



NEW YEAR, NEW PLANS

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO



Happy New Year. I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday season and I wish you the very best in 2023. At the board of directors meeting last month, the directors approved our 2023 work plan and budget. I would like to highlight a few of the key projects.

Construction: We faced many supply-chain issues in 2022 and 2023 is not looking much better. In the past, we could order most inventory a month or so in advance and receive it. Now we are lucky if we can get a lot of items within a year of ordering. Along with long delays in shipping, costs have increased by at least 28% as well.

In 2023, major construction will take place in Mauston, Lyndon, Wyeville, Shennington, Kendall, Elroy, Castle Rock, and Bear Bluff areas. There are also many other places where smaller construction projects will take place in Clifton, Buckhorn, Babcock, Ocean Spray, and Whistling Wings. Depending on cost, inventory status, and terrain, some of these areas will be converted from overhead to underground. In 2023, we also plan to start construction on two new substations.

Renewables: Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) continues to support renewables with our community solar garden and helping members connect their own member solar projects to our grid. We are also planning on building two of our own solar gardens in the summer of 2023. We had hoped to have this completed in 2022; however, due to supply-chain issues, we had to delay. One will be approximately 3.5 MW and the other will be approximately 1.5 MW. As construction gets closer, we will be sharing more details about the project(s).

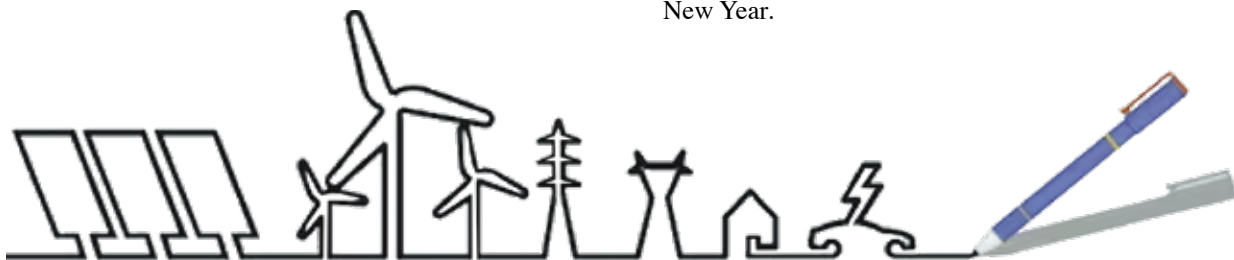
Electric Rates: Starting this month, we will be completing a Cost of Service and Rate Study with Power

Systems Engineering. They will be reviewing all of our rate components and recommending changes, along with creating new rates for us to implement in the future. Unfortunately, we will need to raise our rates this year. Once the study has been completed, we will decide on what the increase will be; however, it looks to be between 3.5% and 5%. Look for more information later this spring in the magazine.

Electric Vehicles: OEC continues to watch and learn about electric vehicles. We plan on purchasing an electric truck this summer and installing a few public electric vehicles chargers throughout our territory. We are also looking at creating a special EV rate for our members to use when charging their vehicle at home.

Technology Updates: Later this year, we plan to start the upgrade of our end-of-life load management system with a newer system that will complement our automated metering system. This upgrade will take a year or two to fully upgrade. There are many benefits to upgrading our load management system including being able to help implement new control strategies to help with newer rate design. More details will be explained about this as we are able to roll out new programs in 2024. We are also continuing to implement new hardware on our distribution lines to help monitor and restore outages and voltage information remotely.

There is much more that OEC plans to do in 2023. Please know that every decision that is made at OEC is made with the best interests of all members in mind. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please contact us. Again, on behalf of everyone at Oakdale Electric Cooperative, I would like to wish all members a Happy New Year.



Director candidates must submit petitions by January 23, 2023.



SMALL CHANGE MAKES BIG CHANGE

Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) was built on seven cooperative principles and Operation Round Up® brings light to the seventh principle, Concern for Community. Just as the name implies, cooperative members' electric bills are rounded up to the next nearest dollar. This small change is used to assist worthy causes in OEC's service area.

Since the program's inception in 2002, over \$100,000 has been given back to local communities with the average donation of \$6 per year, per member. With everyday living and operating costs rising, and in an effort to support more community causes, OEC enrolled all members into Operation Round Up® in 2023.

"We as a board thought to do whatever we could to raise more money to positively impact more community projects," stated OEC Board Chairman Rick Barrett. By serving five counties and multiple small communities within those counties, Operation Round Up® leaves a favorable impact on eligible



Colleen Woggon and Rick Barrett

parties within OEC service area—not just members. The Operation Round Up® Trust Board of Directors is composed of seven OEC members and has allocated funds to causes such as: schools, food pantries, public safety, educational needs, youth programs, and more.

Operation Round Up® Board Chair Colleen Woggon stated, "We've always been able to give out money but it can be stretched thin." She added, "With the expanded dollars, we're able to allocate more and expand our reach further."

With only a few cents per month, at most \$11.88 a year, you can kick off the new year knowing you are helping your community through Operation Round Up®. If you would like to

apply for a grant, application forms can be found at www.oakdalerec.com/operation-round.

Operation Round Up® is a voluntary program. If you do not wish to participate, you can opt out at anytime by contacting us at 1-800-241-2468.





Winter

ENERGY-SAVING TIPS

1. Adjust your Thermostat

- According to the U.S. Department of Energy, you can save 10% on your energy bill just by turning your thermostat down 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours a day or at night.

2. Choose the Right Lights and Appliances

- ENERGY STAR® appliances and LED lighting can provide energy efficiency to lower your energy bill. Visit www.oakdalerec.com/incentives for appliance and lighting incentives.



3. Close Vents and Doors to Unused Rooms

- Many homeowners have a room or two that isn't in use at all times, close the vents and doors to save money.

4. Let in the Sun

- Open curtains and blinds when the sun is out to utilize the free and clean energy the sun provides. Close curtains and blinds at night to add a bit of insulation to your windows and prevent heat loss.

5. Install a Smart Thermostat

- Visit <https://focusonenergy.com/utility-partners/oakdale-electric-cooperative> to learn more or purchase a smart thermostat that automatically adjusts temperature settings in your home for optimal performance.



6. Weather-strip Your Doors and Windows

- By installing weather-stripping around doors and windows, you're creating a barrier between your home's warmth and outside elements.

7. Inspect and Clean Your Fireplace

- Make sure your fireplace is safe before using. Close fireplace dampers when you are not using the fireplace to prevent heat from escaping.

8. Monitor Usage with SmartHub

SmartHub provides convenient account access and two-way communication to and from Oakdale Electric Cooperative on your computer, tablet, or via your mobile device. With SmartHub, you have the ability to do the following with just a few clicks:

- View daily, monthly, and average energy usage graphs
- Make a payment
- Review bill and payment history
- See power outage reporting and notifications
- Sign up for Auto Pay Program
- Go paperless
- Enroll in e-mail or text alert notifications



Visit www.oakdalerec.com/smarthub to learn more or sign up to stay in-the-know of your energy account.

CHERI NESS RETIRES AFTER 24 YEARS

Engineering Assistant Cheri Ness recently retired after 24 years with Oakdale Electric Cooperative. Cheri stated, “I have been blessed to work with some of the best people that made my years at Oakdale so enjoyable. I only hope I have made the process easier for my co-workers, members and contractors.”

Cheri Ness was a main piece in the operations at the cooperative and worked closely with Project

Supervisor Matt Riggs. “Cheri has been absolutely nothing but the best to work with and was always willing to lend a helping hand. Her knowledge will be hard to replace,” Matt reflected.

Cheri gets to spend much more time with her family and grandchildren as she kicks off the new year in retirement. “Her dedication, positive attitude, and always having a smile on her face, will be sincerely missed,” Matt concluded.



Spruce up Your Holidays


2022 Winners

Madeline Nelson of Armenia
Patricia Zager of Necedah
Eldred Erickson of Sparta
Phillip Kroncke of Camp Douglas
Thomas Zarembo of Camp Douglas
Daniel Hay of Necedah
Susan Melvin of Camp Douglas
Sharon Bauman of Tomah
James Peterson of Camp Douglas
Larry Wargowsky of Necedah

Simon Wells of Sparta
David Johnson of Lyndon Station
Karen Stussy of Sparta
Carl Chase of Camp Douglas
Sandra Weber of Wonewoc
Cheri Le Moine of Lyndon Station
Nancy Taylor of Kendall
Phillip Gigous of Tomah
John Repka of Warrens
Joy Bever of Wilton

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.