

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* October 2026 NEWS



**Oakdale Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

DYNAMIC DAIRY

CO-OP MONTH AND COW LESSONS

PORK RECIPES

KIDS AND CRITTERS





THIS FALL, REFRESH YOUR CYBERSECURITY HABITS

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, but protecting your personal information is something that deserves attention all year long.

At Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC), cybersecurity is a critical part of providing safe, reliable electric service. While much of our focus is on protecting the physical systems that operate the electric grid, we also work to protect the systems and information that help us serve you—including online accounts, payment systems, member portals and outage communications.

Unfortunately, scammers are becoming more sophisticated, too. Artificial intelligence (AI) is making it easier for cyber criminals to create convincing emails, text messages, websites and even voice messages that can look and sound legitimate. The FBI has warned that generative AI can make fraudulent schemes more believable by eliminating many of the errors that once helped us identify a scam.

That matters when it comes to utility scams.

A scammer may impersonate OEC and claim your account is past due, your service is about to be disconnected, or you need to make an immediate payment. The message might even include our logo, use professional-looking language or direct you to a website that appears legitimate. With AI helping scammers create more convincing communications, simply looking for spelling mistakes or other obvious warning signs may no longer be enough. And these scams are not a small problem.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, consumers reported losing \$3.5 billion to imposter scams in 2025, making these types of scams the most commonly reported type of fraud. Nearly one in three fraud reports involved an imposter scam.

So, what should you do if you receive an unexpected message claiming to be from OEC?

If a message creates a sense of urgency or threatens immediate disconnection, take a moment to verify it. Don't click the link or call the phone number provided in the message. Instead, contact OEC directly using our trusted methods. You can reach us by phone at 608-372-4131; through our website at www.oakdalerec.coop; or by email at info@oakdalerec.coop.

You can also take steps to protect your online accounts before a scam occurs. Start with your password. Longer is generally better than simply adding more special characters. Choose a long, unique passphrase that is difficult for others to guess, and don't reuse the same password across multiple accounts.

If the accounts you access online offer multifactor authentication (MFA), consider using it. MFA adds an extra layer of protection by requiring an additional way to verify your identity, such as a code sent to your phone or an authentication app.

Most importantly, remember that you don't have to make a payment simply because someone tells you that you do. We want you to have an opportunity to verify any unexpected request.

OEC is committed to protecting the systems that help us deliver your electricity and serve our members. You can help by protecting your own account, slowing down when something seems urgent and contacting us directly when you're unsure.

For questions about your account, including payment options, please contact us.

PETITION TO BECOME A CANDIDATE FOR A DIRECTOR POSITION



Make Your Voice Count at OEC!

As an Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) member, you have the power to help shape your cooperative's future. You can vote for the directors who represent you—or take the next step and run for the Board of Directors. In 2027, members will elect directors to three-year terms in Districts 2, 4, and 5. ***The current directors plan to seek reelection, and other eligible members are welcome to run.***

Ready to Make a Difference?

Members who wish to run must meet all director qualifications and complete the required paperwork. To request a Nomination Petition Form, scan the QR code, email HR@oakdalerec.coop, or call 608-372-4131.



CELEBRATING 90 YEARS TOGETHER MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY!

Join us on **October 7** for an exciting Member Appreciation Day as we celebrate **90 years** of serving our community! This free event celebrates you—our members—and your role in our cooperative's success.

Celebrate with us from **4:00 to 7:00 p.m.** at our cooperative **headquarters, 489 N. Oakwood St., Tomah, Wisconsin**. Members should enter through the front doors. Bring the whole family for fun for all ages as we celebrate 90 years together and make new memories.



Left to right: Ella Plueger & Maribeth O'Dell, Member Relations Specialists; Tina Von Haden, Billing & CIS Specialist

ENTER TO WIN

Scan the QR code by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, October 4, to enter for a chance to win one of 45 prize-filled anniversary cups and learn more!



Displayed by Brielyn Georgeson, Operations Administrator

WELCOME BAGS

Pick up a free welcome bag at the front desk while supplies last! We have 500 available, limited to one per member number. Each bag includes a 2027 Member Calendar featuring our photo contest winners, co-op playing cards, a classic foam koozie, and sunglasses.

DINNER & DESSERT

Come hungry! The Tomah Lions Club will serve locally made pulled pork sandwiches and hot dogs with coleslaw, chips, and applesauce. Oakdale Credit Union is providing ice cream sandwiches, and we'll keep the popcorn popping throughout the event.

NEW ACTIVITIES

The Bubble Connection! Kids of all ages can create colorful bubble art on one of 300 5-by-7-inch canvases. Make a one-of-a-kind masterpiece and take it home!

Inflatable pop-a-shot basketball game!

Step up, take your best shot, and see how many baskets you can score in this fast-paced challenge!



RETURNING ACTIVITIES

Returning favorites are back! Build with giant LEGOs, get a glitter tattoo from Tappy, and take home a custom Balloon by Kevin creation. Visit the educational booths to receive a picnic blanket—500 available, one per member number.

Protect yourself this flu season! The Monroe County Health Department will offer flu vaccines onsite.



Andy Steele,
Field Engineer

PRIZES FOR EVERYONE

- **Kids, get ready**—we're giving away 300 prizes! Kids, ages 3+ in attendance can choose between a kickball or travel domino set to take home.
- In honor of 90 years, **90 members who attend will win a \$25 Visa gift card.**
- **Attendees can enter to win one of seven classic Igloo picnic basket coolers** packed with reusable ice cubes, a Bluetooth speaker, and a custom leather dice shaker! Winners will be selected and notified on Thursday, October 8.



Karter Hoag,
Apprentice Lineman



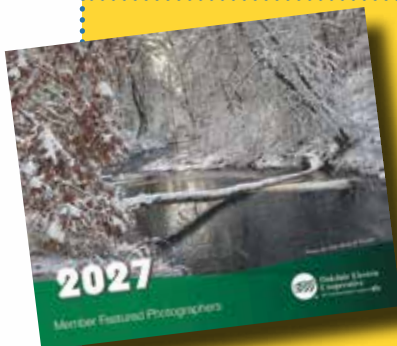
Rachel Winrich,
Finance Director

Pick Up Your 2027 Member Calendar!

Our new calendars feature the winning photos from our member photo contest and will be available at Member Appreciation Day. Be sure to grab your copy and enjoy beautiful member photos all year long!

Congratulations to our talented photo contest winners! The 2027 calendar will feature photos from Rita Berg on the cover, along with Marie V. Pierce, Laura Hannan, Felica Nofsinger, Anna Meyer, Gary Ekes, Debra Galston, Missy Davey, Tracy Lambert, and Jesse Cantwell. Honorable mention David Riley.

A big thank you to every member who entered the contest and shared their photos with us!



CHAD SCHAUF: *O-fish-ally* RETIRING

After 26 years at the co-op, Chad is ready to cast off into retirement and reel in new adventures. We caught up with him to reflect on his career and see what he hopes to hook next.

- 1. What first brought you to the cooperative, and how did you become interested in information technology?** I joined the Navy as a data processing technician, even though I had never used a computer before. After the Navy, I became an independent contractor. Oakdale Electric Cooperative was one of my customers, and the cooperative hired me full time in 2000.
- 2. What are you most proud of from your time as IT Director?** During my 26 years at the cooperative, we had no data breaches, lost data, or major technology problems. That's pretty good! I credit our reliable systems and wise investments.
- 3. How has technology at the cooperative changed during your career?** When I started, the cooperative had one server and about 20 computers. Today, we have 12 servers and more than 300 active devices. Our first internet connection used 256K dial-up modems. Can you imagine that? We did not even use email when I started!
- 4. What will you miss most about the cooperative and the people you worked with?** I will miss the friendships, teamwork, and chances to help others. I enjoy solving problems for employees and helping them get back to work. Knowing I made someone's day easier has been especially rewarding.
- 5. What advice would you give to the next generation of IT professionals?** My advice is to put employees first, learn something new every day, and take initiative. Make time to build the skills you need. Information is right at your fingertips.



Chad is holding a cake donated by Janet Barrett, New Lisbon.

- 6. Besides fishing, what are you most looking forward to in retirement?** I am looking forward to spending more time with my grandson, taking him boating, and traveling with my wife, Keri.

After Chad's retirement, Hunter Ryskoski started his new role as IT Manager. We thank Chad for his guidance and for helping Hunter prepare for this next step.

UNDERGROUND SERVICE REMINDER

Submit all underground construction paperwork and fees by November 1, 2026. If your project is not currently scheduled, call Oakdale Electric Cooperative today at 1-800-241-2468. Frost may prevent us from completing underground work after this date, but we will do our best to install your electric service before winter.

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

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

   info@oakdalerec.coop



**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.