

# GET READY 2023 GRADUATES

Scholarship  
applications are  
now available



**W**ould you like to learn how to apply for a scholarship towards a post-secondary education? Oconto Electric Cooperative has two scholarship opportunities available. Scholarships are funded directly through the Federated Youth Foundation by unclaimed capital credits. A volunteer, member-appointed scholarship committee will review and select scholarship recipients.

## #1: Youth Scholarship

Oconto Electric Cooperative is offering twelve, \$2,500 scholarships to graduating seniors who plan to continue their education beyond high school in an accredited college or technical school.

## #2: Lineworker Scholarship

Oconto Electric Cooperative is also offering one \$2,500 scholarship to a graduating senior who is attending Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in the Electrical Power Distribution program.

## Eligibility

Any graduating high school senior whose parent or guardian is a residential member of Oconto Electric Cooperative is eligible (residential is defined as having the primary residence within OEC's service territory). Scholarship awards will be paid out upon entry into the second full-time semester of post high school education.

## Application

Scholarship applications are available from local high school guidance counselors or online at [www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com).

## Deadline

Completed scholarship applications should be at OEC's office no later than Monday, February 13, 2023.

Recipients will be asked to attend the cooperative's Annual Meeting on April 1, 2023 to receive recognition from the membership.

## Questions?

Information can be found at [www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com). If you have questions, you can also call OEC at 800-472-8410 or email [bfricton@ocontoelectric.com](mailto:bfricton@ocontoelectric.com).

# Local student wins first place in statewide essay contest

Congratulations to Megan Wagner on earning first place in Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association's (WECA) 2022 essay contest.

In July, OEC sponsored Megan to attend the Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) at UW-Stout. YLC is an annual program put on by WECA. It is a unique opportunity for youth across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning the purpose, operation, and scope of cooperative businesses.

All students who participate at YLC are eligible and strongly encouraged to enter the WECA essay contest. Megan took first place in the essay contest and will receive \$1,000. See her essay below.

**Q) Describe the Second Cooperative Principle, what it means to you and your community. Give specific examples of how the second cooperative principle has played a prominent role with your electric cooperative and its members.**

The Second Cooperative Principle states: "Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner."

I have been able to witness this first hand. I attended the Oconto Electric CO-OP's (OEC) annual meeting this past spring. Being an FFA member and officer, I really enjoyed watching a meeting being conducted using Parliamentary Procedures. I have learned that this is how companies and businesses run meetings, but it really did not sink in to me until I witnessed this meeting. I really enjoyed how people in the crowd would make the motion or second the motion followed by voting. For me, this really showed how the OEC demonstrated democratic control. Not only were their board members active in this process but many patrons who also attended the meeting.

Being a young person who has always had the privilege of having power, I really found it interesting how OEC came about. From what I read, in 1935, Franklin D Roosevelt formed REA - Rural Electrification Administration. REA provided loans to cooperatives for the purpose of electrifying the rural areas. A few farmers in the Gillett, Oconto Falls, Underhill and Suring areas were sick of working without electricity. These rural areas had a group of leaders who met and signed up 144 other members to draw up an Articles of Incorporation. This allowed other farmers to sign up to get electricity for their farms. Originally the loans from the government only supplied electricity to farmers in the areas

of Oconto Falls, Green Valley, Gillett, Maple Valley, Underhill and How, but more people wanted electricity. In 1937, North Eastern Electric Cooperative's charter dissolved and the Oconto Electric Cooperative was born. In February of that year, OEC was able to service parts of Marinette and Oconto counties to serve about 1000 members. Currently, OEC has over 9600 members and services about 1400 miles.

Living on a farm and having lived through a few storms that ceased power for a few days, I understand the struggles the farmers had. Although I am lucky as we had generators that allowed us to water our cows, farmers back in the 1930's did not have this luxury. I know that I take things for granted and reading OEC's history reminded me how fortunate I am. I am always able to energize my phone or computer, take a shower and use a toilet each day. I am also thankful that the board is democratic and not in the form of a dictatorship. This allows the members to have a say instead of being told what to do.

Lastly, I want to share that I learned about the Second Cooperative Principle when I attended this summer's Youth Government camp at UW-Stout during the Broadband presentation, the speaker would ask us during the presentation "does this make sense to you" or "what did we learn". He then would take what was suggested or said and elaborate more so that we understood his topic better. To me, this shows the Second Cooperative Principle. By his asking questions and asking for other's input, he is allowing others a choice in their learning.

In summary, I feel that it is great that OEC uses the Second Cooperative Principle of democratic roles by all participants. I think this allows for people to voice their opinions. When people feel they are a part of something they are more likely to comply and support. OEC does an amazing job of supporting the local communities. They provide opportunities for high school students to learn about Co-OP's through the leadership camp, provide scholarships to students whose parents are members of OEC, they have an annual picnic and meeting, they came to my school to demonstrate what to do if lines are down.



Scholarship winner Megan Wagner, daughter of Shaun and Monica Wagner.





## FEELS GREAT TO GIVE BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY

### \$20,000 raised for local organizations

Co-op principle number seven: commitment to community. Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) employees really take this principle to heart. Since 2004, OEC employees have awarded \$173,000 to charities and organizations.

The grants were made possible in part through fundraising and from CoBank, one of the co-op's lenders, which matched our \$10,000 as part of its Sharing Success Grant program. (948500)

"It definitely makes me feel warm in my heart to know that what we're doing will benefit the community," said Katie Jagiello, co-op employee.

We are now accepting grant applications for 2023, which can be found on our website, <https://ocontoelectric.com/employee-charity/>.



## Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

Did you know insulating your electric water heater can reduce standby heat loss by 25% to 45%?

This could save you 7% to 16% on annual water heating costs. Insulating your electric water heater is an easy, inexpensive project that can improve energy efficiency and save you money each month. The Dept. of Energy rates this project as medium difficulty, meaning most homeowners can tackle this project on their own. You can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets for about \$20 at most home improvement stores. Visit [energy.gov](https://energy.gov) for project tips and additional considerations.

Source:  
[energy.gov](https://energy.gov)





## 4-H Group Spreads Holiday Cheer

**T**hanks to a Community Change grant, the Lena Rocketeers 4-H Club was able to make the holidays a little brighter for 20 individuals.

Every year the club picks a service project. This year they made gift baskets to deliver to those who lost a loved one, have no family or are a shut-in. (1061300) The kids painted ceramic flower pots to hold a Christmas cactus.

The project was to help kids learn that they can make a positive difference through service to others and build a lifelong commitment to giving back.



## HOLIDAY LIGHT RECYCLING

Recycle your used holiday lights  
in our lobby for free!

December 1 – January 13

**STRING LIGHTS ONLY**



## SAFETY FOR SENIORS AT HOME

MainStreet Messenger is an emergency response service that helps make independent living a reality while giving peace of mind to the families whose loved ones prefer to stay in the comfortable surroundings of their own home.

- Help is only moments away with push of a button
- Fall detection button available
- Cellular option for those without a landline
- Installation within days

**(920) 846-2816**

**[www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com)**

## 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 December account numbers belonged to Ronald Stancy, Niles, IL and Margaret Kralovetz, Pound.

**Byron C. Nolde, CEO**

7479 REA Road, P.O. Box 168, Oconto Falls, WI 54154

800-472-8410 • 920-846-2816

[www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com)

**Katie Jagiello, Editor**

