

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

February 2026



**Oakdale Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

THE FEMA **EMERGENCY**

SUPPLY CHAIN STILL A CHALLENGE

COME HAVE A PIECE OF CAKE

KIDS AND CRITTERS





MY CO-OP



RELIABILITY REQUIRES INVESTMENT

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

As your local power provider, Oakdale Electric Cooperative's mission has always been simple: keep the lights on and support the communities we serve. But behind every switch, every warm home and every business that opens its doors is a complex system that requires constant care. Reliable electricity doesn't happen by accident. It requires continual investment in our local grid—through system repairs, maintenance, upgrades and the integration of new technologies that help us operate smarter and more efficiently.

Much of the energy system we rely on today was built years ago. While it continues to serve us well, age alone means that components must be repaired or replaced to maintain performance and safety. From poles and wires to transformers and substations, every part of the grid has a lifespan. Routine maintenance helps extend that lifespan, but eventually equipment must be updated to meet modern standards. These proactive investments reduce the likelihood of outages, shorten restoration times when disruptions do occur and create a stronger backbone for our growing communities.

The demands on the electric grid are also evolving. Homes and businesses today use more electricity than ever, and that trend will only continue. Electric vehicles, advanced HVAC systems, smart appliances and new commercial facilities add load to the local distribution system. As these technologies take hold, the grid must be able to support increased demand while maintaining the reliability our members expect.

At the same time, new technologies are reshaping how we operate. Tools such as automated switching devices, drones and advanced monitoring systems allow us to detect problems faster and respond more effectively. These technologies can isolate problems, reroute power to minimize outages and provide real-time data that helps us plan and maintain equipment more efficiently.

Implementing innovative technologies into the grid is not just a convenience—it is a necessity for ensuring reliability in an increasingly complex energy landscape.

While these improvements require thoughtful planning and financial investment, the return is significant. A stronger grid supports economic growth, improves service quality and enhances safety for our crews and community. Most importantly, it ensures that the essential power you rely on is available whenever you need it.

Our commitment to reliability runs deeper than infrastructure alone. It reflects our responsibility to the people and communities we serve. Every upgrade, every repair and every technology we deploy is an investment in your daily life—from the comfort of your home to the success of local businesses and schools.

We know that powering our communities means preparing for the future, not just maintaining the present. By investing in our local grid today, we are building the foundation for a brighter, more resilient tomorrow.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY VEGETATION MAINTENANCE NOTICE

Tree Clearing/Trimming and Brush Control within Mather and Plymouth Areas

Members in the Mather and Plymouth areas received a letter from Oakdale Electric Cooperative in early December 2025 notifying of vegetation maintenance in 2026 to perform work on trees that are too close to power lines. This is a free service that is provided to maintain safe and reliable electric service.

Contracted tree trimming crews include Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC and Zielies Tree Services. Crews may need to access the work by driving on members' property. Vehicles will utilize the utility right-of-way or other established roads or lanes which may exist.



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NOMINATE A LOCAL VOLUNTEER FOR A CHANCE AT \$20!

Do you know someone committed to the community and always available to lend a helping hand? Nominate them for Oakdale Electric Cooperative's Selfless Service Award for a chance at a \$20 bill credit.

The Selfless Service Award Nomination Contest is a reoccurring contest for each quarter. To be eligible, you must be an Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) member with an active account. The nominee does not have to be an OEC member. Once the award recipient is selected, the OEC member nominator of the awarded recipient will be notified and receive a \$20 bill credit.

Nominations for quarter one must be submitted by **March 15, 2026**.

Scan the QR code for more information or to complete a nomination form.

Contest Rules:

- ONE entry per account number.
- Employees, directors, as well as immediate family of Oakdale Electric Cooperative, are not eligible to receive the \$20 bill credit.



2025 Selfless Service Award Recipients:



Oliver Whitten



Dan Rux



Kari Preuss

This award is presented to individuals who engage in community volunteerism, performing valuable services that benefit and improve quality of life within the communities served by OEC. The award, a \$250 check and plaque, will be presented to one individual on a quarterly basis.

Awards will not be granted, for example, to:

- An individual in a paid position with a nonprofit organization
- A volunteer who assists another individual (i.e. lawn mowing, snow shoveling, etc.)
- Self-nominations

ADJUSTING TO DEMAND CHARGE

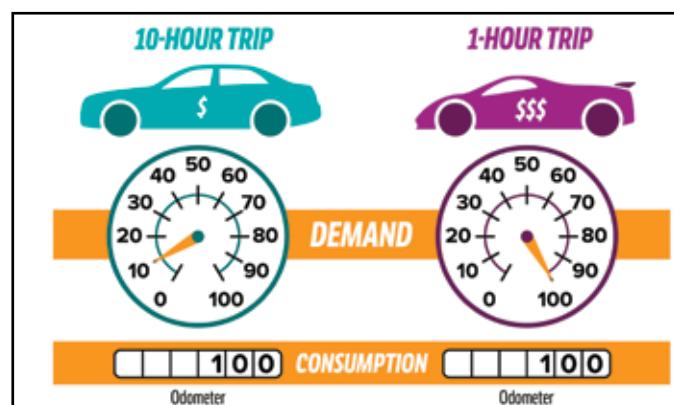
Members will be receiving January energy statements that reflect the latest demand charge for the highest power usage during a 15-minute period within that month at the amount of \$0.25 per kW. This charge is to fairly allocate cost to each member's demand on the electrical grid and aligns with how Oakdale Electric Cooperative is billed by their wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative.

Energy demand is expressed as "kW" or "kilowatts" and is defined as the rate at which a member consumes electricity at a given time. When demand is high, supply can become an issue due to electricity being generated on real-time demand of those who consume it. For example, think of electricity like a car. The speedometer measures the

maximum speed the car can travel, much like demand (kW) measures the amount of energy used at one time. The odometer measures distance traveled, much like the consumption kilowatt-hour (kWh) measures energy used. The illustration shows how two cars could travel the same 100-mile

road, one at 10 mph for 10 hours and the other at 100 mph for one hour. It requires more horsepower to power the car at 100 mph than it does to power the one going only 10 mph.

To assist residential members forecast



their demand and understand the various appliances that affect the charge, an Energy Demand Calculator can be found on the co-op's website under the Understanding Your Bill and Electric Rates pages.

EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS

Employee service awards are a celebration of the hard work and dedication of cooperative employees reaching milestones in their years of service. Oakdale Electric Cooperative would not be operable without the dedication of its employees.



Chad Schauf - IT Director,
25 years



Brock Brown - Area Service
Foreman, 20 years



Dane Pasch - Area Service
Foreman, 20 years



Kurt Starkey - Construction
Foreman, 20 years



Chris Tackmann - General
Manager & CEO, 5 years



CALLING ALL
THIRD-GRADERS:

You're invited to participate in the
Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association's

ELECTRICAL SAFETY POSTER CONTEST

Submit an original poster supporting electrical safety to your local electric cooperative by **April 30, 2026**, for a chance to win a **\$25 gift card**! The top three posters will be entered into the statewide poster contest for a chance to win one of three great prizes:

- 1st place – Chromebook**
- 2nd place – \$100 Gift Card**
- 3rd place – \$75 Gift Card**



Posters should be at least 8.5x11 inches, but no larger than 11x14 inches.

Entries must include completed entry form and student's name on the back of the poster.

Contact your local electric cooperative or go to www.weca.coop for registration forms.



Chronicles of the Co-op

1946-1956

This month to celebrate Oakdale Electric Cooperative's 90th anniversary, we'll take a closer look at the co-op's accomplishments from 1946 to 1956.

1946 – To ensure reliability of early constructed lines, tree-trimming near powerlines was implemented and continues to be an effective practice to improve service and reduce power outages.

1948 – The co-op launched into a power use program, tailored to supply its members with reputable merchandise and to maintain the electrical appliances and equipment.

1950 – Willie Wiredhand was "born" on October 30, 1950, created by artist Andrew "Drew" McClay as the mascot for America's electric cooperatives.

1951 – Willie Wiredhand was officially adopted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). His name and design (socket head, plug body) represented the essential, tireless help electricity provided to farmers and rural communities, a vital "wired hand".

1954 – To keep up with the growing membership needs, a warehouse was constructed to house materials.



1955 – Appliance education continues with an appliance tent at the county fair.



1947 – For the first two years of existence, the co-op maintained an "office" in the front room of the Walter Niebuhr home in Oakdale. Well into 1939, the co-op operated out of a small and cramped Dahle tourist cottage, which prompted a new headquarters.

The new headquarters building was completed in May of 1947, and was dedicated by REA Administrator Claude Wickard on July 6.



1949 – While 800 signed members looked out on only miles of poles in the air, there was little conductor to string on them. It wasn't until Wisconsin Electric Cooperative broke the aluminum conductor bottleneck.

1952-1953 – Various appliance demonstrations were given to educate members on available appliances through the co-op's power use program.



1956 – With the blessings of the board of directors, through the leadership of Manager Lloyd McCaskey, he developed a strong tie between the community and the cooperative.

McCaskey organized Oakdale Electric Cooperative's junior board of directors with the valuable assistance of agricultural and educational leaders in the counties served by the cooperative.



Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

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Jackie McGlin, Editor



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

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Office Hours: Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

24-Hour Emergency Power Restoration: 800-927-6151

Toll-free Online Bill Payment 855-938-3610

Diggers Hotline: For underground cable locates and power line clearance information, call 800-242-8511.