bought his first bar on Main Street in Lena.

Ray has changed locations a few times, but in 2005 he built Ray's Boneyard Saloon on the outskirts of Lena.

Ray's Boneyard Saloon opens daily at 10 a.m. They serve food from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. On the menu you will find burgers, wraps, wings, broasted chicken, homemade pizzas, soup, appetizers, Friday fish fry specials, and more. All items can be ordered to-go.

Ray hosts many leagues, including

summer and fall trap, horseshoes, volleyball in the summer, darts and pool.

Ray's Boneyard Saloon is known for a few annual events. February 7 is the Annual Balls Beater Run in memory of Andy Huberty, in November is the Big Buck contest, and mid-summer he hosts the Sniper Speed Car Show. Follow Ray's Boneyard on Facebook for upcoming events and specials.

Ray's Boneyard Saloon is located at 9089 D and B Frontage Rd., Lena, WI 54139. Phone number is 920-829-5752.

In August of 2020, Ray bought Lena Lanes with Lukas DeCleene and Brad Breuninger. They have been busy making improvements. The lanes are open for bowling and they are serving food.

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

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 Jeff Bunn, Gillett, and Rose McMahon, Suring.

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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