

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative*

September 2025

NEWS



Oakdale Electric
Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

MEMBER APPRECIATION



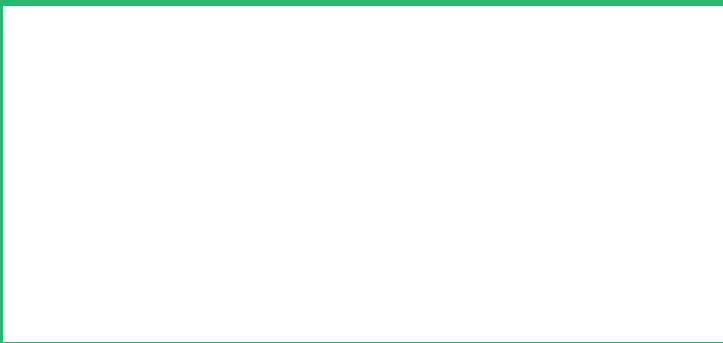
Located at
Oakdale Electric Cooperative
Hwy. PP, just north of
Interstate 90/94

WE APPRECIATE YOU
with

BBQ



WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 1ST 2025
4 – 7 P.M.





Members who attend

MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

On Wednesday, October 1, will get to experience a new menu and the traditional family-friendly fun this event has to offer.

MENU



No need to bring a blanket and basket, The Meat Shop has you covered with BBQ pulled pork, hot dogs, coleslaw, and additional sides. This year, the Tomah Lions Club won't be flipping pancakes, they'll be roasting hot dogs and providing their exceptional service. Leave room for dessert, provided by Oakdale Credit Union and grab a bag of popcorn while visiting all the co-op educational booths and activities.



MEMBER GIFT

When you enter the front entrance of the co-op, you will receive ONE goodie bag per member number. Inside will be the 2026 member featured calendar, which will showcase the winners of the member photo contest, one registration card, one easy-on oven mitt, and one stainless steel silicone tongs for all your cooking and grilling needs.





AI TOOLS FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly popular tool for many industries and even in our daily lives. It has the potential to bring many opportunities—and a few challenges—to the electric utility sector. But machine learning takes time, and we're still in the process of determining how AI can really be utilized in our cooperative.

Many electric cooperatives are already exploring emerging technologies like AI, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). Most of AI's current applications are task-specific—like using chatbots to answer common questions from co-op members or analyzing data to better understand members' needs.

Contrary to what Hollywood would

have you believe; AI cannot think for itself. Its abilities depend on how it's programmed, the quality of its training and the data it receives. AI is essentially about learning from patterns and making decisions based on that input—not about having thoughts or opinions of its own.

Because AI interacts with both internal and external systems/networks, cybersecurity is a top priority. As Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) looks to adopt tools powered by AI and other tech, we will continue to ensure our systems are safe from potential cyber threats.

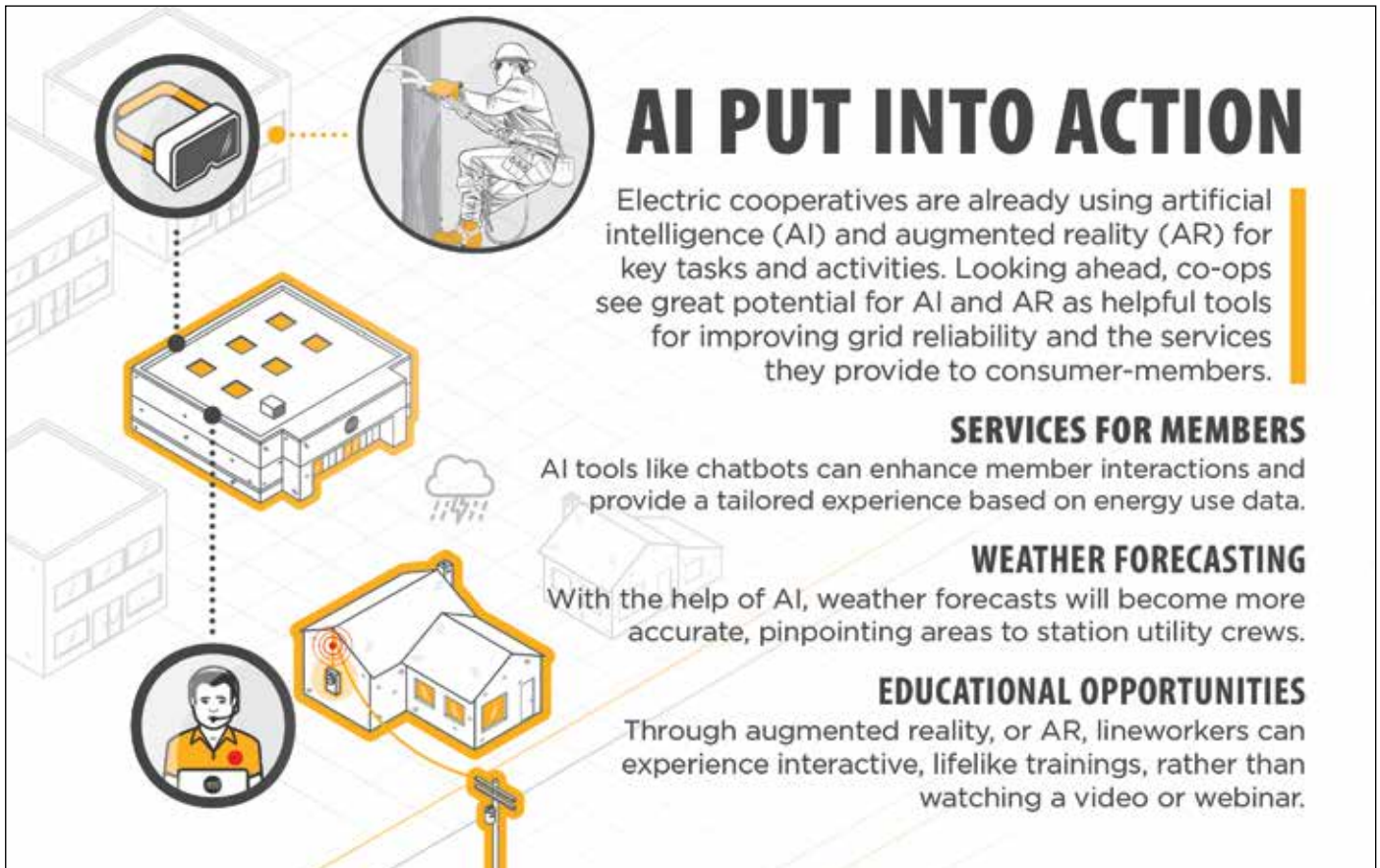
As we consider emerging AI tools, our focus won't be so much on the technology itself as on solving real problems. If AI can streamline a process, predict an issue or improve service for

our members, it's worth considering.

As the technology evolves, it could help our staff better manage the local grid or predict storm damage to deploy crews more efficiently.

Another exciting area is AR and VR. Many electric utilities are currently testing AR for training, giving lineworkers a hands-on experience to prepare for dangerous situations before facing them in real life. In the future, smart glasses may help crews instantly identify and troubleshoot equipment in the field.

Ultimately, AI, AR and VR are tools that can help cooperatives like OEC serve our communities better—making energy more reliable, services faster and operations more efficient.



AI PUT INTO ACTION

Electric cooperatives are already using artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) for key tasks and activities. Looking ahead, co-ops see great potential for AI and AR as helpful tools for improving grid reliability and the services they provide to consumer-members.

SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

AI tools like chatbots can enhance member interactions and provide a tailored experience based on energy use data.

WEATHER FORECASTING

With the help of AI, weather forecasts will become more accurate, pinpointing areas to station utility crews.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Through augmented reality, or AR, lineworkers can experience interactive, lifelike trainings, rather than watching a video or webinar.



A state-wide tradition for over 60 years, Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) sponsored 19 high school juniors from five area schools to attend the annual Youth Leadership Conference (YLC). The event is organized by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA).

Attendance was up this year as 78 youth from 17 electric cooperatives across the state gathered for the three-day event, held July 15-17, at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. This energetic conference is facilitated by teens who were elected to the WECA Youth Board the prior year. The youth board is an opportunity for six elected students to promote electric cooperatives through attending events like the WECA Education and Lobby Days, FFA Expo, WECA Annual Meeting, and a week-long trip to Washington, D.C. for the National Youth Tour. While youth across Wisconsin develop their leadership skills, they also learn about the purpose, operation, and scope of cooperative business.

The conference was kicked off with current youth board members getting attendees up and moving with group activities as well as sharing what they can expect during their time at YLC. Attendees got to hear from former youth board members Thomas Peters, Jayden Mosley, and Emma Steinke who presented on embracing electric cooperative opportunities. Students quickly made new friendships through team-building activities, break-out sessions, and campaigning for the WECA Youth Board.

The first night's featured speaker was Hunter Gillett, who also attended YLC ten years earlier. Hunter spoke on how his plans of playing football for UW-Stout came to a screeching halt when he found himself fighting for his life after a plane crash. The plane was piloted by his friend, 17-year-old Owen Knutson, who tragically died in the crash. He shaped his message around resilience and strength to carry on, despite what life has in store. Hunter chalked his message up to, "Life will knock you down at some point, but life will always go on."

Well-favored motivational speaker Craig Hillier had an interactive breakthrough session with students that focused on the five "P's" of leadership: people, passion, perspective, process, and principle. Students learned more about the aspects of cooperatives with WECA Director of Government Relations Joe Mesec on "The Power of Advocacy." As safety is top priority in the workplace, students learned

more on the importance of decision making for the short and long-term with Safety and Loss Control Manager Ben Bella.

While students gained a solid understanding of electric cooperatives and enhancing their leadership skills, they also attended a formal etiquette dinner to prepare them for proper manners in a formal or interview dinner setting. To round out the second night, teens engaged in a hypnotist show resulting in a multitude of laughs.

The final day consisted of speeches from teens vying for a position on the WECA Youth Board. Votes were cast for the youth board and election results announced; it was back on the bus to return home.

Following YLC, students have scholarship opportunities to apply for with OEC and WECA. Interested in attending YLC next year? Contact Jackie McGlin, jmcglin@oakdalerec.coop, to learn how you can take part in this cooperative tradition.



Left: OEC's 19 youth dressed up for the etiquette dinner. Right: Some of OEC's youth ready to dig into the etiquette dinner.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECK

National Night Out 2025



Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) accompanied multiple fire and police departments, emergency personnel, and other community partners at Tomah's National Night Out on August 5, at Winnebago Park. Journeyman Lineman Travis Moser and Apprentice Lineman Kyle Aschenbrenner educated youth and adults about electrical safety inside and outside the home. The activity consisted of three scenarios with two different photos, and the person playing had to choose which picture was safer.

SCENARIO 1: Which tree is safe to climb?

Just as OEC linemen talk about during the electrical safety hotline demonstration that is presented at elementary schools, this question encourages youth to look up for powerlines. This also led to conversation about how electricity wants to go to the ground, no matter the path or object.

SCENARIO 2: Which is safer when digging?

Although some wanted to pick the photo of the kids digging, Travis and Kyle explained that powerlines and other utilities are also underground. This was a great reminder for adults as well to make sure to call Diggers Hotline at 811 prior to starting a project that requires digging.

SCENARIO 3: Which outlet is NOT a fire hazard?

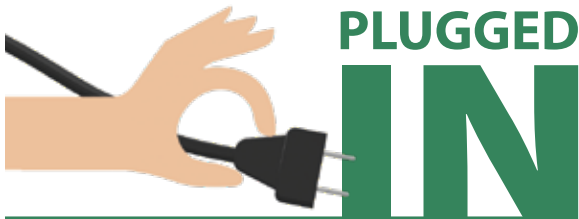
It's easy to overlook this fire hazard when power strips make it easy to plug multiple devices into one outlet. However, power strips should be used to distribute the electrical load, not to increase it. Avoid plugging multiple high-power devices like space heaters, hair dryers, or microwaves into the same outlet.

Plug major appliances directly into wall outlets and replace worn cords and outlets. If you have an older home or are unsure about the electrical capacity of your outlets, consult a qualified electrician to assess your home's electrical system and add new outlets if needed.



OEC member and State Representative Nancy VanderMeer stopped for a photo with Journeyman Lineman Travis Moser in the bucket display.





UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDITS

Notice of forfeiture of funds held by Oakdale Electric Cooperative

You are hereby notified that Oakdale Electric Cooperative of Oakdale, Wisconsin, has unclaimed funds belonging to our members.

You may claim these funds by contacting the cooperative at 1-800-241-2468 or emailing Tina Von Haden at tvonhaden@oakdalerec.coop and furnishing proof of your legal interest in such funds on or before November 3, 2025.

You are further notified that unless you do claim such funds and provide satisfactory evidence of your right to receive the same by November 3, 2025, these funds will be forfeited to the cooperative, pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes Section 185.03(10).

Please visit Oakdale Electric Cooperative's website at www.oakdalerec.coop/capital-credits for a complete list of members names and addresses identified as having unclaimed funds with Oakdale Electric Cooperative.



Tina Von Haden
Billing & CIS Specialist


WELCOME, BRIELYN



Brielyn Georgeson
Member Relations
Specialist/Collections


Brielyn Georgeson joined the co-op in August as the new Member Relations Specialist/Collections. She has a background in finance where she was most recently employed for seven years at Bank First in Tomah as the ACH Specialist.

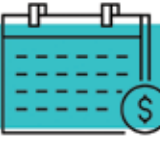
Brielyn is an avid reader, sports enthusiast, enjoys helping on her family's cranberry marsh – Red Diamond Farms, and values spending quality time with her nieces and nephews.





HOW CAPITAL CREDITS WORK

Electric co-ops are not-for-profit and operate at cost. Capital credits are a financial benefit of co-op membership.

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1. Members pay their electric bills, and we track their business with us each month.
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2. The co-op pays operating expenses throughout the year and allocates any leftover operating revenue as capital credits.
- 

3. When financial conditions permit, the co-op board votes to retire (pay) capital credits to the members.
- 

4. We send members their share of capital credits as a bill credit or check.

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

P.O. Box 40, Oakdale, WI 54649


608-372-4131 • 800-241-2468

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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: 855-938-3610

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

DRAWINGS

Members can collect different prizes by following the instructions on the registration card. Once the card is completed and member information is filled in, members can submit it at the prize booth in the middle of the shop for an additional prize. This will get you entered for a chance to win one of the many picnic and BBQ inspired giveaways. The registration card will also have a circle to scratch off for a chance at Co-op Cash. This can also be redeemed at the prize booth. Kids attending Member Appreciation Day will receive a goodie bag at the co-op entrance with an entry card to place into one of three prize drawings.

DRAWING RULES:

- Winners will be drawn and contacted Thursday, October 2.
* No drawings will take place during Member Appreciation Day.
- ONE entry per member number.
- Kids Drawing — ONE entry per child and parent or guardian must be a member.
- Employees, directors, as well as immediate family of Oakdale Electric Cooperative, are not eligible.



2024 winners left to right: Bob Hikade— cooler; James Phillips — Solo Stove & S'mores Kit; Adilynn — Kids Drawing Ring Toss; Richard Rath — Co-op Cash.

CONVENIENCE & PARKING

Employees will be directing traffic and parking at the co-op headquarters. Golf cart transportation will also be available to assist members to the front entrance from the parking area. Overflow parking will be located across the street at Granger's, LLC.

Parking Options:

1. Oakdale Electric Cooperative
489 N. Oakwood St. Tomah, WI 54660
2. Granger's, LLC (across the street)
566 N. Oakwood St. Tomah, WI 54660



SAFETY

- Learn about electrical safety by watching the hotline demonstration at 5:30 p.m.
- Fight off the flu this fall and get your flu vaccine from Monroe County Health Department. Pre-registration is encouraged and can be found at www.oakdalerec.coop/member-appreciation-day, or scan the QR code and pre-register now under the flu shot tab to avoid filling out paperwork the day of.



Journeyman Lineman Travis Moser and Apprentice Lineman Karter Hoag present the electrical safety hotline demonstration. Young member tries on the lineman's safety gloves.

ACTIVITIES

Bring out your inner child with a multitude of games at co-op educational booths and be sure to stop at the following:

- **Balloons by Kevin**
- **Face Painting by Tappy**
- **Paint a Pumpkin**
- **Giant Games & LEGOS**
- **Take your photo in a bucket**

* For safety purposes, parents and guardians are responsible for watching their children at all times.

Members of all ages participated in the activities in 2024.

