



PARTNERSHIP TO BRING 12 NEW SOLAR ARRAYS

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Cooperation among cooperatives is one of Oakdale Electric Cooperative’s (OEC) guiding principles. Electric cooperatives are known for working together in a variety of ways, most importantly during major storm restoration. A different way we are following this principle in 2023 is by investing in solar in our service areas.

Over the last two years, OEC has been working with eight other Wisconsin electric cooperatives to get the best volume pricing on solar energy for our members. This has allowed us to form a partnership with OneEnergy Renewables of Madison to develop and construct 12 utility-scale solar arrays across Wisconsin. Over the next two years, the partnership will add 22 megawatts (MW) of new solar generation. The arrays will generate enough electricity to power 4,000 homes for our co-op members.

OEC currently has one existing solar garden (SunnyOak Community Solar Garden, pictured below) which is in Necedah township. This garden began operating in 2017 and has 792 panels. It is shared with Dairyland

Power Cooperative’s 1.5 MW solar array. Members can purchase subscriptions to this garden to help offset their own electricity usage. We still have subscriptions available, so if you are interested, please contact our office for more information.

Two of the 12 new arrays being constructed will be on our system. Together they will generate 4.5 MW of solar energy. One will be near Mauston and the other will be near New Lisbon. Combined with the output from SunnyOak, the gardens will be able to power approximately 856 homes annually. These projects not only add more clean energy to our grid, but they also relieve potential overloading of our substation equipment and help to offset power market costs.

The first of the new arrays will be constructed in the Mauston Township, about 25 miles southeast of our office in Oakdale. The projected 18-acre site will have 6,708 panels that operate on a tracking system to follow the path of the sun for maximum power generation. The 3.0 MW array will generate about 6,266,000 kWh of

electricity annually. This Lemonweir Solar site will become the largest utility-scale solar project in Oakdale Electric’s service area.

The second array will be built in the New Lisbon Township. Webster Creek Solar is projected to be our second largest utility-scale project. The 10-acre site will hold 3,302 panels to generate 1.5 MW or 2,831,202 kWh annually. This site will also use tracking technology to follow the sun for maximum potential generation.

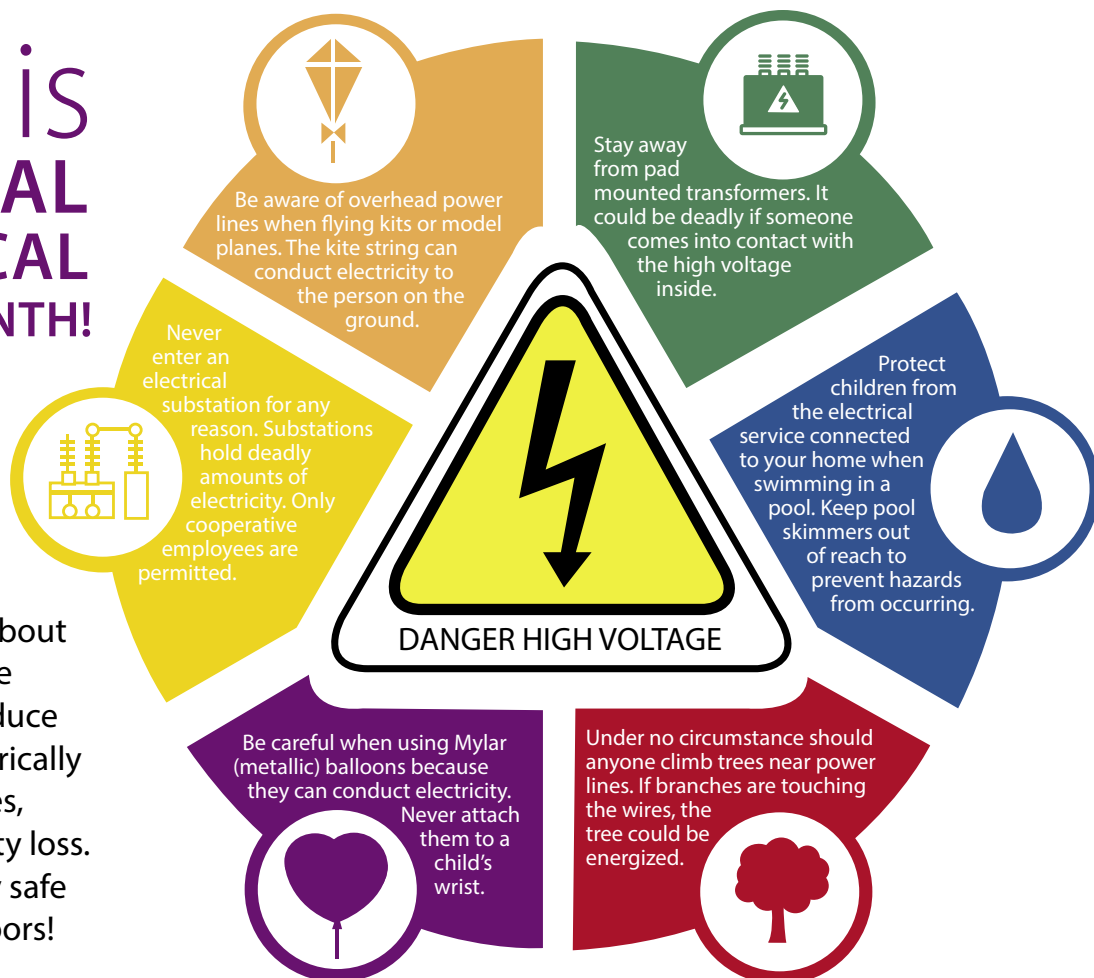
We had originally hoped to have both projects built last summer; however, due to supply-chain issues, the projects had to be delayed to 2023. Construction on both sites will be starting soon and is estimated to be completed by the end of this summer. OEC supports a balanced transition to a lower carbon future and these new sites will aid in that adaptation.

I encourage you to follow our social media sites for more information as construction continues.



MAY is NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH!

National Electrical Safety Month is an annual campaign to educate members about the steps that can be taken in order to reduce the number of electrically related fires, fatalities, injuries, and property loss. We want you to stay safe when you are outdoors!



LINEMEN TEACH ELECTRICAL SAFETY TO AREA YOUTH

This past February and March, Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) Area Service Foreman Brock Brown, Apprentice Lineman Ethan Thorson, and Apprentice Lineman Ryan Betthausen presented the Hotline



Ryan Betthauser and Brock Brown dress up two students at New Lisbon Elementary like lineworkers.

Safety Demonstration to Brookwood, New Lisbon, Royall, and Sparta area elementary schools. A total of 1,700 youth was taught to respect the dangers of electricity and provided with valuable information on how to stay safe around it. They saw firsthand what happens when a tree branch, kite, or person (simulated by a hotdog) accidentally touches a power line energized with 7,200 volts.

Brock reassured that they were not there to scare them but to reinforce that electricity does not have a brain and cannot tell the difference between a tree, animal, or person. "I'm a lineman. I can turn your electricity back on, but I can't bring a person back to life," Brown stated.

The Hotline Safety Demonstration



Ethan Thorson demonstrates the dangers of a kite contacting an overhead power line.

is a long-standing tradition at OEC and rotates each year throughout the service area elementary schools. To schedule a demonstration, civic and community organizations included, contact Jackie McGlin at jmcglin@oakdalerec.com or call 608-372-4131.

SELFLESS SERVICE AWARD

BEHIND EVERY STRONG FIREFIGHTER, THERE'S A STRONG CHIEF

Oakdale Electric Cooperative's (OEC) Selfless Service Award was implemented to recognize volunteers who go the extra mile, some in the face of danger. The official definition of the word courage is strength in the face of pain or grief. Pittsville Fire Chief Jerry Minor was recently awarded the Selfless Service Award for his courage and volunteerism to ensure his department, community partners and youth are educated in fire safety.

Jerry joined the Pittsville Fire Department in 1978. Since then, he has hosted ice rescue classes for several years and is the sole reason many surrounding fire departments now have personnel trained for an ice rescue. With Wisconsin's vast agriculture industry, Jerry also hosts silo and agriculture machinery rescue classes to educate other departments if faced with that call.



Jerry Minor & Nicole Fox

Beyond providing education to other departments, Jerry volunteers his time at local schools to demonstrate fire safety. "My goal is to help children to not be afraid of firefighters in the face of danger when we are all suited up," stated Jerry. "Showcasing what we look like in our bunker gear in a calm setting can aid in calmness if we were to get that fire call."

To be awarded the Selfless Service Award, the volunteer must be nominated by an OEC member. Nicole Fox nominated Jerry for the award and shared her interactions with him. "He will jump in and help a community member without needing to be asked," stated Nicole. Jerry welcomes children of all ages to stop in and learn about the fire department and EMS while allowing them to check out the fire trucks and ambulances. Nicole went on to say, "Jerry has been there for me personally and will for anyone who needs advice, a listening ear, or a shoulder to cry on, regardless of his schedule."

In recognition of his efforts with the Pittsville Fire Department and surrounding communities, Jerry Minor is more than deserving of the Selfless Service Award. Nicole concluded with, "No matter the time, day or night, know that Jerry is there to help."

Preventing Home Electrical Fires



Fire departments respond to an average of **46,700** home fires each year caused by electrical failure or malfunction.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):

Over a recent 4-year period...



30%

happened in cold weather months (Nov. - Feb.)

Fires caused an estimated average of:



390 Deaths
1,070 Injuries



Wiring and related equipment were involved in the **greatest number of home electrical fires.**

Lighting, a lamp or a bulb was involved in the **second largest number of fires.**



WARNING SIGNS of electrical issues:

Damaged cords and flickering lights

Discolored outlets and switch plates

Frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses

Hire a licensed contractor to ensure that your home's wiring is **installed to code** and functioning properly. Learn more at:

Safe Electricity.org

Source: NFPA's Electrical Fires Report, 2022

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

For more tips on smart tree planting in our community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit www.ArborDay.org.

Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.

Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

LARGE TREES	MEDIUM TREES	SMALL TREES
<p>Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maple • Oak • Spruce • Pine • Birch • Sweetgum • Linden 	<p>Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington hawthorn • Goldenraintree • Eastern redbud • American arborvitae • Dogwoods 	<p><i>Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.</i></p> <p>Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star magnolia • Crabapple • Lilac

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 **May 31, 2023**, 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**

Posters should be at least 8.5x11 inches, but no larger than 11x14 inches.

Entries must include completed entry form and student's name on the back of the poster.

Contact your local electric cooperative or go to www.weca.coop for registration forms.

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P.O. Box 40, Oakdale, WI 54649
608-372-4131 • 800-241-2468

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [@](#) info@oakdalerec.com

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 833-526-0293

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