



Winter Increases the Potential for Power Line Accidents

Winter wonderlands are beautiful, but they can be a driving nightmare. Snow, slush, ice, and wind make it stressful and difficult to drive. These driving conditions also make it more likely that your car will skid off the road. Losing control of your car may seem like the worst-case scenario, but if you do not know what you are doing, the moments following an accident could potentially be more dangerous than the accident itself.

In an accident, a car may slide off the road and into a power pole. The pole may fall down, lines may fall on your car or nearby, and the area around your car may become charged with electric energy. If you stepped out of the car in this scenario, your body would become the path to ground for the electricity, and you could be electrocuted.

While downed lines can sometimes show they are live by arcing and sparking with electricity, this is not always the case. Lines without these telltale signs can still be live and just as lethal.

Stay in the car after an accident with a power pole. If someone is approaching to try and help, warn them to stay far away. Call 911 for help, and wait until a professional from the electric utility tells you it is safe to leave the car.

The exception to this rule is if your car is on fire. In that case, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time. Then hop away with feet together. This way there will not be a voltage difference between your two feet, which would give electricity the chance to flow through your body.

If you witness a car collision with a power pole, do not approach the accident. By trying to help, you will put your own life at risk. The best thing to do is contact emergency responders and stay far away from the accident.

Power lines may be difficult to see if they are covered in snow or ice, so be cautious if you must be out driving after a winter storm.



Road conditions were icy and this truck went off the road and hit one of our power poles. The pole was snapped in half and power lines were lying on the truck. The individual stayed in the truck until co-op personnel got there to make sure it was safe to get out.



CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS

WE'RE LOOKING FOR PICTURES OF RURAL WISCONSIN FOR OUR 2023 CALENDAR

Oconto Electric Cooperative is holding a Member Photo Contest. Winning photos will appear in OEC's 2023 calendar. Photos may also be used in future newsletters or cooperative publications. (370701)

Photo Contest Criteria:

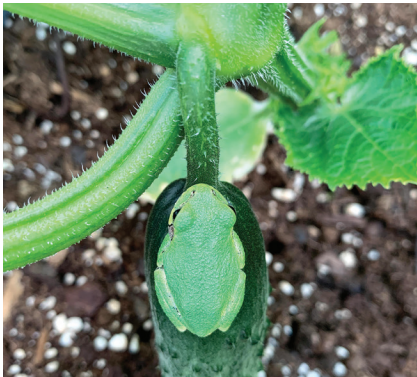
- Photos must be taken within the Oconto Electric Cooperative service area.
- Photos should capture scenic life in rural Wisconsin (seasons, wildlife, landscape, etc.).
- Photos must be horizontal (landscape).
- Photos can be in color or black and white.
- Photos MUST be at least 300 dpi and 8"x10".

*Entry forms can be downloaded from ocontoelectric.com,
picked up at a OEC or emailed to you.*

Please email all photos to kjagiello@oconotoelectric.com

Photo Contest Rules and Details:

- Contest will run through August 26, 2022; however, submitted photos can be taken outside of this date range.
- Three (3) photos per member will be accepted.
- All OEC members 18 years old and over are eligible to submit photos.
- An OEC member under the age of 18 years old is eligible to participate, but must submit a parent/guardian form with entry.
- A completed entry form must accompany each photo.
- Member must own rights to photo.
- OEC employees will choose winning photos.



Five Reasons We Love Serving Our Members



MY CO-OP

February may be the shortest month, but it's packed with special observances like Presidents' Day, Black History Month and Valentine's Day, in addition to a host of unofficial "national" days you've probably never heard of like "National Tater Tot Day." But they all have something in common. They were created to draw attention to a particular issue or theme.

Valentine's Day may seem like an observance originally created by a greeting card (41202) company, but over time, it's become a widely celebrated day generating millions of dollars spent on flowers, candy, and, of course, greeting cards professing our love. But Valentine's Day isn't just for the lovebirds. It's also the perfect time to let our friends, family, co-workers, and other special people in our lives know we care about them—with or without a store-bought greeting card.

So, in that vein, we've created our list of top five reasons why we love serving you, the members of Oconto Electric Cooperative.

1. We love serving our members because without you, the co-op wouldn't exist. Our purpose is to provide you with reliable, responsible, and safe electricity. Simply put, OEC exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1937—to bring power to our local area when for-profit utilities would not.

2. You enable us to complete our mission by supporting our efforts to give back. A major part of our mission is to serve our community and look after the greater good. With your assistance, we're able to help the most vulnerable members of our community through hygiene and toy drives, and programs like Community Change that help civic groups, charitable organizations, and people who have experienced a catastrophe in their lives.

3. Members of our co-op also serve on the board of directors. They provide guidance for setting co-op priorities and paving the future of the co-op. Because our board members live in the area, they're able to serve as the pulse of the larger community and identify immediate and long-term needs. The broader co-op membership provides helpful input through their vote on director elections and by weighing in on co-op and community issues.

4. You help us get it right. OEC members are great about keeping us in the know. We do our best to avoid power outages, but Mother Nature can occasionally throw us a curve-ball. Our members are quick to report any power disruptions and are patient as our crews work to safely restore power. We know outages are frustrating, and your support as we work through storms means so much to our employees. Your opinions are critical for the co-op's success, and we thank you for that.

5. You and other OEC members make up the community we serve—and for us, it's all about community. Our employees live and work here too and care about our community the same way you do. We're invested and work to help it thrive. That's why OEC donates to local charities, schools, and scholarship funds. It's also why we invest in economic development, and why you'll see our employees volunteering at local schools and other charitable and community endeavors. Our employees have been raising funds since 2004 for local charities and organizations and have distributed \$153,000.

As a co-op, our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community and look after its long-term interests. We love serving our members and our local community, and just like you, want to see it continue to thrive.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weatherstrip all windows to seal air leaks.

When running your home heating system, lock all operable windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.

Source:

Dept. of Energy





Spreading Christmas Cheer

Two local girls, Kaitlyn Borkovec (left) and Emilie Sanders (right) from the town of Spruce (Lena), reached out to “Spread Christmas Cheer” to their neighbors.

The girls came up with this simple act of kindness on their own from the organizing, to buying the gifts with their own money to the delivery. They prepared 17 baskets for their neighbors. The baskets included a mug, hot cocoa mix, Mary Kay products, fuzzy slippers, and a handmade Christmas card.

Their original plan was to deliver the baskets via horse and cart, but they quickly figured out the gifts would not all fit in the cart. So, instead they delivered them via a UTV Ranger. Nothing says “we are thinking about you” like receiving a thoughtful package.

Correction

In the January issue there was a misprint. The correct information is below.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight



December of 2019 we had a heavy wet snow. The sagging power lines had 8 inches of snow/ice on them.



HIDDEN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

Oconto Electric Cooperative hides two account numbers in the local pages of the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* each month. (88401) 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 Leonard Leisner, Pound, and David Varney, Coleman.

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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