



SAVE A LIFE: Avoid Distractions While Driving

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

Some temptations are hard to resist. While driving, we typically hear that “ding” on our phone, alerting us to a text or call coming through, and we sometimes feel the urgent need to check it. We know we shouldn’t, but we reason that we’re going to make an exception—just this once.

So, why do we do this? According to AAA research, most people feel they are better-than-average drivers. After all, we have busy lives and are accustomed to multitasking. But mounds of research and thousands of deaths every year prove otherwise.

August is Back to School Safety Month. As a new school year begins with young drivers and school buses back on the road, I thought it would be a good time to remind everyone, including myself, of the dangers of distracted driving.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one of every 10 fatal crashes in the United States involves distracted driving, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths annually. I find this statistic heartbreaking considering so many of these accidents could easily be avoided if we’d simply put down our phones while driving.

Distracted driving is considered any activity that diverts our attention, including texting or talking on the phone, and adjusting the navigation or entertainment system. Texting is by far one of the most dangerous distractions. Sending or reading one text takes your eyes off the road for an average of five seconds. At 55 mph, that’s like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

In addition to refraining from texting while driving, we can help keep the roads safe by moving over for first responders and other emergency vehicles. Additionally, if you see utility crews conducting work near the roadside,

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I’d encourage you to move over when possible and give them extra space to perform their work safely.

At Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC), safety is foremost in everything we do—for our employees and the members of the communities we serve. We routinely remind our crews of the dangers of distracted driving, and we hope you’ll have similar conversations with your teens who may be new to the roadways and are especially susceptible to the lure of technology.

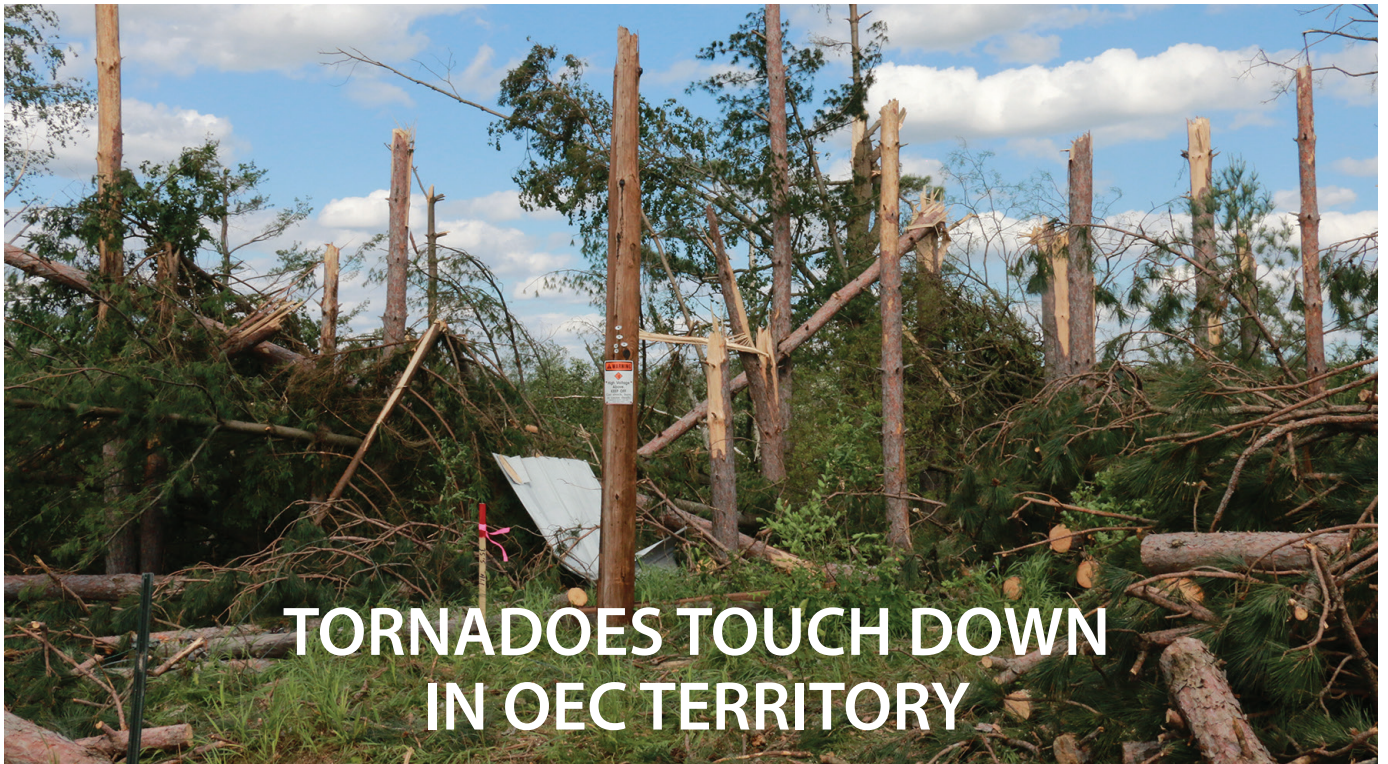
Let’s work together to keep everyone safe on the roads. Remember: that text can wait, and waiting just might save a life.

Also, as a reminder, OEC is participating in National Night Out in Tomah at Recreation Park and Necedah at the Lion’s Park on August 2, 2022, from 4 – 8 p.m. Stop by our booths for information on electric safety.

Play it safe. That text can wait.



While driving, turn phone to silent mode or pull over if the text can’t wait.



TORNADOES TOUCH DOWN IN OEC TERRITORY

The Sixth Co-op Principle, Cooperation Among Cooperatives, was exercised after tornadoes touched down in OEC territory in June.

On Wednesday, June 15, 2022, an EF2-rated tornado passed through Tomah, Oakdale, and Wyeville with 115 mph winds that tracked nearly 21 miles. Strong winds and rain penetrated through other parts of Oakdale Electric Cooperative's (OEC) territory, with the hardest hit areas being in Monroe and Juneau counties. OEC crews were dispatched at 4:07 p.m. to begin power restoration.

The storm front continued across OEC territory with extensive damage to areas in Oakdale, Wyeville, Mather, Mauston, and Lyndon Station. A total of 72 outages impacted 7,081 OEC members. A damaged transmission line on US Hwy 12-16 from OEC's generation and transmission supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), impacted 3,361 OEC members. Highest outage reports by substation were: Mather, 1,491; Lyndon Station, 1,201; and Oakdale, 1,130.

Two additional crews were called in through the cooperative's mutual assistance program known as ROPE (Restoration of Power in an Emergency). Vernon Electric Cooperative (Westby) and Riverland Energy Cooperative (Holmen) both sent four journeymen linemen to assist. Zielies

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Tree Service and members from Ho-Chunk Nation assisted in tree removal, which aided in power restoration. M. J. Electric restored the transmission line on US Hwy 12-16.

"A tornado hasn't hit OEC territory in 22 years," stated Construction Foreman Joe Engel. He added, "Safety was at top-of-mind when working through the destruction. We're fortunate—it could have been a lot worse."

Crews replaced 29 poles, strung 13,200 feet of new wire, and fully restored power at 3:21 p.m. on Friday, June 17, 2022.

"The sixth co-op principle was implemented—Cooperation Among Cooperatives—and we can't thank our crews, Vernon Electric Cooperative, and Riverland Energy Cooperative enough for assisting in restoration for OEC membership," said General Manager & CEO Chris Tackmann. "We are proud to have a membership and communities that come together in times of devastation and the gratitude to the co-op does not go unnoticed, thank you."



ROPE crews listed from left: Riverland Energy Journeymen Linemen: Dillon Marten, Marc Mades, Josh Abramczak, and Pete Boos. Vernon Electric Journeymen Linemen: Zack Taylor, Andy Lee, Kabel Kubarski, and Brenton Fleming.

Recent Operation Round Up Trust Fund Donations

A total of \$4,300 was donated back into the communities at the June Operation Round Up Trust Board of Directors meeting.



- Friends of Lone Rock School, Inc.
- Children's Miracle Network
- Monroe County Association for Home & Community Education
- Families First of Monroe County
- City Point Volunteer Fire Department
- Town of Lincoln Fire Department
- St. James Catholic Church Food Pantry
- Ecumenical Bread Basket Food Pantry
- Elroy Emergency Food Pantry
- Mauston Community Sharing Pantry
- Couleecap Monroe County Food Pantry
- Necedah Food Pantry
- Neighbor for Neighbor Food Pantry
- New Lisbon Food Pantry
- Ontario Food Pantry
- PANS
- Reedsburg Area Food Pantry
- Wilton Food Pantry
- Wonewoc Union Center Food Pantry

SMALL CHANGE THAT CHANGES LIVES

Are you looking for a way to give back to your community? Operation Round Up is a program that gives back to the community through members who voluntarily round up their energy bill to the nearest dollar each month. Donation average per member is approximately \$6 per year.

Thanks to the generosity of 2,100 cooperative members, over **\$100,000** has been given back to our local communities since the program's inception in 2002.

Who decides on how the money is spent? The Operation Round Up Trust Board of Directors is composed of seven Oakdale Electric Cooperative members: Colleen Woggon, Kendall; Pat Christensen, Nekoosa; Al Bernhardt, Tomah; Lillian Jorgensen, Camp Douglas; Sandy Chroninger, Tomah; Sue Rezin, Warrens; and Robin Hiles, Wisconsin Rapids. The Trust board meets at least four times a year to review applications.

What type of donations are made with Operation Round Up funds? According to its bylaws, the Trust board may make donations to any worthwhile community cause, except for political purposes or to pay electric bills. The current mission statement of the Operation Round Up Trust allows for donations to be made for food, clothing, shelter, equipment, medical, and educational needs.

Donations may be made to any individual in need or organization within the five counties (Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, Sauk, Wood) served by Oakdale Electric Cooperative.

HOW TO APPLY FOR TRUST FUNDS

Applications can be found on our website at www.oakdalerec.com/operation-round. Applications are designated for either an individual or an organization in need. The correct form must be completed and mailed by **August 11, 2022**, to be reviewed in the third quarter.

Mail to: Oakdale Electric Cooperative
Operation Round Up
PO Box 40
Oakdale, WI 54649



Right: Operation Round Up Trust Board of Directors donated \$2,600 to 13 local food pantries. Pictured from left: Lillian Jorgensen, Pat Christensen, Sandy Chroninger, Al Bernhardt, Robin Hiles, and Colleen Woggon.



OEC DONATES TO PURPLE HEART HIGHWAY PROJECT

Oakdale Electric Cooperative presented a donation to Necedah VFW Post 10231 for the Purple Heart Highway Project. The project will consist of the fallen soldier statue and nine black granite stones with names of all the servicemen who were wounded or fallen from Necedah, dating back to the Civil War. Gov. Tony Evers designated Highway 21 from Sparta to Oshkosh as a Purple Heart Memorial Highway, with Necedah being the heart on that highway stretch. The first phase of the project will begin in August, with five stones to be completed by the end of November 2022.



Pictured from left: Billy Rattle, OEC Communications Specialist Jackie McGlin, Ken Hornburg, Ed Hanson, John Montgomery, Don Briggs, Dave Saunders, and Kenneth Murphy.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM, ADRIAN

Adrian Gebhardt joined Oakdale Electric on July 11 as an apprentice lineman. Adrian was born and raised in Tomah and completed his Electrical Power Distribution degree from Chippewa Valley Technical College – Eau Claire in 2017.

A familiar face at OEC, Adrian was a summer lineworker in 2017. Through the Missouri Valley Line Constructors Apprenticeship and Training Program, he has worked and traveled to multiple different states spanning from Louisiana to Massachusetts.

“The people and line crews at OEC were super helpful and respected that I was still learning the trade during my first year as an apprentice. With working across the country in many different



states, I have been trying to make my way back here and I finally did, which I’m super excited and fortunate for,” stated Adrian.

OEC is proud to have Adrian join the team as he works on completing the final fourth step of his apprenticeship.

SAVE the DATE

Oakdale Electric Cooperative's
Member
Appreciation Day
Saturday, October 15
Watch for more details

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

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Jackie McGlin, Editor



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

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 866-392-4307

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