




**Oneida-Madison  
Electric Co-op., Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

December 2023

# COOPERATIVE NEWS

## Letter from President Brouillette

A storm descended on a small town. As the downpour soon turned into a flood, an old woman knelt in prayer as the water rose. Along came a young woman in a canoe.

"Better get in, Ma'am. The waters are rising fast."

"No," said the old woman. "God will save me."

Still the waters rose. A man zipped up in a motorboat.

"Better get in, Ma'am. The waters are rising fast."

Once again, "No," said the old woman. "God will save me."

Then, barely able to keep her head above water, a helicopter descended out of the clouds, the pilot called out.

"Better get in, Ma'am. The waters are rising fast. This is your last chance."

Yet again, "No," said the old woman. "God will save me."

Sadly, the sweet old woman drowned.

In heaven she asked, "Lord, I had unwavering faith in you. Why didn't you deliver me from that flood?"

God spoke softly. "My sweet child... I sent you two boats and a helicopter."

This story is a good lesson for living in today's world.

We would like to be able to tell you that we can guarantee electricity to be delivered to your home 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Understand that while we'll do all that we can to accomplish just that, there are no guarantees. Just like the lady in the story, each of us is partly responsible for ourselves! A severe storm in the dead of winter could be catastrophic if you're not prepared. It is a good idea to have a generator and back up heat source ready to go in case such an event happens.

Weather and regulation are two factors beyond our control. The all-electric dream proposed by our administration could possibly result in not having enough electricity to go around.

*Letter cont'd on page 2*



## Notes & Information

Normal Office Hours are as follows:

7:30am-4pm, Monday-Friday

Office Location: 6630 State Rt 20

Bouckville, NY 13310

Call (315) 893-1851 **24 hours a day**  
for assistance with power outages  
and/or emergencies

## Your Board of Directors

Rudy Brouillette, President

John Lehr, Vice President

Dan Saulsgiver, Secretary/  
Treasurer

Seth Howard

James Nassimos

Kurt Peavey

## Cooperatives are still the best source for affordable, reliable electricity

We know that the cost of just about **everything** keeps going up and up and up and looks to have no end in sight.

But....

Did you know, as a member of an electric cooperative, you're still getting the absolute best deal compared to your counterparts who are serviced by for-profit utilities?

According to U.S. Energy Information Administration, while NYS is ranked 9th in the nation for the highest average cost of electricity at 21.63¢ per kWh\*<sup>1</sup>, as an OMEC member, you only pay 11.5¢ per kWh. That's almost half of what other New Yorker's pay.

OMEC's average service availability index (ASAI), which is the ratio of the total number of customer hours that service was available during a given time period to the total customer hours demanded is at 99.9685% as of the time of this publication.

\*as of June 2023

<sup>1</sup> US Energy Information Administration. "Rankings: Average Retail Price of Electricity to Residential Sector, June 2023 (cents/kWh)" <https://www.eia.gov/state/rankings/?sid=NY#series/31>. Accessed 3 November 2023.

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## President's Letter cont'd...

In looking at the big picture, the ideal to remove our dependency on fossil fuels is necessary. It would be nice to plug everything into an electrical outlet and have it working smoothly. However, when you consider everything that it takes to get that energy to that electrical outlet, that's the eye-opener.

The regulations and mandates imposed on our energy sources are frustrating. New York State's goals for clean energy are 70% by the year 2030 and 85% clean energy by the year 2050. Those goals come with a hefty price tag. Upgrades to the grid necessary to accommodate the demand to charge electric vehicles and such are astronomical. Incentives, monies, and grants may be available to attempt the upgrades. But we need to consider, where does the money come from anyway? Who does it end up costing?

Hydropower, natural gas, nuclear and even coal have proved reliable sources of electric generation. We worry a dependency on wind, solar, and battery storage alone could seriously impact that reliability.

Energy experts nationally advocate against any single generation option. They acknowledge that today's generation mix is essential to reliability and affordability for our members as future electricity generation evolves.

We all hope we can keep up with the electricity needed as we transition to remove our dependency on fossil fuels. We also understand that hope is not a real strategy. Perhaps efficiency will carry the days with reliability and resiliency.

Not sure how long it will take or even if that horse gets back before that cart, in the meantime, be prepared with that alternative heat source in your home that doesn't require electricity so that in the event of an emergency it won't be an emergency for you.

I wish you all the best and may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Respectfully,

Rudy Brouillette

President, Board of Directors

From all of us at  
**Oneida-Madison Electric  
Cooperative, we hope you  
have a safe, happy and  
healthy holiday season!**



## Long-Time Board Member Retires

After serving Oneida-Madison Electric for more than 29 years, Vice President of the Board of Directors, Tom Stone, has retired.

Tom joined the Board of Directors in 1994, and became Vice President in 1999.

He along with his wife, Susan, have six sons and one daughter. Tom is a retired dairy farmer, but along with his family still owns and operates Stone Brothers Greenhouse located on Milestrip Road in the town of Fenner.

Tom's influence and contributions to our Cooperative over the years are innumerable. And while we are sad to see him leave, we wish him all the best in his next adventures.



## “Blinks” Can Signal a Properly Working Electrical System

So often we have members calling the office to tell us about “blinks” wreaking havoc on their lives. A blink is when the power grid is subject to a momentary loss of power, turning off and right back on as if you blinked your eyes. And we get it; having to reset clocks and cable boxes can become cumbersome in a time when we are more reliant than ever on our electrical appliances.

But blinks can actually be a sign that the electrical infrastructure is working properly. Reclosers which are strategically placed throughout the lines, function like a breaker in your electrical panel in your home, except they can reset themselves automatically. If a critter or tree branch come into contact with a line, it may cause a blink. The recloser gives the system three tries to “get rid of” whatever is contacting the line. If the line can't be cleared, the recloser will remain open, causing an outage and protecting the lines from further damage. If it can be cleared, the blink occurs, but the power is restored and our line crew doesn't have to come out.

While these momentary lapses of power can be annoying, they can prevent a complete outage and they keep your bill low by not dispatching personnel and equipment to come out unnecessarily.

If you're experiencing blinks on a regular basis, do not hesitate to call the office to let us know; it could be a repeat offender like a certain tree that gets blown into the line regularly and may require a trim. As always, we appreciate our members letting us know when there is a problem!

## Save the Date

The office will be CLOSED for the following holidays:

### New Year's Day

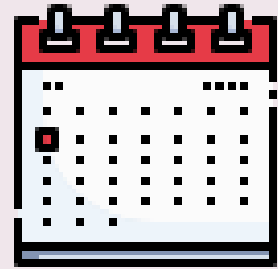
Monday, January 1, 2024

### Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, January 15, 2024

### Good Friday

Friday, March 29, 2024



As always, in the case of an outage or emergency, please call

**315-893-1851**

24 hours/day, 365 days/year

For the most up-to-date information regarding news, outages, contests, and more,

Like and Follow us on

Facebook!



Account Number	
Amount Due	\$2.22 CR
Due Date	01/18/2022
Amount Paid	CREDIT BILL



**It's Capital Credit Time!**

The OMEC Board of Directors has retired over **160K** of 2007's capital credits which will automatically be applied to your billing statement! Remember, if you see "CR" or "Credit Bill" on your payment stub, that means that you have a *credit* on your account and you don't actually owe anything!

Almost sixty years ago, NRECA established our political action committee (PAC) to support political candidates who recognize the vital role of electric cooperatives in their local communities. And for nearly six decades, our PAC has done just that. Today, nearly 35,000 donors contribute to our PAC, and it continues to support political candidates who support issues important to electric co-ops.

America's Electric Cooperatives PAC allows electric co-ops to financially support federal candidates through personal dollars raised from co-op leaders and consumer-members. We want to ensure that candidates, who if elected become policymakers, connect our PAC with electric co-ops. America's Electric Cooperatives PAC is non-partisan, advocating for policies and legislation supporting our electric co-ops. By contributing to the PAC, you can help make a difference in shaping the future of America's electric co-ops and the communities we serve.

*Your map location number, found on your billing statement, may be found somewhere in this newsletter! If you find it, contact our office by Feb 1st and your account will be credited \$10!*

**Operation Round Up is LIVE!**

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program that rounds your bill up to the nearest dollar each month. The money raised will go to a charity of the members' choosing, to be voted on at the 2024 Annual Meeting! You can opt-in or out at anytime! To enroll, you may log in to Smart Hub or call the office at 315-893-1851.



Your PAC contribution builds on our collective strength, which is grounded in the relationships between local electric co-ops, the communities they serve, and the candidates seeking to represent them. Join the thousands of co-op leaders who value political engagement and the role it plays in our collective success. For just a small amount a month, you can be sure your voice is heard in Washington, D.C. For more information on how to join simply visit [www.cooperative.com/pacdonation](http://www.cooperative.com/pacdonation) or ask your local PAC coordinator for a membership packet.

The PAC is just one tool in our advocacy toolbox. We also have a robust Voices for Cooperative Power grassroots advocacy program with thousands of electric co-op employee and consumer-member participants, and a grass tops influencer program that can tap into thousands of cooperative CEOs and directors. Those are complemented by skilled legislative and regulatory advocacy teams at NRECA.

Through these efforts, candidates and elected officials trust us at a time when trust is a scarce commodity in Washington. They know electric co-ops are invested and engaged in the communities you serve. Through our continued collective advocacy, our reputation in Washington will be enhanced for years to come.


*Contributions to the NRECA America's Electric Cooperatives PAC are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. Contributions to America's Electric Cooperatives PAC are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. You have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Federal law prohibits contributions from foreign nationals who lack permanent resident status. Any contribution guidelines presented are merely suggestions. You are free to contribute more or less than the suggested amounts, or not at all. NRECA will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount contributed or a decision not to contribute. For more information on the PAC, please contact your local cooperative or NRECA PAC team at 703-907-5799 or by email at [pacteam@nreca.coop](mailto:pacteam@nreca.coop).*

# Attention High School Juniors: Scholarship Opportunities Now Available!

For an application visit <https://oneida-madison.coop/2024-youth-scholarship>, call 315-893-1851 or inquire with your guidance counselor!



## Oneida-Madison Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# NRECA Legislative Rally 2024

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Annually, Oneida-Madison Electric Cooperative, Inc. (OMEC), sponsors a "Legislative Youth Tour" providing a selected youth-delegate the opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. to meet with our nation's political leaders, learn about our Nation's legislative process and how that process benefits the critical issues that face Rural Electric Cooperatives.

Along with this great experience comes the opportunity to receive up to \$1,000 scholarship, chances for more monetary scholarships and a possibility to meet with like-minded youths in Atlanta, GA for the NRECA 2025 PowerXchange.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Be a son/daughter of a member of OMEC.
- Be in their junior (11th grade) year.
- Have at least a "B" average or better.
- Participate in extra-curricular activities and community service.
- Be available to travel to Washington, D.C. April 20-24, [2024](#)



## APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested students should:

- Complete and submit the application by **February 15, 2024**. Applications available on our website or in our office
- Submit a one-page student essay describing yourself. Essay should include where you go to school, favorite subjects, extra-curricular activities, and community service you have been involved in.
- Written recommendations from two **references**. References must be from a teacher, an extracurricular activity coach or leader, an elected official, religious leader or employer.
- Once applications are submitted an interview will be scheduled.

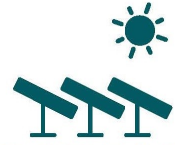
*for more information visit*

<https://oneida-madison.coop/2024-cooperative-youth-scholarship>

6630 State Route 20, P.O. Box 27, Bouckville, NY 13310  
office@oneidamadison.com  
Telephone: (315)893-1851 | Fax: (315) 893-1857



HOME ENERGY  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Home Energy Assistance Program, or HEAP, is now accepting applications for regular benefits! Enrollment began on November 1st. Regular HEAP benefits are based on income, household size, primary heating source, and the presence of a household member who is younger than 6, 60 years or older, or permanently disabled. HEAP can assist you if you heat your home with one or more of the following: electricity, natural gas, oil, coal, propane, wood/wood pellets, kerosene or corn.

Emergency HEAP will be available starting January 2, 2024. The emergency benefits are a little different and are based on income, available resources and type of emergency.

You can apply for regular HEAP benefits in person at either the Oneida or Madison Counties Department of Social Services, online at <https://mybenefits.ny.gov/mybenefits/begin>, or by phone at (315) 366-2211 (Madison County) (315) 798-5559 (Oneida County-Utica) or (315) 356-2840 (Oneida County– Rome).

Emergency HEAP must be applied for in person or over the phone; they do not accept online applications.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding how HEAP could help you with your electric bill this winter, don't hesitate to call our office at (315) 893-1851 to speak with one of our Member Services Representatives.

## Getting to Know Willie Wiredhand

You may know his face as the official mascot for electrical cooperatives across the nation, but how well do you really know Willie Wiredhand?

In December 1948, Rural Electrification Magazine ran a contest promoting the creation of a “symbolic cartoon” with a grand prize of \$50. Andrew “Drew” McLay answered the call with his depiction of Willie Wiredhand; the surname being a play on hired hand as electricity was advertised as “the never-tiring, always available, hired hand to help the nation’s farmers”.

The purpose of the contest was to come up with a rival mascot to Reddy Kilowatt, the face of investor-owned electric companies. Willie Wiredhand was then “born” on October 30, 1950. And you'd think that would be the end of the story, but you'd be wrong.

In 1956, there was a head-to-head fight between Reddy Kilowatt and Willie Wiredhand as a lawsuit was filed alleging trademark infringement from the Reddy side. Reddy Kilowatt was created in 1926 by Ashton B. Collins, who at the time worked for the Alabama Power Company. Once Collins severed ties from the Alabama Power Company, he allowed them to have a license to use Reddy in their advertising and marketing materials and went on to do the same for 222 licensees (as of 1956) both here and abroad. Collins refused licensing to electrical cooperatives because he thought it would be harmful to associate investor-owned utilities with the federally-subsidized rural programs.

Willie Wiredhand, cont'd...

When Willie came along as the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) mascot, Reddy Kilowatt, Inc. was not having it and filed the lawsuit.

However, all's well that ends well, as the District Judge ruled that there was no copyright infringement and that hundreds of companies for years had used animated, anthropomorphic characters in advertising including Planter's Mr. Peanut, among others. Willie had won not only the lawsuit, but his own copyright!

Since then, Willie has been the official face of electrical cooperatives across America, including right here at OMEC. With his signature lightbulb socket head, wire body, and two-pronged power plug legs, Willie is a symbol that has withstood the test of time, just as electrical cooperatives have; steady, reliable, and always here for our members.



## NRECA Joins the Throngs By Sponsoring a Contest

### \$50 Offered For Symbolic Cartoon

In an era of symbols for everything from soap to nations, there is no symbol representing the rural electrification program or electricity on the farm.

In an era of contests so numerous that most people hear or read about one before breakfast and the last thing before going to bed, NRECA has never held a contest—until now.

Killing two birds with one sitting at the typewriter, NRECA announces a contest without rules. Any non-copyrighted cartoons or drawings are eligible—contestants can submit anything they can steal or talk a cartoonist friend into working up in an idle moment.

Everything—even if it is an upside-down modern painting—will be submitted to the voting delegates at the NRECA convention in New York January 30-February 3. Their votes will select the cartoon they think most symbolic of the program.

Since even a contest without rules ought to offer a prize to the winner, \$50.00 will be awarded to the person who submits the winning drawing.

The cartoons on this page were dredged up to start the wheels turning. Three of them are the work of a part-time artist who wanders into the National office every few months. The others are the work of fertile brains of individuals within the rural electrification program.

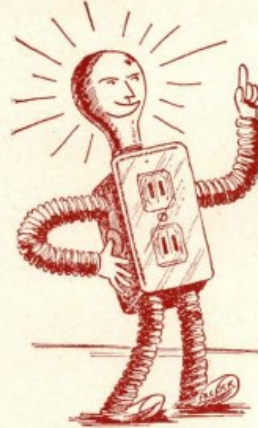
Deadline on entries will be January 17, since the drawings must be printed up so that all delegates can have a look at them.

The objective of this contest is a serious one. It will likely be used extensively.

**Originators Reserve All Rights to the Drawings on this Page.**



O. E. Mabrey, manager of Flint Hill REC of Council Grove, Kan., sees rural electricity as the "Elec Tricity" pictured above.



"Kwicki Work Hand" is rural electricity as seen by a staff member of Harrison County rural electric of Kentucky.



Kentucky's Statewide contributed this suggestion, with rural electricity an honorary colonel, "Super Hand."



An artist stopped in at the National office and came up with some ideas of his own on the best symbol of rural electricity. He envisions the unnamed character in the left cartoon as being part of numerous similar scenes in the home and on the farm.



RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

Clockwise from top left: Willie Wiredhand skiing, advertisement from Rural Electrification Magazine, December 1948, and Willie Wiredhand with a lightbulb. All courtesy of the NRECA.

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## *At Home with Hazel*

*Winter is peak citrus season and these easy-to-make lemon bars are just the ticket for a sweet treat with minimal ingredients!*

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### **Lemon Bars**

Prep time: 5 mins Cook time: 52-60 mins

Servings: makes 16 bars

#### **Ingredients:**

*For the crust:*

12 Tbsp unsalted butter

6 Tbsp sugar

1 ½ Cups all-purpose flour

*For the Filling:*

1 ½ Cups sugar

¼ Cup flour

4 large eggs

¾ Cup lemon juice (juice from 4 lemons)

1 Tbsp lemon zest

Dusting of powdered sugar, optional

#### **Instructions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350° and line 8x8 baking dish with parchment paper.\*
2. Add crust ingredients to food processor or blender and pulse for 20-30 seconds, until dough is easily formed into a ball.
3. Press dough evenly into bottom of parchment-lined pan. Bake for 22-25 minutes.
4. Combine filling ingredients into a bowl and whisk well. Let sit for 15 minutes while crust is baking.
5. Whisk again quickly before pouring over crust. Bake for an additional 30-35 minutes
6. Remove from oven before top begins to brown.
7. Remove bars from pan by grabbing the ends of the parchment paper and carefully place in refrigerator or freezer to chill for 1 hour.
8. Once bars are set, dust with powdered sugar, if desired, and cut into squares.

Notes:

\*Leave a three-inch overhang of parchment paper in each direction to allow for easy removal

You can use bottled lemon juice in replacement of freshly squeezed, but don't omit lemon zest; that's where the real lemony flavor comes from.

Press the sides of bars into powdered sugar to seal in moisture and store in an air-tight container

Add strawberries, blueberries, poppy seeds or swirl your favorite jam through lemon mixture for an added twist! (If using fresh fruit, add an additional 10 minutes to cook time).