

**SATURDAY, APRIL 24**

# ANNUAL MEETING 2021



MY CO-OP

**HELD IN THE  
OCONTO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE WAREHOUSE  
7479 REA ROAD, OCONTO FALLS, WI**

**REGISTRATION OPENS AT 9 A.M.**  
(DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS NO EARLY ENTRY)

**MEETING BEGINS AT 10 A.M.**  
REGISTRATION FOR BALLOTING AND DOOR PRIZE ENTRY CLOSES AT 10:15 A.M.

**MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL BE REQUIRED OF ALL ATTENDEES.**

MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE THE OFFICIAL NOTICE AND REGISTRATION CARD IN THE MAIL IN EARLY APRIL.



## ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA – APRIL 24, 2021

- Call to order/determination of quorum
- Invocation
- Introduction – Chairman
- Meeting Notice and Proof of Mailing
- Waive or read minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting
- Approve/ratify reports and actions of officers & directors for 2020
- Election of directors
- Old business
- New business
- Cooperative update
- Election results
- Final announcements
- Adjournment
- \$100 Cash drawing
- Prize drawings
- \$1,000 Cash drawing

**\* No meal will be served.**

## MEET YOUR DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

Co-op membership has its advantages. One advantage of being a member of a cooperative is the opportunity to elect directors to the co-op's board. The chance to vote for your board will be held on April 24 at the Oconto Electric Cooperative Warehouse, at OEC's Annual Meeting.

There are two director terms expiring this year – District 1, incumbent Vernon Gisenas, and District 7, incumbent Todd Duame. A meeting was held in January in each of these districts for the purpose of nominat-

ing at least one but not more than two people to run for election to fill the positions.

At the District 1 meeting, incumbent Vernon Gisenas was the only person nominated to fill the position of director. His nomination will be approved at the annual meeting by voice vote.

In District 7, incumbent Todd Duame and Denise Langlay were nominated to fill the director position. The final election by the membership will be at the annual meeting.

### DISTRICT 1 – UNCONTESTED



#### Vernon Gisenas

Vernon has been a member of the cooperative for over 40 years, and was elected to the board of directors in 2009.

Since 1993 he has owned a logging business and deer farm; prior to that he worked at Graetz Manufacturing for 19 years. Vernon has one son, Christopher.

Other activities that Vernon is involved in include serving as a supervisor on the Beaver Town Board, and he has served on the Marinette County Board of Supervisors.

"I believe Oconto Electric is moving in the right direction," he said. "Financially the co-op is sound and outage-hours are low, which are the two things most important to the members."

"I want to thank all the members of OEC for their support. Along with the rest of the board and staff we will all work to keep rates reasonable and the service excellent," exclaimed Vernon.

# DISTRICT 7 – CAST YOUR VOTE



## Todd Duame

Todd Duame is the incumbent director representing District 7. He was elected 12 years ago and holds the office of secretary.

He is the owner of Duame Sand & Gravel and Duame Trucking. “I feel that being a business owner helps me to understand how to spend the members’ money efficiently and effectively,” explained Todd.

“I have enjoyed the past 12 years serving on the OEC board and representing our members,” said Todd. “Our current board works well together. We all have a common goal in mind and that is to keep our budget and rates down. I want to thank all of you that have supported me in the past and I am asking for your support now. I am proud of the many accomplishments we have made to make your cooperative better. One of them was our new wholesale power contract that, as of last year, received 50% of our power from renewables and will be at 80% in 2035, with a final goal of 100% carbon-free by 2050. At the same time controlling our rates. We belong to a group that will be providing charging stations throughout our state and region. At the same time, we will be providing charging in your home at a reduced cost when combined with our load control program. If you vote for me I can assure you that we will continue to look toward the future and do what’s right for you and at the same time control your rates.”

Todd and his wife, Colleen, have one daughter together and Todd is the stepfather of Colleen’s other two children. They have eight grandchildren. During his “off” hours, Todd enjoys riding his Harley and spending time at their cabin.



## Denise Langlay

Denise has been a member of Oconto Electric Cooperative for over 35 years and recently was nominated as a director candidate for District 7. Denise resides in Oconto Falls with her husband, Brent, and they have three adult children. She currently works in guest services at Kwik Trip and was formerly a business owner and certified veterinary technician.

In the past she enjoyed serving on the Community Change Board (president, secretary/treasurer), Home School Board at St. Anthony School (president), N.E.W. Credit Union (supervisory committee), Oconto County Farm Bureau (secretary/treasurer), Town of Oconto Falls Smart Growth Comprehensive planning committee, Oconto County Advisory Committee for Comprehensive Planning, and as an FFA Alumni member. “At this time I am not serving on any boards. I would devote my full attention to the members of OEC,” said Denise.

“I feel that electric cooperatives like OEC are an important part of the electric industry, otherwise we would be an investor-owned utility with no economic participation, autonomy or independence to vote in the direction of our needs for the community. I am looking forward to the opportunity to represent the members of OEC and contribute a new perspective of concepts, strategic planning and ensure economic solutions to our members. I would like to represent your rights as members.”

Denise enjoys gardening, canning vegetables, and traveling.

“I would be honored to serve Oconto Electric Cooperative as your District 7 Director for the next three years and ask for your support and vote.”



# OCONTO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S 83RD ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

## AUGUST 6, 2020

Oconto Falls, Wisc.—Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Oconto Electric Cooperative conducted this year's meeting "drive-in" style at the new Dirt City Race Track in Lena, Wisconsin, with members arriving in their vehicles and tuning their radios to their local radio station 88.3 FM to hear the meeting broadcast.

Chairman Hischke determined a quorum of 53 voting members in attendance and called the meeting to order.

Special patriotic American flag songs in honor of all veterans serving past and present were presented by Sharon Stodola Eslien.

David Hischke, chairman of the board, presided over the meeting.

Secretary Todd Duame read the Official Meeting Notice of the 83rd annual meeting and Proof of Mailing, which was a postcard sent via mail and by email for those on paperless notifications on March 11, 2020, to each member of the cooperative. Secretary Duame also read the second meeting notice sent on July 8 via bill insert and/or email due to the postponement of the original meeting date due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A motion was made and seconded to waive the reading of the 2019 82nd OEC annual meeting minutes and accept as published. Motion carried.

Members were reminded that the 2019 cooperative's audit report was published in the March issue of the *WEC News* magazine as well as being noted on OEC's website at [www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com).

Co-op Attorney Eslien called for a motion to approve and

ratify the reports and actions taken by the officers and directors for 2019. A motion was made and seconded to approve as presented. Motion carried.

Attorney Eslien also called for a unanimous vote due to District 4 and District 6 having only one candidate nominated for incumbent directors Doug Allen, District 4, and Dan Kanack, District 6. Director terms to begin retroactive back to the original meeting date of March 28, 2020, for another three (3) year term. A motion was made and seconded to accept as nominated for another three (3) year term. Motion carried.

Chairman Hischke asked if there was any old or new business to be discussed. Hearing none, this concluded the business meeting of Oconto Electric Cooperative.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting ended with the membership drawing of \$1,000. (All co-op member names are entered in the drawing—member must be present to win.) There was a small hiccup when opening the spinner containing the slips of papers with the members' names. The wind blew a slip of paper out and employees were unable to find where the slip of paper went, due to it being so windy and the grassy brush of the terrain. The chairman apologized and asked members to disqualify the first drawing and to agree to draw another name. Hearing no objections, Attorney Eslien drew member Robert D. Bystek's name. Unfortunately, he was not in attendance. Chairman Hischke extended a final thank you to all for attending the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Secretary, Todd Duame

## Annual Meeting Drawing \$1,000

The name of every member of Oconto Electric Cooperative is entered into the drawing.  
The person whose name is drawn ***must be present to win.***

# COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET

## ASSETS

### UTILITY PLANT:

Electric Plant in Service  
Construction Work in Progress

#### AUDITED 2019

#### UNAUDITED 2020

\$60,044,138  
\$457,782  
\$60,501,920

\$61,598,146  
\$986,354  
\$62,584,500

**LESS:** Accumulated Provision  
for Depreciation  
Net Utility Plant

\$26,059,620  
\$34,442,300

\$27,089,013  
\$35,495,486

### OTHER PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS:

Investments in Associated Organizations  
Other Investments

\$1,720,355  
\$2,235  
\$1,722,590

\$1,765,037  
\$2,235  
\$1,767,272

### CURRENT ASSETS:

Cash – General  
Temporary Cash Investments  
Accounts Receivable  
Materials and Supplies  
Prepayments  
Other Current Assets

\$4,388,982  
\$103,746  
\$2,223,736  
\$996,517  
\$83,982  
\$5,341  
\$7,802,304

\$1,760,917  
\$105,652  
\$2,102,597  
\$1,294,568  
\$92,681  
\$5,191  
\$5,361,607

### DEFERRED CHARGES

\$100,374

\$129,735

### TOTAL ASSETS

\$44,067,568

\$42,754,100

### EQUITIES AND MARGINS:

## EQUITIES & LIABILITIES

Other Margins & Equities  
Patronage Capital

#### AUDITED 2019

#### UNAUDITED 2020

\$1,687,281  
\$18,991,160  
\$20,678,441

\$1,774,109  
\$20,217,198  
\$21,991,308

### LONG-TERM LIABILITIES:

RUS Mortgage Notes  
Other Long-Term Debt

\$8,981,110  
\$12,395,342  
\$21,376,452

\$10,491,191  
\$8,175,330  
\$18,666,521

### CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable  
Customer Deposits  
Other Current & Accrued Liabilities

\$948,759  
\$140,481  
\$493,370  
\$1,582,610

\$1,060,908  
\$140,985  
\$464,398  
\$1,666,291

### DEFERRED CREDITS

\$430,065

\$429,981

### CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

\$0

\$0

### TOTAL EQUITIES & LIABILITIES

\$44,067,568

\$42,754,100



# STATEMENTS OF REVENUE & PATRONAGE CAPITAL

	AUDITED 2019	UNAUDITED 2020
<b>OPERATING REVENUE &amp; PATRONAGE CAPITAL</b>	\$15,788,903	\$16,309,364
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>		
Power Production Expense	\$90,078	\$79,549
Cost of Purchased Power	\$7,378,145	\$8,287,529
Transmission Expense	\$13,103	\$29,033
Distribution Expense-Operations	\$789,712	\$729,524
Distribution Expense-Maintenance	\$1,078,787	\$699,983
Customer Accounts Expense	\$394,307	\$435,288
Customer Service & Informational Expense	\$315,673	\$318,983
Sales Expense	\$7,368	\$20,654
Administration & General Expense	\$1,312,769	\$1,247,103
Board of Directors per diem*	\$42,330	\$32,321
Board of Directors Education & Travel Expense*	\$94,851	\$34,380
Miscellaneous Board Expense	\$12,360	\$8,415
Depreciation Expense	\$1,903,358	\$1,962,967
Taxes	\$271,585	\$258,571
Interest on Long-Term Debt	\$1,007,655	\$773,695
Other Interest	(\$3,676)	(\$8,469)
Other Deductions	\$5,017	\$2,245
Total Operating Expense & Interest	<u>\$14,713,422</u>	<u>\$14,911,770</u>
Net Operating Margin	\$1,075,481	\$1,397,594
<b>NON-OPERATING MARGINS</b>		
Interest Income	\$339,495	\$225,849
Other Non-Operating Margins	\$34,297	\$28,633
Total	<u>\$373,792</u>	<u>\$254,482</u>
<b>CAPITAL CREDIT ALLOCATIONS</b>	\$133,255	\$148,222
<b>NET MARGINS</b>	\$1,582,527	\$1,800,298
<b>PATRONAGE CAPITAL AT BEGINNING</b>	\$18,026,486	\$18,991,160
Retirement of Capital Credits	(\$617,853)	(\$574,260)
<b>PATRONAGE CAPITAL AT END</b>	\$18,991,160	\$20,217,198

\*In accordance with the cooperative's bylaws, directors do not receive a salary for their services. Instead, each director receives a fixed fee compensation (per diem) of \$295 per full day and \$175 per half day for attendance at board meetings, training seminars, and while performing cooperative business. Directors are reimbursed actual out-of-pocket travel expenses when traveling for cooperative business purposes.

## AUDIT REPORT

In accordance with our mortgage agreements with National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUCFC), Rural Utilities Service (RUS), and CoBank, an independent audit is conducted of the cooperative's records each year. Our most recent audit was completed for the period ending December 31, 2020, by the auditing firm of Bauman Associates, Ltd., P.O. Box 1225, Eau Claire, WI 54702.

The audit included a complete examination of the past year's operations and the income and expense entries to deter-

mine if they are made in accordance with generally accepted auditing and accounting standards. Other tests are made of accounting records and procedures as considered necessary by the auditors.

The auditing firm will present its report directly to the board of directors at a regularly scheduled board meeting. Copies of the completed audit are sent to NRUCFC, RUS, and CoBank and are available for review at the office of the cooperative.



## OPERATING STATISTICS

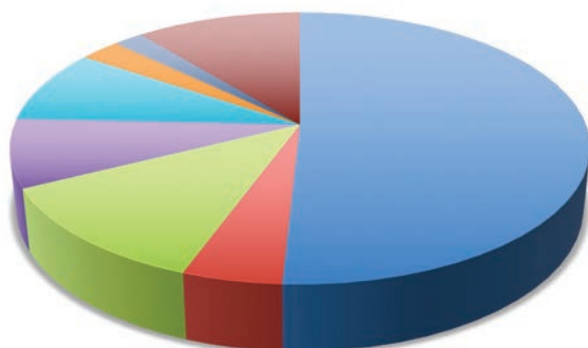
	AUDITED 2019	UNAUDITED 2020
Net equity due members	\$18,991,160	\$20,217,198
Interest paid RUS/CFC/CoBank	\$1,007,656	\$748,819
Total paid to RUS/CFC/CoBank (principle & interest)	\$2,610,666	\$2,152,917
Total kilowatt hours generated	7,383,529	8,295,513
Total kilowatt hours purchased	116,772,000	120,604,000
Average kilowatt hour usage per month (residential only)	1,032	1,050
Average cost per kilowatt hour to member (residential only)	\$.1375	\$.1373
Average member's bill per month (residential only)	\$141.90	\$144.17
Number of connected services	10,003	10,069
Highest system demand	23,867	26,689
Cost per kilowatt hour generated in mills	21.100	17.400
Cost per kilowatt hour purchased in mills	65.984	68.645
Number of meters per mile	6.96	7.55
Miles of distribution line	1,433.72	1,440.65
Miles of transmission line	59.29	59.29
Total capital credits refunded during the year	\$617,853	\$574,260
Total capital credits refunded to date	\$16,906,687	\$17,480,947

## ANNUAL REPORT COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

	2010	2015	2020
Kilowatt hour sales	105,877,761	108,559,504	118,752,725
Operating revenue	\$14,249,314	\$15,653,308	\$16,309,364
Cost of power	\$7,596,567	\$8,322,331	\$8,287,529
Power cost as percent of revenue	53.31%	53.17%	50.81%
Operating & maintenance expense	\$1,279,810	\$1,426,748	\$1,429,507
Operating & maintenance expense as percent of revenue	8.98%	9.11%	8.76%
General & administrative expense	\$998,360	\$1,159,814	\$1,322,219
General & administrative expense as percent of revenue	7.01%	7.41%	8.11%
Consumer accounting expense	\$339,710	\$336,034	\$435,288
Consumer accounting expense as percent of revenue	2.38%	2.15%	2.67%
Depreciation	\$1,350,360	\$1,643,450	\$1,962,967
Depreciation expense as percent of plant total	4.00%	2.99%	3.14%
Interest (long term debt)	\$1,061,408	\$940,608	\$773,695
Interest as percent of revenue	7.45%	6.01%	4.74%
Total costs	\$13,179,539	\$14,492,555	\$14,911,771
Total costs as a percent of revenue	92.49%	92.58%	91.43%

MY CO-OP

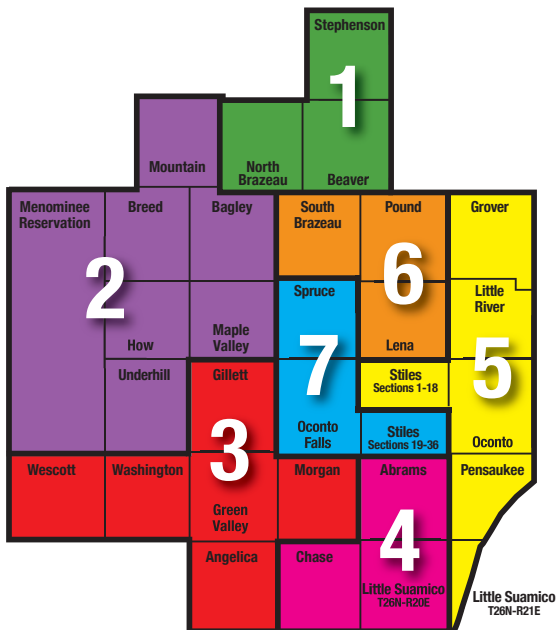
## 2020 EXPENSE DOLLARS



Customer Service 2%	Administrative & General 8%
Consumer Accounts 3%	Operations & Maintenance 9%
Interest 5%	Depreciation 12%
Other 11%	Power Costs 51%



# TERRITORY SERVED BY YOUR COOPERATIVE



**Vernon Gisenas**  
District No. 1  
Term Expires: 2021



**David Hischke**  
District No. 2  
Term Expires: 2022



**Tony Wagner**  
District No. 3  
Term Expires: 2022



**Doug Allen**  
District No. 4  
Term Expires: 2023



**Ronnie Kruse**  
District No. 5  
Term Expires: 2022



**Dan Kanack**  
District No. 6  
Term Expires: 2023



**Todd Duame**  
District No. 7  
Term Expires: 2021

**BUILT** by our community.  
**SHAPED** by our community.  
**LED** by our community.

**WE'RE PROUD TO  
POWER YOUR LIFE.**

## Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program

### What Kind of Help is Available?

- Utility and Home Energy Payments
- Rent Payments
- Services to help you stay in your home

**Eligible households may receive up to 12 months of assistance to help with current and/or overdue bills.**

### Does My Household Qualify?

Your household may qualify if at least one or more individuals in your home meet the following:

- 1) Qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, experienced major costs, or experienced financial struggles due to COVID-19;
- 2) Demonstrates a risk of being evicted or losing your home; and,
- 3) Has a household income at or below 80 percent of the county median.

### Want to Apply?

Information about the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program, including how to apply for assistance, is available in two convenient ways:

**Your Local Community Action Agency**  
Visit: [wiscap.org/wera](http://wiscap.org/wera)

**Energy Services, Inc.**  
Call: 1-833-900-9372 or  
Email: [support@wera.help](mailto:support@wera.help)

Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration





To the Families  
of Our Linemen

THANK  
YOU

Thank you for your:  
sacrifice,  
understanding,  
support,  
interrupted holidays,  
and so much more.

**"My daddy works with electricity. He is a lineman," said Noah, the son of OEC lineman Scott Bancroft. Also pictured is his wife, Lauren, and daughter, Nina.**

"Lineworker" is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. This is understandable as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, having to brave stormy weather and other challenging conditions makes a lineworker's job dangerous and unforgiving. But our electric lineworkers are up to the task!

Oconto Electric Cooperative's (OEC) lineworkers are responsible for keeping power flowing day and night, regardless of national holidays, vacations, birthdays, weddings, or other important family milestones.

It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain the willingness to leave the comfort of their home and family? This dedication and sense of service to the community are truly what set these workers apart.

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees at OEC, it's important to note that there is a team of skilled professionals working behind the scenes. Engineers provide ongoing expertise and guidance on the operations side of the co-

op. Member services representatives are always standing by to take your calls and answer your questions. And these are just a few of the folks who work together to ensure we can deliver the service and reliability you expect and deserve. Without them, our lineworkers wouldn't be able to "bring the light" to your community.

### Family Support System

To perform their jobs successfully, lineworkers depend on their years of training, experience, and each other to get the job done safely.

Equally important is their reliance on a strong support system at home. A lineworker's family stands behind their loved one's commitment to the greater cause during severe storms and power outages. Without strong family support and understanding, this challenging job would be all the more difficult.

### When the Phone Rings

"Anytime the phone rings during a thunderstorm I get very nervous! I know Ron is a very safe lineman, but when there is lightning going on and he's working out in the storm I pray to God he will be

safe!" — *Spouse, Karen Friedman*

"When the phone rings during a storm, I feel many different emotions. Nervous, worried and anxious are just a few. You never know how long your lineman will be gone for. When everyone is running to shelter from the storm, our husbands are running out into the storm, and that's a scary thought. I always hope that his brothers on the line will help keep him safe, and that he will do the same for them." — *Spouse, Marissa Schroeder*

"When I hear the phone ring during a storm, my stomach goes into knots. I feel scared for my husband and for myself and our family. Scott would never leave us alone without making sure we are secure and set up for the storm first. He ALWAYS makes sure to say I love you before leaving because he knows there is that chance he may not return." — *Spouse, Lauren Bancroft*

"I would always hope it wouldn't be an outage call, but it usually was. I'd get nervous for my dad to go out into that



weather and work with electricity. My mind would imagine the worst possible scenarios, and I'd pray for him while he was out there." — *Son, Mitch Friedman*

## Don't Take Electricity for Granted

Today we rely on electricity more than ever. We depend on it to power our computers and cell phones, essentials to everyday communications. You flip a light switch and you expect the lights to come on. But what happens when the power goes out? We've all been in that position before, and it's frustrating. We take electricity for granted.

"I definitely believe people take electricity for granted. When the power is out, I see many complain how long it is taking for it to be restored. What many people don't understand is that it can take hours to fix a line, but that may only turn the power back on for a few people. The linemen make so many sacrifices and work as hard as they can while being safe to bring the light back on. I try to educate people on how difficult it can be at times and to just have patience and know the linemen are doing their best under less than desirable conditions." — *Spouse, Marissa Schroeder*

"People definitely take electricity for granted but what they really take for granted are the people who restore the power and get everything back in work-



**Karen Friedman hugging her husband, Ron, in 2017 as he was getting ready to leave for Clay Electric in Florida to help with Hurricane Irma relief efforts. (11903)**



**Perhaps a future lineman? The son of lineman Tyler Schroeder and his wife, Marissa. (Photo credit Chassey Bayer Photography)**

ing order. What people don't understand is that it is not always the flip of a switch to restore power. Sometimes it's much more and takes a whole crew to get the power back on, and these men and women are working their hardest and safest to restore power in a timely manner. Customers need to be patient and respectful of these workers." — *Spouse, Amanda Arndt*

"I think people take electricity for granted when the weather is calm. Our members have gotten used to very reliable service and struggle understanding that there are other reasons besides bad weather to cause outages." — *Spouse, Karen Friedman*

"We definitely take electricity for granted. I know it's an inconvenience when the power goes out, but fixing isn't always easy and hurrying is not safe. My dad works extremely hard and long hours and gets little sleep when major outages occur. The blessing of electricity requires a lot more than the flip of a switch." — *Son, Mitch Friedman*

## Impact

The linemen at OEC take their jobs seriously, because at the end of the day they all want to go home safely to their

families. They know how demanding their job can be and that they miss out on family functions, and that their family sacrifices right along with them.

"I've learned to appreciate the time I have with my lineman, because you never really know when that phone is going to ring. He has missed out on holidays, birthdays and special events that many families cherish, but that's the sacrifice that has to be made. If he gets called out on Christmas, I know it's to help another family who is spending Christmas in the dark and that makes me feel better about him being gone." — *Spouse, Marissa Schroeder*

"Brian has had to miss several family and holiday functions and the boys don't always understand why he can't just come." — *Spouse, Amanda Arndt*

"If my brother and I had a sporting event out of town, my dad would usually have to stay home when he was on call. It impacted weekends, hobbies, and regular rhythms of life. We didn't like that he had to miss those things, but he demonstrated discipline, commitment, and hard work to us through his job as a lineman." — *Son, Mitch Friedman*



## I Married a Lineman

"The best thing about being married to a lineman is the pride I have for him and what he does. Not many people are willing to work all hours, in all conditions—down-pouring rain, blizzards, heat waves, extreme cold. I also know that not everyone can be a lineman's wife. There is a constant worry of wondering when he will be home, what disaster is he working on." — *Spouse, Marissa Schroeder*

"Being married to a lineman makes me so proud to be his wife! He puts himself at risk every day he is working with electricity." — *Spouse, Karen Friedman*

## What would you tell others if their spouse were about to enter the profession?

"I would tell them to be supportive of their spouse and when they have worked straight through night or several hours in

a row to give them some quiet time to try and rest and get some sleep so they can get back at it." — *Spouse, Amanda Arndt*

"I would say, you're a part of a special family now. We're a small group that can truly understand what one another is going through. It takes a strong person to be a lineman, but it also takes a strong person to be a lineman's wife." — *Spouse, Marissa Schroeder*

"I would tell other spouses that storms are scary when your spouse is home but becomes scarier once they leave. Especially having kids. You have to become the 'strong' figure for your kids. When they are out working 16 hours remember they aren't choosing to be away from family. They are helping others and will be home as soon as they can." — *Spouse, Lauren Bancroft*

## A Prayer for My Son

Behind every successful lineman is a

mother who is waiting, worrying, and supporting them every step of the way.

"I knew Jake would be in some type of trade as he loves being outdoors and has always been hands-on. I am proud to know that he is out there helping people and like, all moms, I pray that he stays safe." — *Mom, Nicky Baldwin*

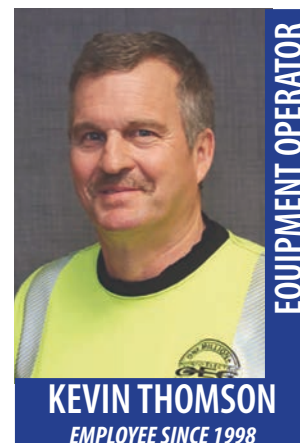
## Outage

The next time you lose power during a storm, take a moment to reflect. Know that there are people working to restore your power. But also take a moment to realize there may be a spouse without their significant other, or a child without their mom or dad, all because those people are working to get your lights back on.

## Thank You

Monday, April 12, is Lineworker Appreciation Day. Given the dedication of OEC's lineworkers, both on and off the job, I encourage you to take a moment and acknowledge them and their families.






## APRIL 12 IS LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY





# 5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

01 NOTIFY	02 WAIT	03 CONFIRM	04 RESPECT	05 DIG CAREFULLY
Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.	Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.	Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.	Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.	If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.
				

## Q: What is Diggers Hotline?

A: Diggers Hotline is a free service that you use before you do any kind of digging to make sure you don't damage underground lines. *Let us know at least three working days before you start digging* and we will help you avoid costly or dangerous buried lines by alerting the owners of lines in the digging area. Diggers Hotline is not responsible for the actual marking of the lines.

## Q: Will all of the lines be marked on my property?

A: Diggers Hotline coordinates between excavators (such as a homeowner) and the owners of buried lines. It's up to the owners of the lines to mark the locations near your job site with paint and/or flags. Private lines, such as an electric line to a detached garage or other outbuilding or a line from a propane tank that may be on your property, are considered the responsibility of the landowner. A locating company can be hired to mark private lines.

## Q: What are private lines and why don't they get marked?

A: Private lines are facilities that are owned by homeowners or private businesses and are contained fully on their property. Because these lines do not cross in to the public right-of-way they are not required to be members of Diggers Hotline and will not be notified of locate requests. Examples of private lines include propane lines, sewer laterals, sprinkler systems, ornamental lighting, and electric lines to a barn or garage.

## Q: Who can I contact to mark my private lines?

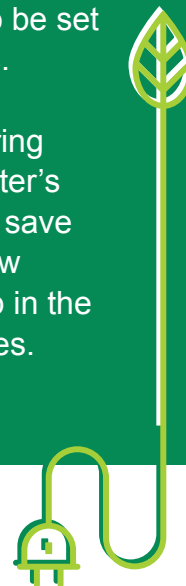
A: Damage Prevention Services is located in Green Bay, WI. Phone: (920) 370-5970  
Email: [info@damagepreventionservicesllc.com](mailto:info@damagepreventionservicesllc.com)

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140 degrees, but most households usually only require them to be set at 120 degrees.

Consider lowering your water heater's temperature to save energy and slow mineral buildup in the heater and pipes.

Source:  
[www.energy.gov](http://www.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 March account numbers belonged to Larry Kaminski, Lena, and Leo Thomas, Pound.

**Byron C. Nolde, CEO**

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