



Oakdale Electric
Cooperative

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'YOUR VOICE MATTERS'

Members gather for Oakdale Electric Cooperative's 82nd annual meeting

Oakdale Electric Cooperative's 82nd Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, April 1, at Tomah High School. Members and employees socialized while enjoying coffee and donuts before the start of the meeting.

Robert Hess, board president, called the business meeting to order at 10 a.m. MaKenna Linenberg, Tomah High School senior (pictured above), beautifully delivered the singing of the national anthem, and James Van Wychen, director, provided the invocation. Hess stated it has been his privilege to serve the membership for the past 15 years, and emphasized the significance of this day.

"Today we learn about the cooperative's financial status, line construction projects, and involvement in the community, but it's also a day for members to exercise their cooperative right by voting," he said. "Democratic member control is one of the seven guiding principles contributing to the success of our cooperative and makes us different from other businesses. As a member of Oakdale Electric, your voice matters."

Bruce Ardel, general manager, welcomed members and thanked them for their attendance. He expressed pride in the cooperative advantage by stating, "The seven Cooperative Principles upon which co-ops are built have served us well and will guide us in the future."

Ardelt highlighted some of Oakdale Electric's accomplishments from the prior year as well as future projects. These included 177 new services added, increased kWh sales from large loads, line and system upgrades, and right-of-

way maintenance. The co-op invested \$3.8 million in 2016 to improve the electric system, and intends to invest another \$4.9 million in 2017. Projects will include new construction, replacement of aging poles, and line upgrades.

"New technology advancements are being made to improve data and communications for cooperative employees, but also for members," Ardel informed the crowd. Installation of a new metering system, Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI), began in November with the goal of full deployment by the end of 2018. This new system combines two-way communication with smart meters for real-time electrical usage tracking. Members will gain a better grasp of how their lifestyle choices affect their energy consumption.

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—Bruce Ardel, general manager

Ardelt spoke of more improvements at the cooperative, including implementation of software for operations, accounting, and billing. A mobile and Web application, called SmartHub, will be put into effect this summer. Registered members



of SmartHub will be able to securely pay their bill online, view energy usage, and eventually report outages. **Members currently using a credit card to make payments through Bill4U will need to re-sign up in July for SmartHub in order for scheduled payments to process.** Stay tuned as more information will be communicated in the coming months.

The single largest expense item is the cost of power purchased from Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), which accounts for approximately 67 percent of the budget. A small retail rate increase was implemented in 2016.

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Ardelt informed members that a settlement was reached between DPC and the Nuclear Waste Policy Act Lawsuit. Oakdale Electric Cooperative will receive \$2.9 million (6 percent of the total proceeds received

by DPC), which will be used to stabilize rates in future years.

SoCore Energy resumed construction on the SunnyOak Community Solar Garden after winter weather put a halt to the project. Project managers for SoCore Energy estimate the SunnyOak Community Solar Garden will be complete and operational this June, assuming weather conditions are favorable. There are still solar subscriptions available for purchase. Interested members should contact the cooperative to learn more.

Dairyland Power Vice President of External and Member Relations Brian Rude, and Wisconsin Energy Cooperative





Association President Steve Freese were the annual meeting's guest speakers.

Incumbent directors Robert Hess and Ron Churchill were up for re-election and retained their positions. Both directors will serve a three-year term. At the reorganizational meeting, Robert Hess was elected to be the DPC director representative for Oakdale Electric. The other officer positions remained unchanged. They are as follows: vice president, Gregory Eirschele; secretary, Jonathan Williams; assistant secretary, Cherlyn Moseley; and treasurer, Richard Barrett. Alternate DPC director is James Van Wychen.

Five members received a \$100 bill credit. Following the business meeting, members were served a hearty Kentucky Fried Chicken lunch. One-pound blocks of cheese were given out to members as door prizes upon departure.





CONSTRUCTION RESUMES AT SOLAR GARDEN

Spring has finally sprung! With the warmer weather returning, SoCore Energy resumed construction on the Oakdale Electric Cooperative SunnyOak Community Solar Garden. Project managers for SoCore Energy estimate the SunnyOak Community Solar Garden will be complete and operational by June 2017. Please keep in mind that construction is reliant on favorable weather conditions, and weather in Wisconsin is ever-changing.

Solar subscriptions are still available for purchase. Interested members can contact Oakdale Electric Cooperative Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 608-372-4131 to learn more.




SmartHub Coming Soon!

Oakdale Electric members will soon be able to use SmartHub to access their electric accounts. SmartHub will replace OEC's current Bill4U website and will provide members with a new process for paying electric bills online, managing electric accounts, communicating directly with the cooperative, and setting up recurring and stored payment options. It can be accessed online via a personal computer or as a free app on the member's smartphone or tablet.

Stay tuned for more information on SmartHub's release date for Oakdale Electric members!

Bruce Ardel, General Manager

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Deana Protz, 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 866-392-4307

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