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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

August 2026



**Oakdale Electric
Cooperative**

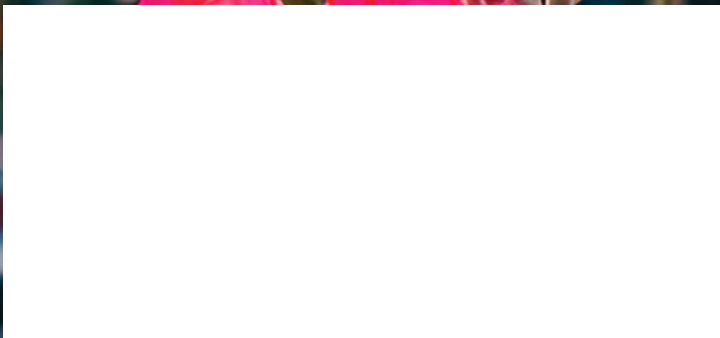
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

FRESH FLOWER FIELDS AND FARMS

A LEGACY OF INDEPENDENCE

IT ALL STARTS WITH "WHY?"

WATERMELON RECIPES



**Oakdale Electric Cooperative**Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

August is typically one of the warmest months of the year, and that means air conditioners across our community are working overtime to keep homes comfortable. During periods of extreme heat, many members may see an increase in their electric bill and wonder what factors contribute to the cost of electricity.

At Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC), we believe understanding your electric bill is an important part of being an informed member. While the total amount due may seem like a single number, it actually reflects several different costs associated with delivering reliable electricity to your home or business.

The largest factor is often the amount of energy you use. Electricity is measured in kilowatt hours (kWh), and the more energy your household consumes, the higher your bill will be. During the summer, air conditioning is typically the largest driver of increased energy use. When temperatures climb into the 90s or higher, our cooling systems run longer and more frequently, consuming significantly more electricity than they do during milder weather.

A great tool available to members is SmartHub. The free service allows you to view usage on a daily basis and even set up usage alerts to keep you informed of your energy consumption. The graphic below is an example of energy consumption in July 2025, on the desktop version of SmartHub. Contact our office for an OEC employee to walk you through creating an account.



Energy consumption in July 2025 shown in SmartHub.

Another major factor is the cost of generating or purchasing electricity. Like many cooperatives, OEC purchases power from Dairyland Power Cooperative. The cost of producing electricity fluctuates based on fuel prices, including natural gas, coal and other energy resources used to generate power. Changes in wholesale power costs influence the price of electricity delivered to members.

Transmission costs also play a role. Before electricity reaches your home, it must travel across a network of high-voltage transmission lines that connect power plants to local distribution systems. Transmission equipment requires ongoing maintenance and upgrades to ensure reliability, especially as electricity demand continues to grow.

Closer to home, OEC maintains the local electric distribution system—utility poles, power lines, transformers, substations and other essential equipment that safely delivers power to members. Maintaining this equipment is covered through the monthly facility charge. This is a flat daily fee all members pay, regardless of how much electricity they use. This fixed fee ensures all members pay a fair share of the basic operational costs required to keep the power grid reliable and ready to serve your home or business. Whether a member uses a little electricity or a lot, we must maintain infrastructure and have crews, equipment and resources available to provide electricity around the clock.

Summer temperatures can also influence costs in less obvious ways. When the demand for electricity is high across a region, wholesale power prices can increase. Utilities and grid operators must ensure enough generation is available to meet peak demand, and those costs can be reflected throughout the electric system.

The good news is that simple steps to lower energy use can make a meaningful difference. Setting your thermostat a few degrees higher when you're away, replacing dirty HVAC filters, using ceiling fans only when the room is occupied, sealing air leaks and avoiding the use of major appliances during the hottest parts of the day can help reduce energy consumption, lower your bill and reduce strain on the local grid during peak demand.

OEC's mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity while being transparent about the factors that impact energy costs. We understand every dollar matters, and we are committed to making smart investments that keep the lights on and support the communities we serve.

If you ever have questions about your electric bill or co-op programs designed to help you save, please reach out. We're here to help you make informed decisions that work for your household.

Celebrating 90 Years!

**Member Appreciation Day****Wednesday, October 7**
4-7 p.m.**OEC Headquarters**489 N Oakwood St. on Hwy PP, just north
of I90/I94 in OakdaleDinner from The Meat Shop, LLC., ice cream
sandwiches, gifts, balloon artist, face painting, flu
vaccine clinic, drawings, and more!

YOU ARE THE KEY TO YOUR SAFETY

Oakdale Electric Cooperative responds to an average of 12 car accidents involving electrical equipment each year. We all think it will never happen to us, but it can, and in an instant. Whether it is a vehicle that veered off the road or farming machinery, people can become dangerously close or enter electricity's path to the ground.

Knowing what to do in that situation can save your life and potentially others who may not be aware of the situation. Review the Q&A below to know what to do in this circumstance.

Q: What should I do if I am in an accident involving a power line or a pad-mounted transformer (metal cabinet or green box)?

A: DO NOT get out of your vehicle. It is always safer to remain inside a vehicle, which acts as an insulator and keeps you out of the path of stray electricity. Call 911 and tell the dispatcher that a downed power line or other electrical equipment is involved. The power company personnel will then be dispatched to the scene to deenergize the power.

Q: Is there any reason I should exit the vehicle?

A: Yes, but only when your vehicle is on fire or you see smoke. If that is the case, make a clean jump from the vehicle with your feet together, and without touching the vehicle. Then hop with your feet together or shuffle keeping your feet on the ground and not separated by more than an inch



as far as you can, 50 or more feet away is preferred. This is due to the step potential which is the voltage difference between a person's two feet when standing near an energized, grounded object, like a downed power line.

Q: What else can I do?

A: Roll your window down and yell to others not to approach the scene. They could be shocked or electrocuted if they walk or run over the energized area or touch anything that is energized.

It is highly recommended to watch the "License to Live" video that teaches the vital, life-saving lessons talked about above in a short educational video.

Scan the QR code or visit safeelectricity.org/license-to-live!

License to Live



safeelectricity.org



Last Call FOR YOUR BEST SHOTS!

Submit your three best photos to the **Member Photo Contest** by **Friday, August 14, 2026.**

Photo winners will receive a \$25 Co-op Cash card and \$50 Co-op Cash card for the cover winner.

Note that two or more photos submitted must be from two different seasons.

For contest details, visit oakdalerec.coop/member-photo-contest

ANDREW MORTENSEN, A GUIDING LIGHT FOR OTHERS

Shared experiences bring a level of empathy and validation that provides a bridge to connection and a sense of community. When someone has first-hand walked a mile in your shoes, a mutual understanding is formed. That is the case with Andrew Mortensen and why he volunteers with Three Bridges Recovery in Wisconsin Rapids. From providing reliable transportation, to demonstrating that recovery is strengthened through compassion and community, Andrew's humble spirit is why he received the Selfless Service Award.

Andrew was raised by his grandparents, with junior high school being the extent of his general education. Despite his past struggles with addiction, Andrew is clean and sober and has built a successful business. Established in 2022, Andrew is the owner-operator of A.M. Forestry LLC, which offers professional tree services for residential and commercial clients in the areas surrounding Nekoosa.

With a customer base thriving on referrals only, the tree removal business takes much of Andrew's time. However, he makes time to pay it forward by volunteering at Three Bridges Recovery. Andrew shows compassion, provides encouragement, and is a dependable presence for those in the recovery community. He consistently provides personal time to drive individuals to meetings, medical appointments, work, and other essential commitments. Andrew understands that reliable transportation can mean the difference between isolation and connection, and between struggle and progress.

Although transportation is important, Andrew offers far more than a ride. He listens without judgement, provides understanding, and extends reassurance when someone is struggling. As a business owner, he also hires individuals with backgrounds that limit them from getting hired elsewhere. Since his background gives a similar standpoint, Andrew provides a guiding light for others in recovery.

That light of hope has also been shared with his now wife of three years, Rebecca Mortensen. Before recovery, Andrew was still supporting Rebecca even when they were both at their lowest times individually. "He is highly motivated and

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Andrew poses with his wife Rebecca who nominated him for the award.

pushes people beyond what they think they're capable of, not just me but so many other people," Rebecca stated.

His values and work ethic keep business customers coming back. Rebecca mentioned that Andrew is thorough and transparent when it comes to bidding out jobs and never tries to do unnecessary work. She went on to say, "hard work and dedication are his motto for life," "he is the only person like my dad who is 74 and is still so driven, kindhearted, and selfless."

Between the highs and the lowest of lows, he still embodies determination and discipline, with a steadfast heart. Just as Three Bridges Recovery's motto states, "When 'I' becomes 'We', even Illness becomes Wellness," Andrew Mortensen is living proof of what peer support can be for those in recovery.

Nominate a community-focused individual for the Selfless Service Award for a chance at a \$20 statement credit. Visit oakdalerec.coop/selfless-service-award for more information.



Chronicles of the Co-op

2006-2016

This month we highlight the second to last decade of 2006 – 2016 as we continue to celebrate Oakdale Electric Cooperative's 90th anniversary.

2006 – At the annual meeting, members were shown the video “Restoring Hope: Co-ops Helping Co-ops,” which honored the many cooperatives’ personnel nationwide who helped with power restoration following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. A standing ovation was given to several of Oakdale’s personnel who helped following Hurricane Katrina and an ice storm in the Dakotas. Those employees were Joe Engel, Danny Moore, Todd Duncan, Scott Brookman, Stewart Walters, Robert Thompson, Andy Steele, John Ollendick, and Roy Boyles.

2008 – The co-op rolled out the electric water heater rebate. The rebate consisted of \$200 for a 50–79-gallon water heater and \$400 for 80 gallons or higher.

2010 – Through the mutual aid agreement among electric cooperatives called Restoration of Power in an Emergency (ROPE), Oakdale Electric sent crews to Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services in Minnesota after a sever storm knocked down about 100 utility poles. With assistance from other co-ops, they were able to accomplish full restoration in 48 hours.

2012 – To keep up with the growing social media outlets, the co-op launched their Facebook page at the very end of 2011. Photos, safety messages, employee anniversaries, and power outage updates, can be found by following the Oakdale Electric Cooperative Facebook page.

2014 – Since the program’s inception, Operation Round Up donated approximately \$38,000 to local people and organizations for just a few pennies a month.



2016 – SunnyOak Community Solar Garden broke ground for the installation of one of 12 utility-scale solar facilities in Wisconsin to total 15 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy. With 792 solar panels, members can purchase a subscription unit as an affordable renewable energy option.

2007 – Concern for Community goes for wildlife as well. Line crews helped the Tomah Citizens Lake Committee with a spring project to entice Ospreys to nest near Lake Tomah. A used 35-foot utility pole with a large nesting platform attached was placed on the city’s lakeshore easement at the north end of Lake Tomah on the edge of a quiet lagoon.



2009 – The co-op converted to automated meter reading systems for residential members. The Cannon AMR (automated meter reader) system provides a daily consumption record and graph, while also pinpointing periods of extreme hot or cold weather. The AMR system helps answer members’ questions about energy usage and continues to be a beneficial tool today.

2011 – Oakdale Electric celebrated 75 years of serving the rural communities throughout Monroe and Juneau counties, along with parts of Jackson, Sauk, and Wood counties.



2013 – The Member Photo Contest began for members’ photos to be featured in the next year’s calendar and publications. The contest continues today and ends this month on August 14.

2015 – Longtime board of director James Guilbault retired after 18 years of service. He joined the board in 1997 and was elected treasurer in 2002 until his retirement. Board President Ron Churchill (left) presented a clock to James Guilbault (right) at the annual meeting.



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Jackie McGlin, Editor



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

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Office Hours: Monday–Thursday 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Closed Friday.

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.