

OAKDALE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HOLDS 86TH ANNUAL MEETING



**Oakdale Electric
Cooperative**

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The 86th Annual Meeting for Oakdale Electric Cooperative was held on Thursday, June 17, at Oakdale Electric Cooperative.

Rick Barrett, board chairman, called the business meeting to order at 5 p.m. and expressed, “Many of us were likely glad to see 2020 come to an end. It challenged families, companies, schools, businesses and communities. It challenged each one of us. Due to the continued uncertainty of the current COVID-19 pandemic and with the health and safety of everyone in mind, we are unable to have our typical annual meeting again this year.”

Similar to last year, the meeting agenda was kept to essential business only to streamline the program.

Cooperative members had the opportunity exercise their right to vote by absentee ballot prior to the meeting. There were 1,100 ballots cast in the uncontested director election. Incumbent directors Rick Barrett, Jim Van Wychen, and Martin Potter were up for re-election and retained their positions. All directors will serve a three-year term.

Attorney Drew Parrish presented the 18 proposed bylaw amendments, which were unanimously approved by the 67 members in attendance.

Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association Director of Government Relations Rob Richard presented State Senator Patrick Testin the Champion of Electric award for his work on authoring the emergency bylaw bill that was approved earlier this year for cooperatives. General Manager/CEO Chris Tackmann stated, “Senator Testin has been a good friend of electric cooperatives and our causes. Senator Testin was chosen as this year’s recipient of the award for authoring legislation, Wisconsin Act 5, that now legally allows cooperatives to hold virtual annual meetings during times of emergency.”

At the reorganizational meeting, all officer positions

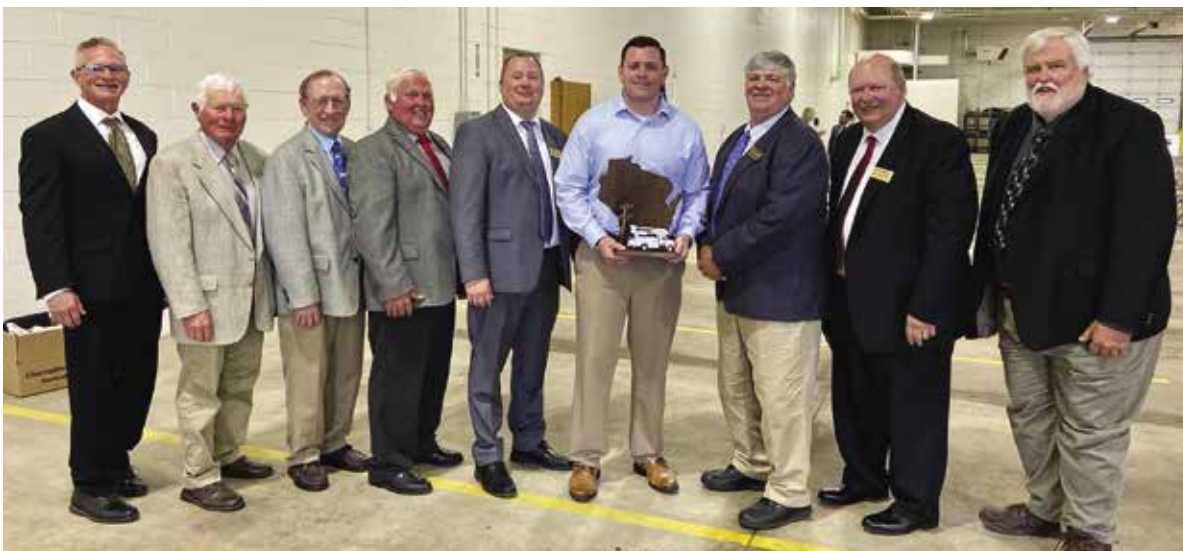
Janet and Dan Hoag enjoyed their Jimmy John’s boxed meals to go following the meeting.



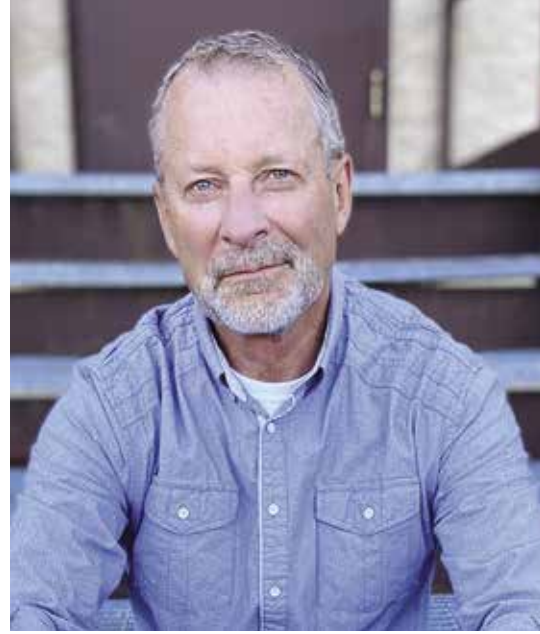
remained unchanged. They are as follows: board chairman, Rick Barrett; vice chairman, Gregory Eirschele; secretary, Jonathan Williams; treasurer, James Van Wychen; assistant secretary, Cherlyn Moseley; DPC director, Robert Hess; and alternate DPC director, Rick Barrett.

Following the business meeting, members were provided a gift, and a boxed meal from business member Jimmy John’s upon their departure.

Tackmann stated, “It is my sincere hope and wish that life for all of us will be back to normal soon and next year’s annual meeting will have a more traditional agenda.”



General Manager/CEO Chris Tackmann and the board of directors with Senator Patrick Testin, who was presented with a Champion of Electric Cooperatives award.



GLENN PAMPUCH IS PROUD TO HAVE WORKED FOR OAKDALE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

His co-op career spanned 39 years; however, it didn't take nearly that long to get hired. In a matter of one hour after accepting a job offer from General Manager Darwin Schendel, Glenn went home to change clothes, and came back to the co-op ready to get to work. "I knew this was a great organization and I was so excited for the opportunity to work for Oakdale Electric," he stated.

Those feelings of excitement—moreover, the pride—never dissipated for Glenn over the course of his career.

He went on to study and train for his journeyman lineman certification, which he successfully completed four years later. Glenn recalled, "I was so very proud to obtain that status." On graduation night, it was customary to dress for the occasion, and for Glenn that meant a three-piece suit.

The journeyman lineman trade is both physically and mentally labor intensive. "It's a dangerous job that is not forgiving," explained Glenn. He furthered, "It takes a tough skilled person that has to keep their head on straight."

It can take anywhere from hours to days, during all types of weather conditions, for a crew to fully complete power restoration following a storm. "You're going off of little sleep, you're cold and hungry," Glenn described, and likewise explained why he enjoyed the challenge: "When

you have all members back on, you look back and say, 'Wow, look at what we just did. We did it!'" For a lineman there is no better reward for hard work than helping others.

Over the years, Glenn continued to take on more responsibility at the co-op. First, he moved into a construction foreman position, followed by a promotion to assistant line superintendent. When the opportunity to oversee the line department became available, Glenn wrote in his application that he was willing to give himself to Oakdale Electric Cooperative.

"I was very proud to be promoted into a management position," Glenn continued. "I am proud they had the faith in me to do all of those things."

Glenn's service and dedication were the driving force that greatly improved the cooperative's service reliability. He recalled, "There was a primary cable fault and lines on fire daily." He cited overcoming this challenge for the cooperative as his biggest career accomplishment by explaining, "It took years of replacing cable, rebuilding lines, and planning ahead for a better future."

The turnaround was tremendous, and Glenn is quick to extend credit to his co-workers stating, "planning and teamwork accomplishes everything."

Daily morning tailgate sessions are part of that planning process. “We communicate to ensure everyone understands what is going on,” Glenn informed. It is essential every crew member follows proper job procedure and safety practices, which Glenn stated both have also improved over the course of his career. Planning is everything to ensure everyone goes home safe, every day.

A message he often relayed to his crew members was, “Little things are big things. It’s important to take the time to show a little bit of kindness—those little things, people don’t forget.” This included offering a friendly wave or raking a yard with extra precision. For himself that meant putting members first, and always taking the time to return a member’s phone call. Glenn stated, “I enjoyed visiting with members, whether it’s helping answer a light bill question, figuring out a problem, or even correcting an issue we made.” To be friends again was Glenn’s intent with each member interaction, and it always started and ended with kindness.

Glenn is looking forward to continuing to teach these messages of kindness, attitude, and hard work post-retirement to his grandchildren. His family, which includes wife Kim, daughters Valerie (Joe), Kensie (Mitchell), and grandchildren Fletcher and Rory, is his whole world. “I want to positively influence my grandchildren’s lives,” he said, and to this

“It’s important to take the time to show a little bit of kindness—those little things, people don’t forget.”

—Glenn Pampluch

proud tradesman that includes changing tires and swinging a hammer. Glenn is equally looking forward to putting his hands to work with his own projects, including cabinetry making. “There is so much doggone stuff to do,” expressed Glenn, “And I hope to be a big help to my kids, as well as travel with my wife.”

There is one thing Glenn will not miss: storms. He stated, “I do not like storms. There is no benefit to anyone in a storm, but it is part of the business.”

He will, however, very much miss his co-workers and the members. Oakdale Electric Cooperative is in a strong and secure position, which made the decision to retire a little easier. Glenn admitted, “I’ve never had it so good. I have great foremen around me, and they make my life so easy.” This includes Construction Foreman John Ollendick, who was selected to succeed Glenn and lead the operations department following his retirement. His advice to John, if you want to be a great leader, you need to be a great servant.

Glenn noted, “I have always asked my team members, ‘How can I help you do your job?’”

Oakdale Electric is equally, if not more, proud to have Glenn Pampluch dedicate his life and career to our cooperative for 39 years. He was a great servant, leader, and made good on his promise to give his all to the cooperative.

Rising to the Top

Newly appointed Operations Supervisor John Ollendick is proof that to get to the top, you have to start at the bottom.

At 16 years of age, John washed trucks at Oakdale



The Pampuch family (left to right): Valerie, Joe, Kim, Glenn, Rory, Kensie, Fletcher, Mitchell



John Ollendick began his new role as operations supervisor in June.

Electric Cooperative after school. He went on to assist in the warehouse during the summer months and maintain the grounds. Following high school, John attended Chippewa Valley Technical College to complete an electrical power distribution degree, while still continuing to work for the co-op on the weekends.

Once graduated, John accepted an apprenticeship at Menasha Utilities; however, his time there was short-lived. When a full-time position became available at Oakdale

Electric, he was contacted to come back home to work. It was an easy decision for John, and he completed his apprenticeship requirements at Oakdale Electric.

Never one to shy away from a challenge, seven years later, he accepted a promotion to fill a construction foreman position. Admittedly, John would be happy doing any job for the co-op, but he felt such great reward from his duties and accomplishments the past 15 years, and shared, "It's been more than a job to me."

John looked to his family — wife Kelli, and children Carter [14], Cale [13], Calynn [11], Collin [9] — for advice when the opportunity to lead the operations department became available. Kelli's words resonated with her husband: "If you think you might be the best person, then you owe it to the co-op to try."

Always humble and kind, John believed many of his co-workers were capable of this job. He believed in himself, too, and following Kelli's advice, applied.

John officially began his new duties this past June. He is excited for the opportunities ahead, but understands there will be challenges along the way. With confidence John said, "I know that I may not have all the answers, but I will find them."

There is no doubt John will succeed. Hard work, determination, and perseverance have always been the keys to the cooperative's operations supervisor's career climb upwards.

EMPLOYEE NEWS




Journeyman Lineman Bobby Thompson (left) has worked for the co-op for 20 years, was recently promoted to a construction foreman position. "I'm grateful for this opportunity and accept the responsibilities this position requires. My number one priority is that everyone comes home safe," shared Thompson.

Kaden Hericks (right), recent graduate from Chippewa Valley Technical College in Electrical Power Distribution, will work alongside the crews this summer and gain valuable hands-on experience. Kaden is excited to be working back in his hometown and stated, "I am looking forward to working and learning from a great group of linemen at Oakdale Electric Cooperative."



Chris Tackmann, General Manager/CEO


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Deana Protz, Editor



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