



Members learn of new technologies, projects at Oakdale Electric Cooperative's 83rd Annual Meeting

Oakdale Electric Cooperative's 83rd Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, March 24, at Tomah High School. Members and employees socialized, while enjoying coffee and donuts, before the start of the meeting.

Robert Hess, board chair, called the business meeting to order at 10 a.m. MaKenna Linenberg, member, beautifully delivered the singing of the national anthem, and James Van Wychen, director, provided the invocation. Hess stated, "As directors, our main responsibility is to serve and represent you, our fellow members, to the best of our abilities. We keep you in the forefront of every meeting we attend, every vote we cast, and every decision we make, to ensure that your needs are being met and exceeded."

Bruce Ardel, general manager, welcomed members and thanked them for their attendance. He expressed the co-op's commitment to providing safe, reliable energy in a responsible manner while promoting a sustainable future.

"Oakdale Electric Cooperative is guided by a clear and constant purpose—our members," spoke Ardel. "With your support, we are able to preserve our past, support our current

operations, and adapt to the changes that are shaping our future."

Oakdale Electric's accomplishments from the prior year as well as future projects were highlighted during the business meeting. This included 193 new services added, increased KWh sales from large loads, line and system upgrades, and right-of-way maintenance.

"Clearing the right-of-way protects our electric system, decreases outage restoration time, and reduces line loss," Ardel stated. The co-op invested \$4.9 million in 2017 to improve the electric system, and plans to invest another \$5.1 million in 2018. Projects will include new construction, conductor replacement, and line upgrades.

"New technologies were implemented in 2017 to improve processes, and to enable employees to work more efficiently," Ardel informed the crowd. This included the deployment of an Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI), which will conclude in the fall the 2018. AMI provides accurate and timely kWh reading and automatically reports voltage fluctuations and power outages.

SmartHub, a free mobile and web application that allows



for members to interact directly with the co-op, is now active. When the AMI deployment is complete, any member with a registered SmartHub account can pay their bills securely online, as well as view and analyze their own energy usage. Set up is simple; otherwise, call Oakdale Electric directly for assistance.

The co-op's single largest expense

item is the cost of power purchased from Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), which accounts for approximately 66 percent of the budget. Rates have remained stable over the last few years due to kWh sales growth and wholesale rate stability. Even with a slight projected wholesale power cost, Ardelt stated, "Our budgeted electric sales

should be enough to cover budgeted costs so little or no rate increase should be needed."

Construction of the SunnyOak Community Solar Garden was successfully completed. Since it came online last June, those 800 panels have produced over 215 megawatt-hours of renewable energy. The entire solar





facility, located in Necedah, consists of a 1.7 MW utility-scale facility owned and operated by SoCore Energy. There are still solar subscriptions available for purchase. Interested members should contact the cooperative to learn more.

An electric vehicle charging station will be installed this spring on the north side of Tomah. The Ground Round location is ideal because of its proximity to the interstate, and placement between the Twin Cities and Madison/Milwaukee/Chicago areas.

Ardelt concluded his presentation by sharing Oakdale Electric’s devout concern for community. “We have a responsibility to support community events and promote electric safety in the communities in which our members live and work,” stated Ardel. Positive impact is made year-round through Member Appreciation Day, electrical safety demonstrations, youth leadership conference sponsorships, college scholarships, donations/sponsorships, and employee volunteerism.

Dairyland Power Vice President of External and Member Relations Brian Rude was the annual meeting’s guest speaker. State Representative Nancy Vandermeer presented a service award to Journeymen Linemen Dane Pasch, Andy Steele, Stew Walters, and Josh Von Haden for their assistance in the Florida power restoration following Hurricane

Above: State Representative Nancy Vandermeer presents a service award to lineman who assisted with power restoration in Florida following Hurricane Irma, (L-R) Dane Pasch, Andy Steele, Stewart Walters, and Josh Von Haden (not pictured). Below: Re-elected to the board were, left to right: Richard Barrett, Martin Potter, and James Van Wychen.



Irma’s destruction.

Incumbent directors Jim Van Wychen, Rick Barrett, and Martin Potter were up for re-election and retained their positions. All three directors will serve a three-year term. At the reorganizational meeting, all officer positions remained unchanged. They are as follows: Board Chair – Robert Hess, Vice Chair – Gregory Eirschele, Secretary – Jonathan Williams, Assistant Secretary – Cheryn

Moseley, Treasurer – Richard Barrett, DPC Director – Robert Hess, and Alternate DPC Director – James Van Wychen.

Five members received a \$100 bill credit. Following the business meeting, members were served a hearty Kentucky Fried Chicken lunch. Individual jars of raw honey from Black Bear Fruits were given out to members as door prizes upon departure. ☺





UTILITY POLES ARE NOT BULLETIN BOARDS

We're entering the season of garage sales, graduation parties, and family reunions. *Please think before you post that sign!*

Staples, nails, and tacks used to hang signs and fliers create dangerous obstacles for electric lineworkers. They could easily create a small hole in a protective rubber glove, creating a pathway for electricity to flow into the lineworker's body with deadly consequences.

Lineworkers also use climbers with sharp metal gaffs attached to their legs and feet. These are poked into wooden poles to support their weight as they climb. Striking the gaff on a metal object imbedded in the pole could cause the worker to slip.

It may be just a simple staple, nail, or tack to you, but to a lineworker it could mean a serious injury or fall. Their jobs are dangerous enough. Please help us keep them safe.



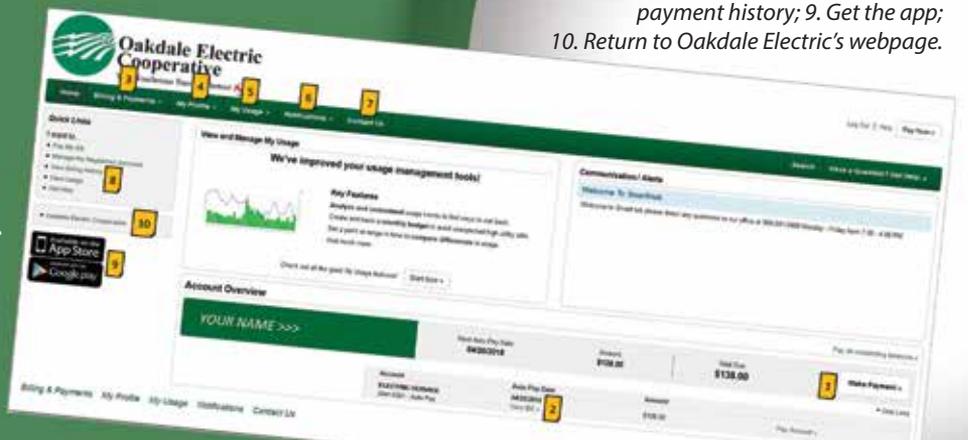
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- Learn more about your electric use,
- Pay your bill on-the-go,
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FEATURES INCLUDE:

1. Pay your bill;
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3. Sign up for Auto Pay Program;
4. Update contact information;
5. View usage history;
6. View newsfeed notifications;
7. Contact the co-op;
8. View billing and payment history;
9. Get the app;
10. Return to Oakdale Electric's webpage.

Bruce Ardel, General Manager

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Deana Protz, Editor



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

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