

Since 1940

# WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* May 2025 NEWS



Oakdale Electric  
Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## FORAGE FOR FUN AT THE MUSCODA MOREL MUSHROOM FESTIVAL

COOPERATIVE FAMILY FUND

TIPS TO BEAT THE ENERGY PEAK

BEEF RECIPES





# WE'RE READY FOR STORM SEASON. ARE YOU?

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

Now that summer is almost here, I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warm weather, especially after the cold, wet, and windy spring that we have had. Summer brings many favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the water, and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

But summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. These potential weather events can cause issues with our electric system, but I want you to know that Oakdale Electric's crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur.

When major storms knock out power, our crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials.
- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages, and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener, and a portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

If you plan to use a generator during a prolonged outage, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely. Also, please make sure to contact us if you have one so that our crews are aware of it while restoring your power. More information about generators can be found on page 18 in the Plugged-In feature.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check Oakdale's SmartHub app, website, and social media sites for power restoration updates.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for our crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies

can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects. Sign up for NOAA emergency alerts and warnings, and follow us on social media to stay abreast of power restoration efforts and other important news and information.

I hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict the weather. At Oakdale Electric Cooperative, we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning. I hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.

## MORE THAN A FEW CANS OF SOUP...

Which Foods Are In Your Emergency Kit?



### THE FOOD IN YOUR EMERGENCY KIT SHOULD:

- Have a long storage life.
- Require little or no cooking, water or refrigeration.
- Include nourishment for infants and toddlers if applicable.
- Meet special dietary needs.
- Include the needs of pets if you have them.

### WATER AND PREP ITEMS

Include in your supplies:

- One gallon of water per person per day to last at least three days.
- A manual can opener and cooking supplies.
- Indoor warming methods, such as chafing dishes and fondue pots.

### EMERGENCY STASH

Plan for several days' worth of food for each person in your household. Edible items could include:

- Canned meats, fruits and vegetables.
- Grains, such as crackers and multigrain cereals.
- Protein or fruit bars.
- Dried fruit.
- Peanut butter.
- Canned soups, meats and beans.
- Powdered milk.
- Dried meat/jerky.
- Oatmeal or breakfast bars.

**BE PREPARED TO KEEP THOSE YOU LOVE SAFE, NOURISHED AND HYDRATED DURING AN EMERGENCY.**

# WELCOME NEW OEC EMPLOYEES



## Mackenzie Myers

Member Relations Specialist

Mackenzie joined the co-op in March as a Member Relations Specialist. She has a background in business where she was most recently employed at Gundersen Health System as the Regional Business Office Coordinator. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, camping, and spending time with family and friends, as well as going shopping.

## Jeremey Brown

Technology Specialist

Jeremey is the new Technology Specialist and joined the co-op in April. He holds a degree in network systems administration from Western Technical College, a certificate in cybersecurity, and comes from D&S Manufacturing where he was the IT Systems Administrator. In his spare time, Jeremey enjoys camping and fishing with his wife and two sons, along with playing guitar and reading a good book.



## UPDATE YOUR ACCOUNT INFORMATION

To help us better serve you it is important to keep your account information up to date. This includes your contact phone number, mailing address, and email address. From outage reporting to capital credit disbursement, keeping your account information up to date is essential.

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_



### Call

Dial 1-800-241-2468 Monday – Friday between 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. and speak to a co-op employee directly.



### Scan

Scan the QR code to take you directly to the Update Account Information form on our website.



### Click

Update information through SmartHub by following these steps: Log in to SmartHub > Settings > Contact Information



### Clip

Complete the form on the left and include with your next payment.





Community Sharing Pantry Volunteers L-R: Zak Gray, James Gray, Deb Spencer, Randy Gray, Phil Spencer, Oliver Whitten, Emma Palmer, Peggy Van Pee, Kathleen Hazel, and Deb Palmer.

## AVID VOLUNTEER AT 13 YEARS OLD, OLIVER WHITTEN IS RECOGNIZED FOR HIS SELFLESS SERVICE TO HIS COMMUNITY



Individualized, Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Academic Discovery is the definition of an iLEAD Charter School that provides a curriculum that has inspired one special young man to go the extra mile. Oliver Whitten volunteers on a regular basis at the Community Sharing Pantry in Mauston, has led two donation drives for the food pantry, and offers services to campers at the Yukon Trails Campground in Lyndon Station.

At 13 years old, Oliver Whitten is positively impacting his community and has proudly been recognized as Oakdale Electric Cooperative's latest Selfless Service Award recipient. Oliver was nominated for the award by Emma Palmer who is a committed volunteer at the Community Sharing Pantry. Emma first met Oliver when his school brought students over to help sort food and stock shelves. From there, Oliver took such a liking to it that he is now a regular volunteer and initiates more ideas to help the community.

Oliver saw a need for spices to be handed out to families, something that isn't regularly donated to the food pantry. Through contacting local businesses, help from his school, and him personally visiting businesses, Oliver's ambition brought in over 60 pounds of spices ranging from salt and pepper to garlic and onion powder. This in turn led to one bottle of spice given to every family ranging from 200 to 250 families served monthly. Emma Palmer said, "Oliver actually came down sick for most of the spice drive, which made him sad he missed out on some of it but that fueled his ambition toward a second collection drive." He is currently collecting health and beauty products for the food pantry. Festival Foods in Mauston has a donation box, Bank of Mauston gave a monetary donation,

along with assistance from other businesses, school, and family.

Kathy Green, who manages the food pantry, was also a Selfless Service Award recipient in 2022. "This is our third student that I've known in the last ten years that have had a passion in helping others and you can see he puts his whole heart into it," stated Kathy. Oliver has also helped Kathy with the Holiday Train where he's dressed up and handed out hot chocolate. In under three months, he has conducted two collection drives for the pantry on his own. "Between his own initiative, school, family, and volunteers at the pantry, he is extremely driven and will succeed at anything he puts his mind to," said Kathy.

Although Oliver has volunteered at the food pantry for about two years, his service to others didn't start there. He and his family camp at Yukon Trails Resort in Lyndon Station and this year will be their sixth summer. Oliver assists other camping residents by mowing lawns, getting groceries, taking trips to the laundry mat, delivering campfire wood, and more. Oliver's mom Samantha and dad Steven are two very supportive and proud parents. Samantha mentioned, "I'm just so proud of him, he really loves helping others."

At 13 years old, Oliver is showing the Mauston area community what selflessness truly means. With a true passion for serving and helping others, Oliver is officially the youngest Selfless Service Award recipient since the program's inception in 2021. A humble teenager, Oliver's response to receiving the award was, "I just help whoever and wherever I can."



# PLUGGED IN

## Generators—what to know before purchasing one.

When it comes to installing a standby home generator in the event of a power interruption, proper installation and safety are most important. Choosing the right generator as well as having the proper equipment installed is something only a professional should handle. Hiring a licensed master electrician to install the proper equipment is essential in making sure that the safety of our line workers and public is achieved, as well as mitigating the risk of damaging your home.

A generator that is improperly installed can cause back feed, which is when the generator sends power back through the transformer onto the cooperative's lines. If the proper equipment isn't in place, a situation can be created, causing the line to be energized to its full potential of 7,200 volts. In turn, a scenario is then created which can be very dangerous, if not even fatal, for an employee of Oakdale Electric working to restore your power, or a member of the public that comes into contact with a downed power line.

Ensuring everyone returns home safely every day is a safety protocol here at Oakdale Electric and with your help of properly installing a generator, you help us achieve this standard as well.

We ask that members with generators contact our office at 1-800-241-2468 so we can note this for safety purposes.



**Matt Riggs**  
Engineering Services Director



## DRAWING DEADLINE APPROACHING!

### *15 Lucky Members Will Receive a \$50 Gift Card*

Submit a qualifying energy-saving incentive between March 1 and May 30, 2025, to be entered for a chance to win a \$50 Kwik Trip fuel only gift card.

Incentive forms must be received by the co-op by 4:00 p.m. **Friday, May 30, 2025.**

Drawing will take place on Monday, June 2, 2025. Winners will be contacted via phone and be mailed their gift card. Employees, directors, as well as immediate family of Oakdale Electric Cooperative, are not eligible.

#### Incentives available for:

- Appliance Recycling
- ENERGY STAR® Appliances
- Electric Water Heaters
- HVAC
- Lighting




View the incentive forms at [www.oakdalerec.coop/incentives](http://www.oakdalerec.coop/incentives), scan the QR code, or call 608-372-4131 Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for additional questions.



## Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO


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608-372-4131 • 800-241-2468

 [info@oakdalerec.coop](mailto:info@oakdalerec.coop)

## Jackie McGlin, Editor



**Oakdale Electric  
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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.