



Electric Co-ops Grow for the Communities They Serve

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

October is National Co-op Month, and Oconto Electric Cooperative is joining cooperatives across the U.S. to celebrate. Co-ops come in all shapes and sizes, but they each have a common goal: to provide goods or services for the members of the co-op.

Electric co-ops, including OEC, exist to serve their members. Our priority is to provide affordable, reliable energy to our local communities. Because we are led by you, the members we serve, we can evolve to meet your needs.

This October, as we celebrate Co-op Month, we're focusing on the ways "Co-ops Grow" for their members.

Co-ops Grow Communities: Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement, and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. OEC's commitment to community doesn't just end at providing energy. "Concern for Community" is one of our core principles—and being community-focused is essential to everything we do. OEC gives back to the communities it serves and empowers its employees to do the same. They support the community through routine actions, like donating to local organizations, volunteering at community events, raising funds for the employee charity grant, and educating the public about electrical safety.

Co-ops Grow Together: Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That's why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies, and better ways to serve our members. We're better when we grow together!

Co-ops Grow Tomorrow's Leaders: Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground for growing tomorrow's leaders through a variety of youth engagement programs. Whether through school demonstrations, community events, Youth Leadership Conference, or Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., we're committed to providing opportunities for local youth to learn and thrive in our community and beyond. OEC is committed to our youths' education, offering scholarships to graduating high school students.

Co-ops Grow for You: At OEC, your satisfaction is our number-one goal. It's why we were formed many years ago to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. We've come a long way since 1937, and your needs continue to evolve. That's why we'll never stop growing for you!



**OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH -
LET'S CELEBRATE!**

Stop in October 23-27 for popcorn and a gift

Lobby Hours: 9 AM - 3 PM

Image: Vecteezy

Distracted Driving Awareness Tips for Staying Safe

Eight people die in distracted-related crashes on American roads each day, according to the National Safety Council (NSC). National Teen Driver Safety Week is observed the third week of each October, which is a good time to talk to the teens in your life about safety on the open road, including the hazards of distracted driving and downed power lines.

Distracted driving

There were 3,142 people killed by distracted driving in 2022, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Lead by example and, as the NSC touts, “Just Drive.”

Texting while driving is the most alarming distraction behind the wheel, since sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for approximately 5 seconds. Other distractions include sifting through music, checking social media, using navigation, eating, talking on the phone, taking selfies, drinking a beverage, or using an app.

Distracted driving is preventable. Teens and adults alike can follow these five easy tips to help them concentrate on just driving:

1. That text can wait. Do not text while driving.

2. Make responding less tempting by blocking texts while behind the wheel.

3. Do not eat while you drive.

4. Rely on playlists instead of searching for music.

5. Set up navigation before you leave or have a passenger navigate.



Downed power lines

Although no one wants to think about teens being in car accidents, it does happen. Severe storms can damage utility equipment, such as power lines/poles and padmount transformers (green boxes). Have discussions with teens about what to do if there is a downed power line or damaged equipment.

Here is how the ground or objects can become energized without any visual indication:

- The energy spreads like ripples on a pond.

- If you walk or run from one voltage “ripple” to another, your feet experience a difference in voltage (this is called step potential).

- If you touch something at one voltage and step on or touch something at a different voltage, your hands (or your hand and foot) experience a difference in voltage (called touch potential).

- Your body becomes electricity’s path to ground, when electrical current enters your body at one point and exits at another.

What to do

If you are in a car accident, stay inside your vehicle, call 9-1-1 and report that there is damaged electric utility equipment. If you are a bystander, do not approach the scene to help. Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything.

Downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless and still be live. Downed lines and other damaged apparatuses don’t have to be sparking, moving, sizzling, or giving off flames to be energized.

Learn other (68002) electrical safety tips at [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org).



License to Live To learn more about what to do you if you should ever find yourself in an accident involving power equipment, watch the short video “License to Live,” a project sponsored by Wisconsin’s electric cooperatives and developed by electric co-op employees and Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association in conjunction with the Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange and Safe Electricity. You can view the video at <https://www.weca.coop/license-to-live>. At right, the padmount transformer was a hit and run. It was still energized when the crew arrived.



Employee Charity

Oconto Electric Cooperative

"Bag Lunch To Go" Tuesday, October 24



From 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
pick up your brown bag lunch at OEC headquarters!

Pulled Pork Sandwich, BBQ Sauce, Chips, Homemade
Cookie, Beverage.
Cost \$8 for the meal or \$4 for sandwich only.

Proceeds go to OEC 2023 Employee Charities:
Oconto County Youth Fair
Oconto River Kids
Oconto Falls Youth Baseball & Softball

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know using your dishwasher is more energy efficient than washing a load of dishes by hand? To maximize efficiency, wash full loads in the dishwasher and don't block the arms or other parts that move while the appliance is in use.

For additional savings, turn on the "air dry" setting instead of using the "heat dry" setting and use a rinse aid to help dishes dry faster without spotting and streaking.

Source: Dept. of Energy
(115002)





Dinner....Is....Served

Thank you Oconto County Youth Fair for allowing Oconto Electric Cooperative the opportunity to provide dinner for the youth livestock exhibitors August 25 at the fair.

The youth livestock competition is the heart of the fair. Showing animals in the fair is a year-round commitment for many children and young adults. Whether they're showing rabbits or cattle, these young people learn the responsibilities of animal care at a very young age.

We're thankful for the hard work members of the fair board as well as volunteers put in each year to make the fair a success. We are proud to support our youth in many ways and we look forward to continuing to support our local 4-H and FFA.



**SHARE
the ROAD**
with Farmers

**Be safe.
Be Courteous.**

Farm season means sharing the road with large farm equipment. Farmers must move slowly in large equipment, but public roads are often the only available routes.

When you find yourself following or meeting large farm equipment on the road, do the following to keep everyone safe:

- 1** Be alert and cautious, and give large farm equipment and other slow-moving vehicles space.
- 2** Do not pass if you are in a "No Passing Zone," or in any area where it is not safe to do so, such as intersections, bridges and railroad crossings, among others.
- 3** Be careful when you do get the chance to pass. Oftentimes, farmers will move their equipment over when it is safe to do so.
- 4** Do not tailgate.
- 5** Make sure the tractor is not trying to make a left turn before you pass on the left.



Share the road with care. Farmers are just trying to get to and from their job, too.

Source: Texas Table Top
(Texas Farm Bureau)

**Safe
Electricity.org®**

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 September account numbers belonged to Elmer Whiting, Oconto, and Miles Berkovitz, Shawano.

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