


Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* January 2026 NEWS



**Oakdale Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



**QUILTS, COMMUNITY,
AND CREATIVITY
BIND IN WITTENBERG**

PICKING WINNERS AND SOLAR LOSERS

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

SHEET PAN RECIPES



PLANS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

Happy New Year. I hope you had a wonderful holiday season, and I wish you the very best in 2026. This year marks 90 years that Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) has provided electric service to our surrounding communities. A lot has changed in 90 years since the first line was energized to bring power to the first members.

Members used to read their own meters, calculate, and pay their bills in person. Now meters are read automatically, computer systems calculate the amount owed, and bills are then emailed (and mailed). Many members then pay their bills via the internet through our website and SmartHub app. In the past, linemen had to read paper maps and climb poles to string wire across our counties. Now they have maps on iPads that give driving instructions to the outages (the outages also report automatically to our system) and can use bucket trucks to assist with building poles and wires instead of having to climb.

Another item that has changed recently is that OEC linemen are now able to build our own substations. In the past, Dairyland Power Cooperative, our G&T, owned and built our substations. This year our linemen built a new substation in Oakdale to help increase capacity in the grid to continue

to provide reliable power to the members in this area. I am extremely proud of their accomplishment of doing this. They built this safely, quickly, and efficiently and exceeded all our expectations in doing this.

I would like to highlight a few of the projects that your board of directors approved at their last board meeting when they discussed our 2026 workplan and budget.

Construction: Construction will start on a new substation in the Armenia area to increase power delivery and reliability. We are also making plans to increase capacity at our Tunnel City, Jack Pine, Plymouth, Sparta, and Tomah substations. This will help us to continue to provide reliable power in those areas.

Major line construction will take place in the Mauston, Kendall, Clearfield, and Clifton areas. There are also many other smaller areas that we will be working in to reduce the likelihood of outages during major storm events.

Unfortunately, material costs continue to increase but not at the pace that they have been. Lead times on most items are also reducing, however, some items still take over a year to get here. If you are planning on any new construction at your home or changes at your business, please let us know as soon

as possible so that we can work with you to plan accordingly.

Technology Updates: In 2026, we plan to continue the upgrade of our end-of-life load management system with a newer system. There are many benefits to upgrading our load management system including being able to implement new control strategies to help with newer rate design. If you are on our load management system, you will be notified with a letter that we will be in your area and there will be a door hanger left at your home once the changeout has been completed.

We are also continuing to implement new hardware on our distribution lines to help restore outages automatically and monitor voltage information remotely.

Electric Rates: Currently, we are not expecting to have to raise rates in 2026. However, we will be implementing a demand component on all residential electric bills starting this month. For the past few years, there has been a line item called “Demand Charge” with no charge associated with it. Going forward, there will be a charge of \$0.25 per kW. This will result in most members seeing a \$2.50 increase per month. Please see last

month’s magazine for more information.

There is much more that Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) plans to do in 2026. Please know that every decision that has been made at OEC for the last 90 years has been made with the best interests of all members in mind. This will not change. We plan on continuing to provide a high level of power reliability and member relations for the next 90 years. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Again, on behalf of everyone at OEC, I would like to wish you a Happy New Year.



Congratulations to our Holiday Giveaway Winners!

Hilliker Tree Farm

- Ashley C.
- Patience C.
- Duane A.
- Angela S.
- Jeffrey K.

Hoag Tree Company

- Justin C.
- Amy J.
- Vicky S.
- Douglas B.
- Mark M.

Van Ert Christmas Trees

- Daniel A.
- Scott A.
- Cody K.
- Amanda S.
- Sandra W.

Wagner Tree Farm

- Abbie E.
- Tracy A.
- Brandon M.
- Stacie R.
- Dawn T.

CALCULATING DEMAND CHARGE

Beginning January 1, 2026, members will see a demand charge for the highest power usage during a 15-minute period within that month at the amount of \$0.25 kW. General Manager & CEO Chris Tackmann expanded more in his column featured in the December 2025 *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* and can be found at www.oakdalerec.coop.

To help residential members forecast their demand and understand the various appliances that affect the charge, an Energy Demand Calculator can be found on the co-op’s website under the Understanding Your Bill and Electric Rates pages.

How to use:

- Select different appliances that you frequently use at the same time.
- Total Demand will show the total kW.
- Demand Charge will multiply the demand charge of \$0.25 by the total kW to reflect an estimated charge to the member.

For assistance, contact our office at 608-372-4131, and a member relations specialist can walk you through it.

The energy demand calculator is an estimation tool only.

Energy Demand Calculator

ENERGY DEMAND CALCULATOR


Appliances - Demand	Appliances - Demand	Appliances - Demand
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioner - 4.0 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Electric Water Heater - 4.50 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Space Heater - 1.50 kW
<input type="checkbox"/> Clothes Dryer - 5.60 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Hair Dryer - 1.50 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Stock Tank Heater - 1.50 kW
<input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Maker - 1.025 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Heat Pump - 3.587 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Television - 0.33 kW
<input type="checkbox"/> Dishwasher - 1.20 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Iron - 1.100 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Toaster Oven - 1.50 kW
<input type="checkbox"/> Electric Oven - 3.40 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Microwave - 1.50 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum - .297 kW
<input type="checkbox"/> Electric Range - 1.50 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Pool Pump - 1.763 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Washing Machine - 0.21 kW
<input type="checkbox"/> EV Charger (Level 1) - 2.30 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Refrigerator - .700 kW	<input type="checkbox"/> Welder - 2.30 kW

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

- ✓ **Lineworker**
- ✓ **At-Large/Non-Traditional**
- ✓ **Youth Essay Contest (high school juniors)**



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

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At Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC), we believe it is essential to invest in area youth and their future. Therefore, providing scholarship opportunities towards a post-secondary education is just one of the many ways that OEC supports the next generation. Scholarships are funded directly through the Federated Youth Foundation by unclaimed capital credits. A volunteer, member-appointed scholarship committee will review and select scholarship recipients.

Lineworker Scholarship

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.

Application deadline is May 1, 2026.

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 legal guardianship) of an active member of OEC in good standing accepted at a post-secondary program or accredited training program.

Application deadline is May 1, 2026.

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 schools. Students must first participate in the **Youth Leadership Conference (YLC), July 14-16, 2026**, 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 2026 at one of our 12 area high schools (Brookwood, Mauston, Necedah, Nekoosa, New Lisbon, Pittsville, Reedsburg Area, Royall, Sparta, Tomah, Wisconsin Dells, and Wonewoc).
- 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 or email 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 for YLC through their school counselor. Questions can be directed to OEC's Communications Specialist Jackie McGlin at 608-372-8826.

Scan the QR code for scholarship and YLC information or visit oakdalerec.coop/scholarships.

What is YLC?

The annual Youth Leadership Conference (YLC) is a dynamic three-day event sponsored by Wisconsin's electric cooperatives and facilitated by the statewide organization Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association. This unique opportunity for youth across Wisconsin encompasses leadership skill building, motivational speakers, college life experience, and learning the operation and purpose of the cooperative business model. Held at UW-Stout campus in Menomonie, OEC covers all program fees and transportation associated.





Chronicles of the Co-op

1936-1946

To celebrate Oakdale Electric Cooperative's 90th anniversary, each month will feature highlights of the co-op by decade. Starting from the beginning, the Rural Electrification Administration was created by Executive Order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, on May 11, 1935. This prompted Wisconsin's cooperative rural electrification development on October 19, 1935, at the Oakdale Community Club.

1936 – On April 24, 1936, the Oakdale Electric Cooperative was organized and incorporated, by signing the Articles of Incorporation.

Although only a handful of farmers signed into membership on the date of the organization meeting of the co-op, there were enough to constitute a quorum and elect a board of directors. W.E. Rabe as temporary chairman of the meeting and R.E. Dunlap served as temporary secretary. Elected to serve as its first board of directors were W.E. Rabe, R.E. Dunlap, C.E. Christensen, I.A. Frohmader, Albert Frei, F.W. Habelman, and James O. McCaskey.

1938 – The co-op built 52 miles of line in Lindina township, between New Lisbon and Mauston, growing the membership to 334 members along the 132 miles of constructed line. Members' use of power jumped from 43.7 kWh per month to 51.5 kWh per month.

1939 – A third loan application was approved by REA, which added 78 more miles of line in Clifton, Glendale, and Plymouth townships.

1941 – Ahead of Pearl Harbor, service was provided to the village of Babcock and to farms in Juneau, Jackson, Sauk, and Wood counties. Although there was a critical material shortage, membership increased to 1,130 and 497 miles of line.

1940 – A 64 miles of line project connected various areas of Juneau and Monroe counties. However, the demand was exceeding the capacity of the New Lisbon plant, and Genoa and Oakdale plants were constructed.

1943 – The Federal Government evolved with the U-1-C Program, which power suppliers could obtain materials to build service to farmers having sufficient animal units.

1937 – The co-op hired Lloyd McCaskey as the manager on July 6, 1937.

The first directors' meeting, now called the annual meeting, was held at the Community Hall in Oakdale, on April 29, 1937.

William Mortensen and L.C. Brown were the first members to be served by Oakdale Electric Cooperative.

Construction had been completed on 48 miles of line, and the New Lisbon substation was implemented. By the end of 1937, the cooperative was serving 221 members paying \$0.02 per kWh.

1942 – Camp McCoy was re-activated on an expanded scale, which required the co-op to move its lines in that area, while at the same time electric service from the co-op had to be extended into the camp.

1944 – The co-op secured materials through the U-1-C Program to construct 142 miles of line to serve an additional 345 farmers.

1945 – Wisconsin Power and Tri-State Power cooperatives consolidated to form Dairyland Power Cooperative. By the end of the year, Dairyland was obliged to increase the Oakdale substation capacity from 450 KVA to 1,000 KVA, and to install automatic voltage regulators.

1946 – Early constructed lines were badly in need of tree-trimming and that program was implemented to improve its service and reduce the trouble call expense.

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 855-938-3610

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