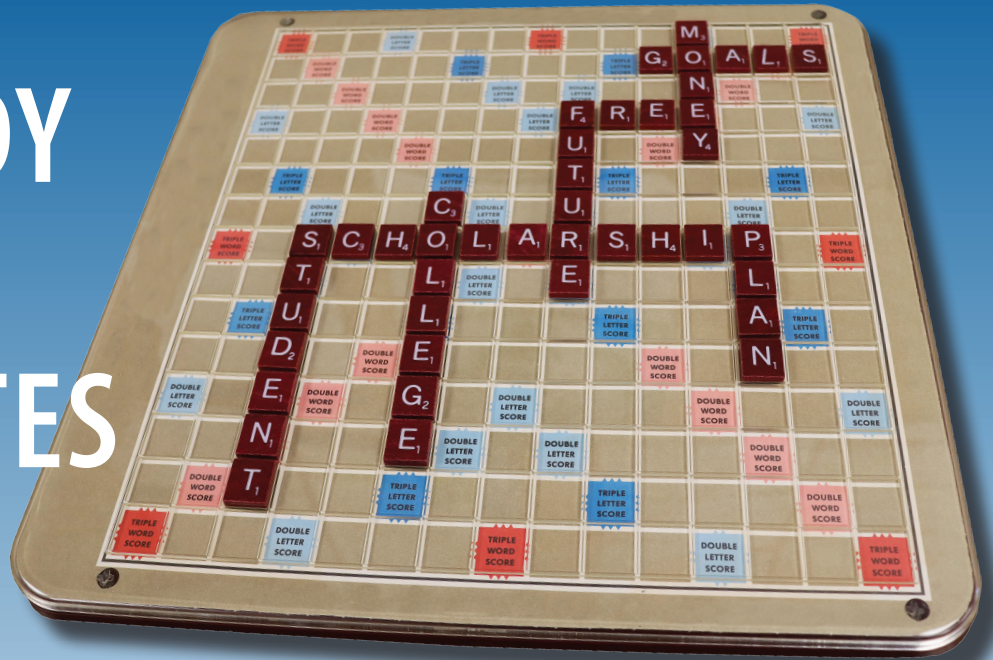


GET READY 2025 GRADUATES

**Scholarship
 applications
 are now available**



Graphic by: Katie Jagiello (910800)

Would 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. These funds have no impact on members' bills. 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.

Deadline

Completed scholarship applications should be at OEC's office no later than Wednesday, February 12, 2025.

Recipients will be asked to attend the cooperative's Annual Meeting on April 12, 2025 to receive recognition from the membership.

Questions?

Information can be found at www.ocontoelectric.com. If you have questions, you can also call OEC at 800-472-8410 or email bfictron@ocontoelectric.com.

20 YEARS OF CHARITABLE GIVING

Co-op principle number seven: commitment to community. Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) employees really take this principle to heart. In 2004, employees of OEC awarded their first donation to Community Healthcare Foundation (HSHS St. Clare) towards an MRI unit. Since 2004, the OEC Employee Charity has awarded \$206,500 to charities and organizations.

The grants were made possible in part through fundraising and from CoBank, one of the co-op's lenders, who will match funds as part of its Sharing Success Grant program.

We look forward to continuing giving in 2025. Grant applications can be found at www.ocontoelectric.com. Grant deadline is February 7, 2025.



In May, Victory Olympics was held at Zippel Park in Gillett. Victory Olympics invites students in all grades with cognitive and/or physical disabilities from Oconto and surrounding counties to participate in a day of Olympic like games. Pictured is OEC employee Robin Banaszynski (L) and Victory Olympics representative Jane Gondek (R).



The Oconto Falls American Legion Eick-Sankey Post 302 was awarded \$5,000 to upgrade uniforms for their Honor Guards to be worn when providing military funeral services.



The Nurse's Nook program provides students in Oconto County with basic needs and other resources to improve their overall health, wellness, and school attendance. We awarded them \$7,500 to help support their program.

<u>2004</u>	Community Healthcare Foundation (MRI Unit) — \$1,200
<u>2005</u>	Oconto Area Humane Society — \$2,500
<u>2006</u>	Kingdom Come Food Pantry — \$1,000
<u>2007</u>	Friends of the Oconto Falls Firefighters — \$1,200
<u>2008</u>	Oconto County K9 Unit — \$3,000
<u>2009</u>	Oconto County Home Respite Care — \$2,400
<u>2010</u>	Oconto County Chapter DAV — \$2,200
<u>2011</u>	Old Glory Honor Flight — \$3,500
<u>2012</u>	St. Anthony Fire Fund — \$9,000
<u>2013</u>	Panther Pride — \$10,000
<u>2014</u>	Lena Tech Ed — \$5,000 Gillett Tech Ed — \$2,500 Coleman Tech Ed — \$2,500
<u>2015</u>	Lena Public Library — \$5,000 Little Hearts for Life, Inc. — \$5,000
<u>2016</u>	Lena Area Volunteer Fire Department — \$6,000 Rainbow House — \$6,000
<u>2017</u>	Old Glory Honor Flight — \$7,000 Patriot Guard Riders — \$7,000
<u>2018</u>	Bridge the Gap, Inc. — \$7,000 Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin — \$7,000
<u>2019</u>	Meals on Wheels Program — \$8,500 Oconto County Law Enforcement — \$8,500
<u>2020</u>	Little River Fire Department — \$10,000 Morgan-Green Valley Fire Company — \$10,000
<u>2021</u>	Abrams Fire Department — \$5,000 Oconto Falls Area Cycling Coalition — \$5,000 Under Hill Volunteer Fire Department — \$5,000 Shawano Area Matthew 25, Inc. — \$5,000
<u>2022</u>	New View Industries — \$10,000 Sportsman with Heart — \$10,000
<u>2023</u>	Oconto County Youth Fair — \$7,500 Oconto River Kids — \$7,500 Oconto Falls Youth Baseball/Softball — \$5,000
<u>2024</u>	Victory Olympics — \$1,000 American Legion Eick-Sankey Post 302 — \$5,000 The Nurses Nook — \$7,500



HELP SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE FOR 2025

Auto Pay is free, secure, and guarantees your payment will be made on time, every time. After the initial setup, you won't have to spend any time paying your bill each month and will have more time for other activities.

Sign up by January 31 for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit.

We're giving away two \$50 bill credits: one to existing Auto Pay enrolled members prior to January 1 and one to NEW Auto Pay members who enroll within the month of January.

**Members currently enrolled in Auto Pay are already entered and do not need to do anything.*



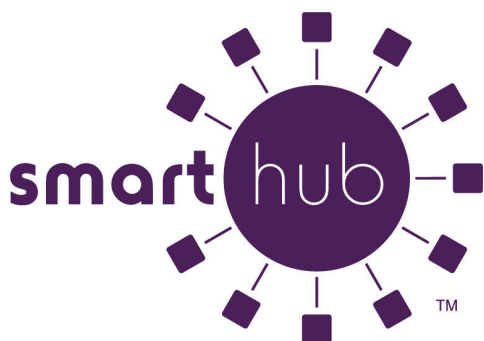
Enter drawing by signing up for Auto Pay within SmartHub:

Sign into SmartHub > Click Bill & Pay > Auto Pay Program

Don't have SmartHub? Sign up today by scanning the QR code on the bottom of the page. SmartHub provides a convenient and FREE way to access your account via your computer, tablet, or mobile device.

For additional questions or assistance, call 1-800-472-8410 Monday-Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Employees and directors of Oconto Electric Cooperative are not eligible.



The Center of Customer Engagement

SmartHub provides convenient account access and two-way communication to OEC online or via your mobile device. Manage payments, notify customer service for account and service issues, check your usage and receive special messaging from OEC all at the touch of a button.

- Bill reminders
- Safe and secure
- Contact customer service
- Bill payment
- Service usage details
- Free



Account Management at your Fingertips



Safe & Secure



SmartHub provides a safe and secure environment for bill payments and transaction between OEC and your financial institution.

How do I get SmartHub?

From your device or computer, go to www.ocontoelectric.com. Click on the SmartHub icon.

iOS Users



Scan this QR code to access SmartHub in the Apple iTunes App Store.

Android Users



Scan this QR code to access SmartHub in the Android market.



Safety Achievement

Safety first is priority number one when keeping our employees, members, and the community safe. Oconto Electric Cooperative participates in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) to help stress the importance of electrical safety.

Monthly safety meetings are held for our employees where they complete training on a variety of safety topics and equipment testing. One meeting a year is dedicated to linemen pole top and bucket rescue training.

Every three years RESAP representatives will show up unannounced to do in-depth inspections of the co-op's safety records, facilities, equipment, underground and over head lines. RESAP visited OEC this year and we passed with very high marks.

Pictured (L to R) are: Katie Jagiello, CEO Ryan Miller, Amy Winkler and Kriss Krause who were instrumental in ensuring OEC's compliance with all safety measures.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Taking steps to help your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills. Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains or other items. (1182000) Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks to form. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions.

Source: energy.gov

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 Leonard and Lois Zaidel, Lena and Francis Toutloff, Krakow.



Ryan Miller, CEO

Katie Jagiello, Communications and Marketing

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

Hours of Operation: 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Hours of Lobby: 9:00 a.m.– 3 p.m. Friday

Non-emergencies: 920-846-2816

Emergencies & outages: Toll FREE 800-472-8410
24 hours a day, 7 days a week