



# SERVING UP SAVINGS

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

The holiday season is just around the corner and soon, festive music will flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound.

The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking and family gatherings, and amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

Keeping this in mind, I thought this month would be a good time to remind Oakdale Electric Cooperative members of a few programs and efficiency tips to help lower your monthly energy use.

## Programs designed to help you save.

Winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor, low-cost improvements, like weatherstripping exterior doors and caulking around old, drafty windows, can make a positive impact on energy bills. If you're not sure where to start, contact Oakdale Electric at 608-372-4131 to speak with one of our energy services technicians for extra guidance.

We also offer energy-saving incentives, which can help you achieve greater savings when purchasing ENERGY STAR® certified lighting or appliances. Our team of member service representatives is available to help, so I encourage you to give us a call if you'd like to learn about specific programs and services that can lower your bills.

## Be festive without breaking the bank.

My wife, Katie, insists that I bring the Christmas decorations down from the attic faster than we can finish the Thanksgiving turkey. With holiday lights decorating our home for well over a month, we decided to make the switch to LEDs to save energy.

LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the Department of Energy estimates that with standard holiday decorations, LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as \$350. Continued

## Shopping for new appliances this holiday season?

Everything you do—from flipping a switch to upgrading your appliances—can add up to big energy savings. Check out Oakdale Electric Cooperative's energy efficiency incentives at [www.oakdalerec.com/incentives](http://www.oakdalerec.com/incentives).

Incentive forms must be submitted within three months of purchase and installation. The deadline to submit incentives is **December 27, 2023**.

Available ENERGY STAR® Certified Appliance & Lighting Incentives



- LED Bulbs
- Dishwasher
- Dehumidifiers
- Electric Water Heaters
- Washer/Dryer
- Refrigerator/Freezer
- And more!

## PETITION TO BECOME A CANDIDATE FOR A DIRECTOR POSITION

### Director Qualifications:

- You are a cooperative member residing primarily in districts 2, 4 or 5;
- You have not been employed or financially interested in a competing enterprise, or a business selling energy, supplies, or services to the cooperative;
- You have not been employed by the cooperative within the preceding five years;
- You have not been convicted of a felony in any jurisdiction at any time in the preceding seven years;
- You have not been an incumbent of or candidate for a partisan elective county, state or federal office in connection with which a salary is paid;
- You have not been a claimant against the cooperative within the preceding five years.

### How to Run:

Oakdale Electric Cooperative's Bylaws outline the procedure by which director candidates are nominated. The bylaws state that the nomination of candidates for director shall be by petition. To be valid, a petition shall be signed by not less than 15 members and submitted by January 27, 2024. If you are interested in running for a director's seat, contact Executive Assistant/HR Administrator Deana Protz at [dprotz@oakdalerec.com](mailto:dprotz@oakdalerec.com) or call 608-372-4131.

Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof, and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by conveniently managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smart phone app or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology, you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional easy ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

### Cook up energy savings in the kitchen.

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small countertop appliances like microwaves, air fryers, and slow



Engineering Assistant Breanna Linzmeier with daughter Demi save energy by cooking with small appliances.

cookers when possible, as they use much less energy than the stovetop or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stove top, match the pan size to the burner to

maximize the stove top's efficiency.

I hope a few of these tips will be helpful as we approach the holiday season. Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills. With a little planning upfront, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday décor to your favorite soup recipes.

From your friends at Oakdale Electric Cooperative, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season.

## Holiday Giveaway

Oakdale Electric Cooperative wants to spruce up twenty lucky members' homes! Members can enter the contest for a chance to win a \$50 gift certificate to a co-op member tree farm of their choice.

### How to Enter:

1. Scan the QR code by hovering your phone camera over it and click on the link that pops up. Or visit our website at [www.oakdalerec.com/holiday-giveaway](http://www.oakdalerec.com/holiday-giveaway).
2. Complete the required information and choose one (1) tree farm drawing you would like to be entered in to win.
3. Entries must be submitted by 4 p.m. Monday, November 20.
  - Hoag Tree Co. – 15764 County Hwy N, Tomah
  - Hilliker Tree Farm – 21495 Flatiron Ave, Tomah
  - Van Ert Nursery + Christmas Trees – S2112 County Rd V, Reedsburg
  - Wagner Tree Farm – N2477 24th Ave, Lyndon Station



### Details:

The contest will close on Monday, November 20, at 4 p.m. Five members will be drawn from the four tree farm drawings for a total of 20 winners. Names will be randomly drawn on Tuesday, November 21, and winners will be contacted by phone. There will be no physical gift certificates; the tree farms will be notified of the winners to apply their \$50 gift certificate at the time of purchase. For assistance in entering, contact our office at 608-372-4131.

### Contest Rules:

ONE entry per customer number. Employees, directors, as well as immediate family of Oakdale Electric Cooperative are not eligible.





# HOW YOUR SMALL CHANGE HAS CHANGED LIVES

Operation Round Up® was implemented in 2002 to reflect the cooperative's seventh co-op principle, Concern for Community, and it has done just that. Since the program's inception, over \$150,000 has been given back to our local communities with member

donations averaging only \$6 per year.

This year all existing and new members were enrolled into the program. Operation Round Up® is a voluntary program and members have the option to opt out; however, this small change adds up creating a lasting impact on multiple

organizations from Warrens to Reedsburg and all towns in between. In 2023 alone, \$48,600 has been given back to communities through fire departments, EMS, food pantries, non-profit organizations, youth programs and schools.

*"On behalf of the Operation Round Up Directors—Pat Christensen, Allen Bernhardt, Sue Rezin, Sandy Chroninger, Robin Hiles, Tammy Burdick and me, Colleen Woggon—we sincerely thank the Oakdale Electric members for your support of this crucial program. By rounding up your bill to the nearest dollar, a little can go a long way in our ability to help more organizations and more members across five counties." – Operation Round Up® Board Chairperson Colleen Woggon*



The Parenting Place is an Operation Round Up® donation recipient and operates out of three locations—Tomah, Sparta, and La Crosse. The non-profit supports any adult caring for children by providing free programming such as support groups, classes, professional support for childcare providers, a free diaper bank for any family in need, and much more. Weekly groups are available like Play Group, Muscles in Motion, and Parent Connection programs for parents and children to build relationships, and all are free because of donors. An anonymous parent reflected on her experience, "I have met so many great people and have become great friends with these moms and some of the staff members! Coming to Parent Connection helps me learn so much about different parenting styles and I can get great advice on issues I'm having!"

The Parenting Place staff often hear from parents how the play groups aid in preparing their kids for school. Another parent shared that prior to coming to play groups her son was very shy, making her nervous about the transition to school. However, by coming to the weekly Play Group her son was able to make friends and come out of his shell. To their surprise he already had a friend on the first day of school because of Play Group!

All the programs are free to participate in due to grants and donations. "Thank you to everyone who participates in Operation Round Up®. You are making a difference in the lives of Monroe County families," stated Director of Donor Engagement Kassie Miller. For more information about The Parenting Place, visit [www.theparentingplace.net](http://www.theparentingplace.net).



Entering their 26th year of charitable service, Reedsburg Area Helping Hands (RAHH) is a non-profit that serves the Reedsburg Area School District. The volunteer-run organization provides various services such as the school start, Easter/Spring, milk/lunch money, emergency clothing, and Christmas program. In their first year, RAHH served 70 families and 170 children. Twenty-five years later, at Christmas 2022, they served 500 children and 202 families.

Rita Mead has been with RAHH since the very beginning and has held the president position for the past 10 years. One year around Christmas time, she and her granddaughter went shopping for a girl who was requesting undergarments. "My granddaughter came to me with a mitten in hand and tears in her eyes saying that no child should have to ask for underwear for Christmas," stated Mead. So, they left the store with a whole new outfit for the young girl. Since then, surrounding businesses like the medical center have participated in underwear and toy drives to fund more for the community through RAHH.

Support from Reedsburg area businesses, volunteers, and donations from Operation Round Up® is how RAHH can provide and care for children. Sometimes, it takes a whole village to raise a child and RAHH is a strong role model for that. Rita Mead concluded with, "We see a lot of children who have never had anything brand new and whether it's a new backpack, mittens, or a stuffed animal, they leave with a smile that warms our hearts knowing every second of hard work is worth it."

For more information about Reedsburg Area Helping Hands, visit [www.reedsburgareahelpinghands.org](http://www.reedsburgareahelpinghands.org).



# SHINING THE LIGHT ON WEBSTER CREEK SOLAR

**O**n Friday, September 22, OneEnergy Renewables of Madison and Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) joined in celebrating the Webster Creek Solar project completion. Set on a 10-acre site holding 3,302 panels, Webster Creek Solar is located south of New Lisbon and is projected to generate 1.5 megawatts annually for OEC members. Equipped with unique bifacial solar panels, this technology has the capability to absorb energy from the sun reflected off the snow in winter months. To ensure no amount of space is unused, the ground under the solar arrays will be restored with prairie grasses and wildflowers, providing habitat for pollinators and healthy root systems.

General Manager & CEO Chris Tackmann stated, “We purchase our power from Dairyland Power Cooperative and by working with them, they carved out a section that we can buy renewables through our own portfolio.” The second utility-scale solar array in OEC service area is Lemonweir Solar, located in Mauston Township on an 18-acre site and equipped with 6,708 panels to generate 3.0 megawatts annually. This will be the largest utility-scale solar project in OEC’s service area.

Webster Creek Solar and Lemonweir Solar are set to start producing energy by end of 2023. Tackmann concluded with, “We believe that solar and renewable energy are the future, and we plan to evolve with it for a cleaner infrastructure.”






Bifacial solar panels allow energy to be absorbed from the sun reflected off the snow in winter months.

## Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

P.O. Box 40, Oakdale, WI 54649


608-372-4131 • 800-241-2468

   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.