



BEAUTIFY YOUR YARD, NOT UTILITY EQUIPMENT

Utility Equipment Needs to be Accessible 24/7

Springtime means time for outdoor projects. Even when located on your property, electrical equipment is the property of Oconto Electric Cooperative and must be accessible to our crews at all times. Why?

Emergencies

In the event of a fire, crews must be able to shut the power off before firefighters can begin their work. Every second counts during such a critical event.

Maintenance

OEC routinely checks and maintains meters and transformers to make sure equipment hasn't been damaged and is in good working condition.

Outages

Some equipment must be accessed in the event of a power outage. If the equipment is inaccessible it can cause longer outages for you and your neighbors.

Locked Gate

If your property has a gate that requires a key, OEC can provide a lock that can be used as a link with your lock and opened with the key held by OEC. We respect your privacy as a property owner, and will only access our equipment when needed.

Padmount Transformers

Green utility boxes, known as padmount transformers, are part of the supply chain that helps provide power to your neighborhood. Those boxes sit on an easement, which allows us access to them.

What are the green

boxes for? Their job is to step down high-voltage electricity to a lower voltage needed for the underground wires supplying power to the lights and appliances in homes.

Please do not paint, enhance, block, or otherwise obstruct padmount transformers. Do not plant shrubs or trees close to green box transformers or other utility equipment. Limiting or restricting access to the box in your yard could delay restoration work during an outage and creates a serious safety hazard. We need at least 10 feet of clearance in front of the transformer (the side that is padlocked), as well as four feet of clearance on the other three sides.

Power Poles

Please keep utility poles free from all personal materials such as balloons, fliers, and metal objects like staples or tacks. By respecting utility poles, you can help keep your community powered, and your local utility workers safe.

Utility workers use specialized climbing devices to perform regular maintenance and repair damaged power lines at the top of utility poles. Nails, tacks, and other metal objects that are used to attach objects to utility poles can interfere with the safe operation of the climbing boots used by utility workers.



Foreign objects (215301) that are embedded in utility poles can also snag or damage the protective clothing that keeps line workers safe from electrical shock.

Meters

Meters must have a clear and unrestricted path for access at all times. They should not be located in areas that are inconvenient to enter or where privacy is desired. This isn't ideal for our crews, is costly to the co-op, and it can be dangerous.

Meters should be placed 36 to 66 inches from the ground and should not be enclosed in any way.

If we can't access the meter, we will be contacting you to schedule a meeting on-site to relocate the meter pedestal.

By respecting all utility equipment, including meters and transformers, you can help keep the power on and your local utility workers safe.



Meters should be located so accessibility will not be obstructed by future alterations or additions.



OEC INVITES THIRD GRADERS TO ENTER SAFETY POSTER CONTEST

Calling all third graders: Oconto Electric Cooperative and the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association are seeking entries for the 2021 electrical safety poster contest. All local children in third grade are invited to submit an original poster that supports electrical safety.

Prizes

All who enter will have a chance to win local and state-level prizes.

Local

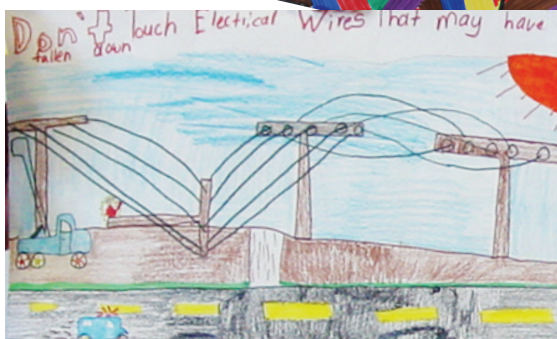
- 1st Place - Family pass to the NEW Zoo in Green Bay (\$75 value)
- 2nd Place - Mini golf and ice cream for family (\$50 value)
- 3rd Place - \$25 gift card

State-Level

The three winning local entries will also be submitted to the state contest, for a chance to win state-level prizes.

- 1st Place - Chrome Book
- 2nd Place - \$100 gift card
- 3rd Place - \$75 gift card

Winning posters will be shared by the co-ops to help educate all kids about the safe use of electricity.



Form **MUST** be filled out completely to be entered into the contest.

Student's Name: _____

Student's Age: _____

Student's School: _____

Parents/Guardian Name: _____

Parents/Guardian Email: _____

Parents/Guardian Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Oconto Electric Cooperative

By entering the contest, each contestant and/or parent/guardian agrees the submission is the artist's original work and consents to use of the artist's first and last name and artwork in publications, exhibits, displays, social media, and websites, as determined by the local electric cooperative and the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association. Original drawing/artwork will not be returned to the participant.

Rules:

- Free entry
- One entry per third-grade student
- The poster must be themed around Electrical Safety
- No computer generated images will be accepted
- The poster should be at least 8.5x11 inches, but no larger than 11x14 inches
- Entries must include completed entry form (above)
- Student's name must be written on the back of the poster
- **Entries must be submitted to OEC no later than May 17, 2021**
- Submit entries to Oconto Electric Cooperative, Attn: Safety Poster Contest, PO Box 168, Oconto Falls, WI 54154.

community change

Community Change provides funds for worthwhile causes, including medical or financial hardships, educational purposes, and charitable organizations. It is funded by volunteer donations from OEC members, allowing them the opportunity to give back to our local communities. When a member signs up, their electric bills are simply rounded up to the next whole dollar amount. The monthly roundup could be as little as a single penny, but never more than 99 cents. The average donation is \$6 annually, which is tax deductible.

The funds are held separately from any Oconto Electric Cooperative funds and are administered by a board of trustees, made up of Oconto Electric members. Applications are submitted for grants and these are reviewed quarterly for disbursement of funds.

To date, Community Change has donated \$211,500 to families in need,

charitable organizations, and house fire victims. Thank you to our participating OEC members for your generous support.

Grants awarded in 2021:

- 1 House Fire Victim
- New Beginnings
- Hillside Assembly of God Hungry Kids Program
- Oconto Falls Community Library
- Suring Area Historical Society
- Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce

How to apply

If you know of a charitable or service organization, civic group, or individual with unusual financial needs, you can encourage them to apply for a Community Change grant. Applications can be found at www.ocontoelectric.com. Applications (336803) for the June board meeting must be submitted by June 1.



Due to the generosity of the former Bay Lakes Cooperative, Community Change has additional funding available that is used for special grants that can provide far-reaching enhancement for a neighborhood or community. The Suring Area Historical Society was awarded \$4,000 for lighting and electrical updates. (Pictured left to right are Community Change board member Wayne Strei, Suring Area Historical Society members Adelaide Boetcher and Candie Lehto). You can tour the historical society on the first and third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m.–3 p.m., May through September. An additional \$1,200 was awarded to the Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. The funding will be used towards the purchase of two kayak launches that will be installed at beaches in Oconto Falls.

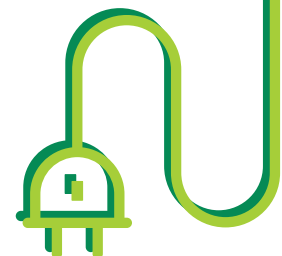
Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat.

The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause your air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Source:
www.energy.gov

MY CO-OP





YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS GOES VIRTUAL

JULY 13–14, 2021 • 8 A.M.–NOON EACH DAY



The 2021 WECA Youth Leadership Congress is going virtual! This is a **FREE**, two half-day event for youth leaders across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning about the purpose, operation, and scope of cooperative businesses.

Take the opportunity to...

- See **what makes the cooperative business model different and successful**, then apply this knowledge to fun and challenging cooperative activities.
- Identify and learn how to develop your own **leadership skills**.
- Discuss **cooperative careers** with industry professionals.
- Be **entertained and challenged** by highly acclaimed motivational speakers who understand teens and talk about topics that are relevant in your life.



SCAN ME

This is a **by-teens, for-teens cooperative leadership conference** that is planned and developed by a youth board elected at the previous year's event.

Questions?

Tina Walden, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association
Email: tina@weca.coop Phone: (608) 467-4599

Who Should Apply

- High school students with family members who belong to a Wisconsin electric cooperative.
- Students active in their school and community.

How to Register

- Sign up at: <http://bit.ly/2021YLC>
- Register by June 1, 2021*

2021 YLC Opportunities

Podcast Contest

- 1st Place: \$250
- 2nd Place: \$100
- 3rd Place: \$50

Scholarship Essay Contest

- 1st Place: \$1,000
- 2nd Place: \$500
- 3rd Place: \$250

*Note: There is a limit of 200 students based on a first-come, first registered basis. Register soon to secure your spot!

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 April account numbers belonged to James McDowell, Oconto, and Nicholas Tyczkowski, Oconto Falls.

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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Katie Jagiello, Editor

