



## “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, (58200) 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.



### “Change” Matters Grant Criteria:

- 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)
- Identify the project
- Provide a budget and total project cost
- Specify the timeline of your project
- Show how your project will have a positive impact in the community
- Indicate if your project includes community collaboration with other like-organizations in the area

**Grant application deadline is May 19, 2023. Applications can be found at [www.ocontoelectric.com](http://www.ocontoelectric.com).**



Lineworkers’ top priority is ensuring we have reliable electricity for everyday life. Thank you to our line crew.

- Brian Arndt - Journeyman Lineman - Employee Since 1997
- Ron Friedman - Journeyman Lineman - Employee Since 1999
- Maguire Girtz - Apprentice Lineman - Employee Since 2022
- John Havemeier - Foreman/Journeyman Lineman - Employee Since 1989
- Christopher Lemirande - Apprentice Lineman - Employee Since 2022
- Jack Pardy - Line Superintendent - Employee Since 1998
- Tanner Riley - Apprentice Lineman - Employee Since 2021
- Jacob Strait - Journeyman Lineman - Employee Since 2021
- Kevin Thomson - Equipment Operator - Employee Since 1998
- Ben Wilcox - Journeyman Lineman - Employee Since 2007

# EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AT UW-STOUT



The annual Wisconsin Energy Cooperative Association (WECA) Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) is a dynamic three-day event for youth leaders from across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning about the purpose, operation, and scope of cooperative businesses. YLC has been held each summer since 1963.

### Who is eligible to attend?

- Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) will sponsor students to attend the 2023 YLC at UW-Stout, July 11-13, 2023.
- Student must be a son or daughter (or under legal guardianship) residing in the same household of an active OEC member.
- Student must be entering his/her sophomore, junior, or senior year in the fall of 2023.

### What does it cost?

All costs are covered by OEC, including transportation to and from UW-Stout.

### Take the opportunity to...

- See what makes the cooperative business model different and successful, then apply this knowledge to fun and challenging cooperative activities.

- Work together with other youth leaders from around Wisconsin to demonstrate the power and value of cooperation.
- Identify and develop your own leadership skills.
- Learn some of the important history that has shaped today's cooperatives.
- Discuss cooperative careers with professionals in the industry.
- Be entertained and challenged by highly acclaimed motivational speakers who understand teens and address topics that are important and relevant in your life.
- Spend three days on a college campus and experience a typical college environment, complete with living in the residence halls, attending sessions throughout campus, and even experiencing a university dining service.

The Youth Leadership Congress is a “by teens, for teens” conference that is planned and developed by a youth board elected at the previous year’s event.

### Interested? Here’s how to apply...

Space is limited. Deadline to sign up is June 2, 2023. For details contact Katie Jagiello at OEC by calling 800-472-8410 or email [kjagiello@ocontoelectric.com](mailto:kjagiello@ocontoelectric.com).



# Know what's below. Call before you dig.



Spring showers bring May flowers, but digging on your own this spring could spell big trouble. Even if you think you could get lucky or that digging one small hole (or two) won't matter, don't take for granted what lines might lurk beneath the soil in your yard or easement.

Before you use that post hole digger or other unearthing tools, STOP and call 8-1-1 to request that buried electric, gas, cable, and other live lines in or near your yard be marked. (37300) The service is free but digging in an unmarked yard may not be.

You might think you don't have time for that and ask yourself, what's the worst that could happen? YOU COULD DIE OR BECOME SERIOUSLY INJURED.

It doesn't make that yard project quite as pressing, does it? So tiptoe through the tulips this spring and summer, both literally and figuratively. Know what's underneath that flower bed and everywhere else in your yard.

### 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) 370-5971

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This planting season, include energy efficiency in your landscaping plans. Adding shade trees around your home can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 6 degrees. To block heat from the sun, plant deciduous trees around the south side of your home. Deciduous trees provide excellent shade during the summer and lose their leaves in the fall and winter months, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

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





## Keeping Kids Safe

Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) believes in educating school children about the importance of staying away from electric utility equipment. Every year, employees from OEC visit grade schools throughout our service territory to demonstrate the importance of always treating electricity with respect, and what dangers could potentially occur if it's not handled with care. The display shows students what could happen if kites, branches, and even a human (represented by a hot dog) come into contact with a power line.

Additionally, OEC demonstrates how to properly handle an automobile crash into a power line, as well as what could happen if items such as farm equipment accidentally make contact with a power line. The last thing in the world we want is someone getting hurt because they didn't know better.

## OEC Employee Charities for 2023

OEC employees have picked the following charities to raise funds for this year.

Oconto River Kids - Their mission is to assist kids with life-threatening illness attain their outdoor dreams through hands-on outdoor adventures.

Oconto County Youth Fair - Upgrade lighting in the animal barns.

Oconto Falls Youth Baseball & Softball - Replace outdated catcher's equipment.



**OEC will be closed  
April 7 to observe  
Good Friday**

**HAPPY EASTER!**

## 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 Patrick McCarthy, Gillett, and James Herald, Lena.

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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