



ADVANCING OUR ISSUES THROUGH ADOVCATING

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

On January 31, Oakdale Electric Cooperative Board of Directors and employees, along with other Wisconsin electric cooperative representatives, were in Madison to discuss important electric industry issues with our elected officials such as Right of First Refusal (ROFR) and Electric Vehicle (EV) legislation. Meeting with elected officials is important for several reasons:

1. **Representation:** Elected officials are meant to represent the interests and concerns of their constituents. Meeting with them allows us to express our views, share our concerns, and ensure that our voice is heard in the decision-making process.
2. **Influence:** While emails, letters, and phone calls are important, face-to-face meetings can be powerful tools for influencing policymakers. Personal interactions can help humanize issues and make a stronger impact than written communications.
3. **Policy Advocacy:** Meeting with elected officials provides an opportunity to advocate for specific policies or changes in legislation. It allows us to present well-reasoned arguments, provide relevant information, and engage in direct dialogue that can help shape their understanding of the issues.
4. **Information Exchange:** Elected officials often rely on information from various sources to make informed decisions. By meeting with them, we can provide firsthand knowledge, expertise, and data that may influence their decision-making process.
5. **Building Relationships:** Developing a relationship with our elected officials is beneficial in the long run. When they are familiar with us and our concerns, they learn that they can trust us and our opinions, even if we do not agree.
6. **Feedback:** Elected officials benefit from direct feedback. By sharing our experiences and providing feedback, we contribute to a more informed decision-making process and help officials understand the real-world impact of their policies.

If you ever have the chance to discuss topics of importance to you with your elected officials, I strongly recommend that you take advantage of the opportunity. Whether it's a local council member or a national representative, your engagement can make a difference in the democratic process.

ROFR – This legislation gives incumbent utilities the “right of first refusal” to build long-range transmission projects within their service areas. In Wisconsin, there are three incumbent transmission owners: American Transmission Company (ATC), Xcel Energy, and OEC’s generation and transmission co-op, Dairyland Power Cooperative.

EV – This legislation will help create a network of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across the state by utilizing approximately \$80 million in federal funds. Most importantly, the legislation creates an exemption allowing retailers to sell electricity (by kWh) without being regulated as a utility.

See You at the Annual Meeting!

Saturday, April 27

Registration – 8 a.m. Coffee & Donuts
Business Meeting – 9 – 10 a.m.

Tomah Recreation Park – Recreation (gold) Building
1625 Butts Ave. Tomah, WI 54660



CONTINUING EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND INFORMATION THROUGH CO-OP PRINCIPLE #5

As cooperatives were built on seven key principles, Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) keeps the fifth principle in motion through scholarships, donations, and youth activities. Investing in area youth is important for our future. Whether it's sponsoring high school juniors to attend Youth Leadership Conference for a chance at a scholarship, an electric safety poster contest, or the Operation Round Up Board donating to a new S.T.E.M. program, OEC is behind our future leaders.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Youth Essay Contest

Scholarships of \$1,500, \$1,250, and \$1,000 are awarded to the authors of the top three essays at each of the 12 participating public high schools. Students must first participate in Youth Leadership Conference (YLC), July 16-18, 2024, which is fully funded by OEC.

Additional requirements to be eligible are as follows:

- Student must be a son or daughter (or under legal guardianship) of an active member of OEC residing in the same household.
- Student must be entering his/her senior year of high school in the fall of 2024 at one of our 12 area high schools (Brookwood, Mauston, Necedah, Nekoosa, New Lisbon, Pittsville, Reedsburg Area, Royall, Sparta, Tomah, Wisconsin Dells, and Wonewoc.)

Carson Welter, an Oakdale Electric Cooperative student member, attended YLC in 2023 and will receive a scholarship this spring. While at YLC, he embraced the opportunity to vie for a spot on the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) Youth Board and was voted on by his peers. "For someone contemplating attending YLC, I strongly encourage them to embrace the opportunity because YLC provides a supportive environment for growth, offering valuable skills, lasting connections, and a sense of empowerment," stated Welter.

Carson's desire to strengthen his leadership skills and get elected to the WECA Youth Board will take him to Washington, D.C., in June, when youth from across the country will unite as part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour. "Serving on the WECA Youth Board and engaging with a unique group of peers has been a particular highlight for me, while broadening my perspective," Carson stated. "I'm eager to attend Youth Tour to further expand my network and continue making meaningful memories."



- Following attending YLC, the student must write an essay on the same topic chosen by Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) for its scholarship essay contest.
- Students should mail one copy of his/her essay to OEC and one copy to WECA to be eligible for both scholarships. The same essay can be submitted to qualify for both contests.
- Scholarships will be awarded to students entering a post-high school educational facility in the academic year following high school graduation. Proof of enrollment will be required.

Students should sign up through their school counselor. Questions can be directed to OEC's Communications Specialist Jackie McGlin, at 608-372-4131 Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Lineworker

One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a high school senior pursuing a post-secondary education in an electrical lineworker program. Any applicant enrolling in a lineworker program is eligible. Preference will be given to OEC members, and residents of Monroe, Juneau, Jackson, Sauk, and Wood counties.

At-Large/Non-Traditional

One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a high school senior who is not enrolled in one of the 12 participating public high schools in our service area (At-Large) or someone pursuing post-secondary education after spending time in the workplace or raising a family (Non-Traditional).

To be eligible, the applicant must be a member or the son or daughter (or under the legal guardianship) of an active member of OEC in good standing accepted at a post-secondary program or accredited training program.

Applications for the Lineworker and At-Large/Non-Traditional scholarships are due by May 1, 2024.

To apply or for more information about scholarships, visit www.oakdalerec.coop/scholarships.

Scan the code to view all scholarship opportunities.



FROM FIRE STATION TO RECREATION STATION, YOUTH S.T.E.M. CAMP COMING TO TOMAH

The Operation Round Up Board approved a \$2,000 grant for the Tomah Parks and Recreation Department to use toward programming supplies for recreational enrichment programs to be held at the new Recreation Station.

Beginning the summer of 2024, a S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) camp will be offered for school-age children and taught by local high school physics teacher Oakley Moser. The students will benefit from a range of experiences including hands-on learning, real-world application, problem-solving skills, teamwork, and collaboration. The grant will be used to purchase wish-list supplies to enhance the program.


Some potential activities that attendees could see are building your own catapult, tallest tower, marble maze, and a rubber band-powered vehicle. "I am looking forward to bringing a S.T.E.M.-related offering to the Parks and Rec Summer Program with the goal of getting kids excited about science and engineering," stated Moser.

Tomah Parks and Recreation Department's Summer Supervisor Jenna Moser took the lead on this unique and valuable youth offering. "We are excited to have this new space to offer such programming going forward," she said. The Parks and Recreation Department is looking forward to expanding their program offerings by utilizing the old Tomah Fire Station on Arthur Street.

Information to register will be posted to the Tomah Parks and Rec Facebook page in the coming weeks. Jenna concluded with, "We appreciate being selected to receive this grant and thank the Oakdale Electric Cooperative Operation Round Up Board and the members who donate to the fund."



ORU Board Member Sandy Chroninger, Oakley Moser, Jenna Moser, and ORU Board Member Al Bernhardt.




CALLING ALL THIRD-GRADERS:

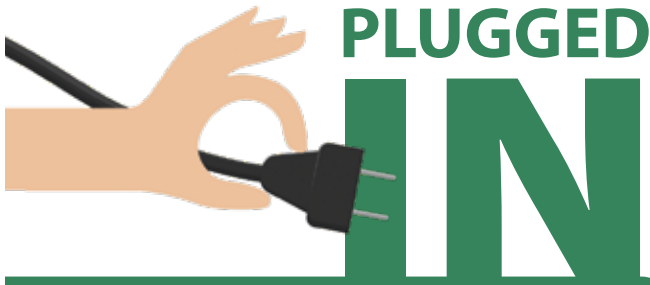
You're invited to participate in the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association's **ELECTRICAL SAFETY POSTER CONTEST**

Submit an original poster supporting electrical safety to your local electric cooperative by **April 30, 2024**, 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**

Visit www.weca.coop for details and an entry form.





What's the difference between an EnergyGuide and ENERGY STAR label?

EnergyGuide The EnergyGuide label is a required label that estimates the annual energy consumption for an appliance. It also provides information about whether that use is above or below the average for that type of product. The dollar amount listed is the estimated yearly operating cost based on the national average cost of electricity.



ENERGY STAR The ENERGY STAR label is the government's symbol for energy efficiency. It helps consumers easily recognize highly efficient products, homes, and buildings that save energy and money, and help protect the environment. The ENERGY STAR logo is often incorporated into the EnergyGuide label for certified products.

Oakdale Electric Cooperative incentives are only available for new ENERGY STAR-rated appliance purchases. Therefore, when shopping for new appliances and to ensure you're getting the most energy-efficient equipment, search for the ENERGY STAR label.

Incentive forms must be submitted within three months of purchase. For more information, please visit www.oakdalerec.coop/incentives.



Maribeth O'Dell
Consumer Service Specialist



You'll be Feeling LUCKY with These Energy-Saving Incentives

ENERGY STAR Appliances & Recycling Incentives

- \$25** – Clothes Dryer, Clothes Washer, Dehumidifier, Dishwasher, Freezer, Inductive Range, and Refrigerator
- \$25** – RECYCLING Freezer, Refrigerator, and Room A/C Unit

Lighting Incentives

- \$.50/bulb** – Light Emitting Diode (LED) Bulbs (min. 5 bulbs)
- \$5** – Room Occupancy Sensor
- \$5** – LED Exit Sign
- \$.50 per 800 lumens** – LED Fixture

Electric Water Heater Incentives

- \$150/unit** – 50-79 gallon
 - \$300/unit** – 80 gallons or larger
 - \$300/unit** – Heat Pump Water Heater
 - \$300/unit** – Solar Storage Water Heater *w/Electric Back-up
- The water heater installation will be inspected by the Oakdale Electric Cooperative load management department and a load management control must be installed. A copy of the receipt is required. A controlled water heater qualifies for a \$3 monthly credit, unless you are on the dual fuel rate. *A control is not required for heat pump water heater.

HVAC

- \$300/ton** – Heat Pump – Air Source & MiniSplit
 - \$500/ton** – Heat Pump – Geothermal
 - \$300/ton** – Heat Pump – Commercial Air Source & PTHPs
 - \$35/each** – New Furnace w/Efficient ECM Blower Motor
- Ag, Commercial, Industrial Incentives and Home Energy Audit Incentives are available. View all available incentives at www.oakdalerec.com/incentives.

Important Incentive Details

- Incentives must be submitted within three months of purchase and installation.
- Incentives are in place through **December 26, 2024**. Funds are limited, so submit the required documentation as soon as possible.
- Incentives will be applied as a credit on an electric account.
- Refer to incentive forms for detailed criteria.
- Incentive program is subject to change without notice.

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

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Jackie McGlin, Editor



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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 833-526-0293

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