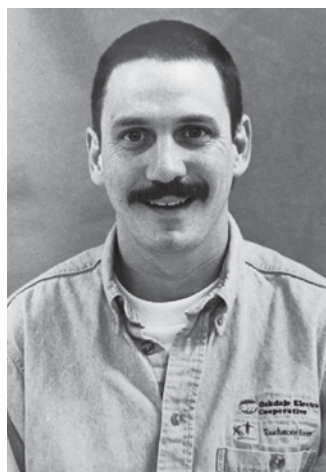


“I AM GOING TO BE A LINEMAN”

When Todd Duncan sets his mind on something, he always finds a way to achieve it.

From early on, Todd had a clear path of his life’s direction. He was going to work for Oakdale Electric Cooperative. “I knew it was a good place to work,” Todd honestly stated. A year on the waiting list for lineman school didn’t veer Todd off course. Instead, he joined the Army Reserves and declared a lineman military occupational specialty (MOS) for the next three years.

Following his military service, Todd worked weekdays on the road for Dairyland Power Cooperative, building substations. All the while, he kept his ear to the ground about any potential openings at Oakdale. Todd’s tenacity paid off. Although it wasn’t in the line department, he got his foot in the door at the co-op when an employee took an extended leave of absence. Hired as a night laborer, Todd wore many hats.



From answering outage calls, to dispatching crews, and even cleaning the building, Todd said, “I did whatever was asked of me.”

Todd received a promotion to a daytime position a few years later, where his new duties mainly included pole inspection. He kept grinding away, and eventually found himself working alongside the line crews. Todd remembered the day he boldly informed the general manager of his career aspirations by announcing, “I am going to be a lineman.” The risk paid off, and shortly thereafter Todd received notice the co-op would send him to lineman apprenticeship school.

With successful completion of school work and on-the-job training requirements, along with a near-perfect score on the certification exam (to which he will still argue today, is correct), Todd finally achieved his dream of becoming a journeyman lineman.

The next 10 years Todd performed hotline jobs and spent his days working in the bucket. “It was exciting, fun, and I was proud to do it,” he stated, but acknowledged his desire for a career change. “Line design interested me because I could still make a difference. It was challenging mentally, but it wasn’t physically dangerous,” Todd explained.

The remainder of Todd’s career has been spent in the engineering department as a field engineer. “I was really passionate that I wanted this job at the co-op, and I still feel



that way today,” he expressed. Todd has appreciated seeing his designs along the roadsides come to life, stating, “I designed that!”

A career highlight has been working directly with members building new homes. Even after 25 years, the excitement never gets old. “It’s a great feeling when the whole project comes together and you are able to get members power,” Todd said with a big grin.

Throughout his career, valuable lessons learned on-the-job quickly shaped him into the person he is today. First, strong communication skills are a necessity for a lineman because someone’s life is on the line. Todd elaborated, “Say what you mean, and be clear. If a line is open, it’s open, and if it’s closed, it’s closed.”

Todd Duncan, center front row, with the rest of the crew early on his career, did “whatever was asked” on his way to becoming part of the line crew at Oakdale Electric Cooperative.

Second, treat people always as you want to be treated. Todd stressed that listening and caring go hand-in-hand when working with members, and were keys to his career success.

To sum up his 33 years of service at Oakdale Electric Cooperative, Todd

stated, “It was fantastic!” There is no doubt about it; Todd clearly chose the right career path.

And his mind is already made up for how he plans to spend his retirement. “I am going to enjoy my hobbies, all of the time now!”



EMPLOYEE NEWS

FIELD ENGINEER PROMOTION

Dan McGarry accepts new position as field engineer



Dan McGarry’s career at Oakdale Electric began in 1999 when he was hired as an apprentice lineman. Four years later, he added the journeyman lineman certification to his resumé. Experience and knowledge aided in Dan’s added responsibilities to next include leading crews on different job sites. “Dan is intelligent, hardworking, and stays levelheaded in all working conditions,” stated Glenn Pampuch, operations manager.

Looking for a new challenge in his career, Dan accepted a field engineer position at the co-op. This new role entails working directly with members to route electric distribution lines to best serve their property. “I am looking forward to working closer with members, and putting my computer skills to use again,” he said. Dan admitted that learning a brand-new skillset after 20 years is a little intimidating; however, he is up to the task and eager to start his next chapter at the co-op.

Dan and his wife, Kristen, reside in rural Oakdale with their two young children, Dawson (3) and Brynlee (1). Dan has a passion for bow hunting. When time allows, he enjoys chasing whitetail deer, and even travels across the state borders to do so. His family enjoys spending their free time together in the outdoors by fishing and honing their t-ball skills. Congratulations on your promotion, Dan!

OPERATIONS SUMMER HELP



Ryan Betthausen, from Mauston, graduated from Moraine Park Technical College this May in Electrical Power Distribution. He will work alongside the crews this

summer and gain valuable hands-on experience of the lineman trade. In his first two weeks, Ryan stated, “I have already learned a lot!” Ryan chose this career path because of his desire to help others by keeping their power on.

In his free time, Ryan prefers to be in the outdoors and enjoys hunting, camping, fishing, and riding his ATV.

Welcome to Oakdale Electric Cooperative, Ryan!



BUTTERFLY EFFECT

Monarch butterflies now have a new waystation at Oakdale Electric Cooperative to call home. *Walking in Monarchs*, a 96 native plant garden, separated into two beds, was created at the co-op this spring to help conserve the majestic orange-and-black winged insects.

It's a voluntary step taken by the co-op to show our concern for the declining monarch population. Follow the three guidelines below, and you too, can create a haven for monarchs to retreat to at your home, school, business, or even in a flower pot!

PLANTS A certified waystation must include at least 10 milkweed plants, of two or more species. Milkweed serves an essential dual purpose for the monarch's survival. First, it is a host plant, providing the sole food for monarch caterpillars. Second, adult monarchs drink from the milkweed, making it a prime nectar plant. Native milkweeds, plants that occur naturally in a particular region without human introduction, are preferred in a waystation, although not necessary. Since they have long adapted to local conditions, natives are renowned for their hardiness. Additionally, the uses of pesticides, fertilizers, or additional watering, beyond normal rainfall, are not needed when planting natives.

Multiple varieties of nectar plants—

to establish continual bloom through the summer and spring breeding, fall migration, and overwintering—are required in a waystation. Adult monarchs are dependent on diverse nectar sources, as are other pollinators such as birds and bees. Fruit feeders, with fresh cut watermelons, cantaloupes, and grapes, are encouraged to be used as another source of food for butterflies.



Butterflyweed and Sullivan's Milkweed were selected for the co-op's waystation. Both native species prefer dry to moderate, sandy soils and their orange and pink colors will be complementary when in bloom attracting monarchs. A colorful variety of nectar perennials, including Verbena, Blazingstar, Coreopsis, and Purple Coneflower, fill the remaining space. Prairie Dropseed and Little Bluestem, both grasses, border both flower beds.

PLACEMENT Butterflies, and their gardens, need at least six hours of sunlight a day to thrive, making a sunny southern location ideal. Plants need to be placed close together to provide monarchs the much-needed shelter from predators and elements.

PEOPLE A garden's success is reliant on its devoted caretakers. It is a time commitment, but many hands (46 to be exact) make light work!

Co-op employees were asked to not only enjoy the garden's beauty but to join in on the maintenance. "We did not use a weed barrier, as it prevents moisture and nutrients from reaching the plant roots. All employees have been told that if you feel the need, pull the weeds," Deana Protz, communications specialist, laughingly stated. "I can't think of a better way to spend a lunch break, or even a few minutes before or after work, than outside with my hands in the dirt."

Oakdale Electric Cooperative hopes that its small garden creates a butterfly effect with members, and inspires others to create butterfly habitats of their own. For more information on Certified Monarch Waystations, visit monarchwatch.org.

CHECK THAT OFF THE BUCKET LIST

Oakdale Electric Cooperative's concern for community reached new heights at Tomah's Hometown Heroes on June 6. A free community event, held at Firemen's Park, brought together emergency personnel from across the county. Families were able to meet and greet police officers, fire fighters, EMTs, military personnel, and even check out their large life-saving rides.

Journeyman lineman Ethan Benson gave attendees the chance to experience what it's like to work high in the sky.

Liam, age 4, never thought he'd ever get to ride in a bucket truck and exclaimed, "I loved it, and it made the best day ever!" Liam was proud to help his friend, Dorothy, brave her first ride, too! Two big checks were marked on both of their bucket lists.

Giant co-op connect 4 was on hand to families to play. And superhero, and superheroine, ice packs were given out to all youth that stopped by the co-op booth.

Contact Oakdale Electric Cooperative to attend your next community event. Simply send a request with all event details to dprotz@oakdalerec.com.




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**Oakdale Electric
Cooperative**

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Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
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