



Oneida-Madison Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

COOPERATIVE NEWS

Holiday Greetings!

First, I'd like to thank everyone who participates in Operation Round Up for helping make a real difference in our community. The generosity of 158 members, each giving a little to help local charities, truly shows the cooperative spirit in action. It's a wonderful reminder of the good people who make up our co-op. If you'd like to get involved, give the office a call for details.

Across the country, America's aging power grid is under growing pressure from rising electricity demand — driven by artificial intelligence, data centers, electric vehicles, and increasingly extreme weather. Experts warn that without timely action and smart investments in infrastructure, we could face significant energy challenges ahead. As always, the future keeps us on our toes.

One of the biggest factors in this growing demand is the rapid expansion of AI data centers. These facilities can be built much faster than new power generation or transmission infrastructure, which adds to the strain on the grid.

That said, we're seeing some positive steps forward. In early October, Governor Hochul directed state agencies to speed up renewable energy development and construction. Last summer, she also supported advancing nuclear energy projects, recognizing that a mix of resources is essential to meet New York's growing electricity and economic needs.

On the national level, the landscape for electric cooperatives has shifted significantly in recent years. Policies continue to evolve as leaders work to balance reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy sources. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) has been a strong voice in Washington, urging policymakers to maintain existing generation resources while exploring new technologies. Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers value NRECA's nonpartisan approach and its collaboration with member co-ops.

Here at OMEC, we share that same focus. We're guided not by politics or profit, but by our mission to serve our members
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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

Scott Bugbee

Seth Howard

James Nassimos

Kurt Peavey



- ♦ Applications due by **February 9, 2026**
- ♦ Must be available to travel to Washington, D.C. **April 26-30, 2026**
- ♦ Join students from other NY cooperatives to meet legislators at the Capitol, sight-see throughout the city, catch a Washington Nationals baseball game, and MORE!
- ♦ Room, board, and travel expenses are **COVERED!**
- ♦ If you have any questions, please contact Kyla Lawrence at 315-893-1851 or kyla@oneidamadison.com



President Brouillette's letter continued from page 1

and strengthen our communities. Regardless of who's in office, our priority remains the same — delivering safe, reliable, and affordable power that supports a high quality of life for the people we serve.

Transitioning to a lower-carbon future will take time, innovation, and balance. As new ideas and technologies emerge, we'll continue working toward sustainability while keeping reliability at the forefront.

Your Board of Directors understands our responsibility to you — the member-owners of OMEC. Every decision we make is grounded in what's best for you and for the long-term health of our cooperative.

I'd also like to thank the Board and staff for their dedication and teamwork through changing times. Working together is the key to success — not just for electric co-ops, but for our nation as a whole.

May peace and prosperity be with you, our Cooperative, and our country this holiday season and always, as we travel life's highway together.

Respectfully,

Rudy Brouillette
President, Board of Directors

Youth Tour Scholarship Now Accepting Applications!

Calling all juniors in high school— our Youth Tour/Legislative Rally scholarship is open for applications! Experience the opportunity of a lifetime with an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. April 26-30, 2026! Additionally you could receive up to \$1000 cash scholarship, the opportunity to return to D.C. in July if chosen for the Youth Leadership Council and a trip to San Diego, CA in February 2027!!!!!!

All you need to do is apply! To receive an application, contact the office at 315-893-1851 or visit our website at:

<https://oneida-madison.coop/2026-youth-scholarship>



New Addition to the OMEC Crew

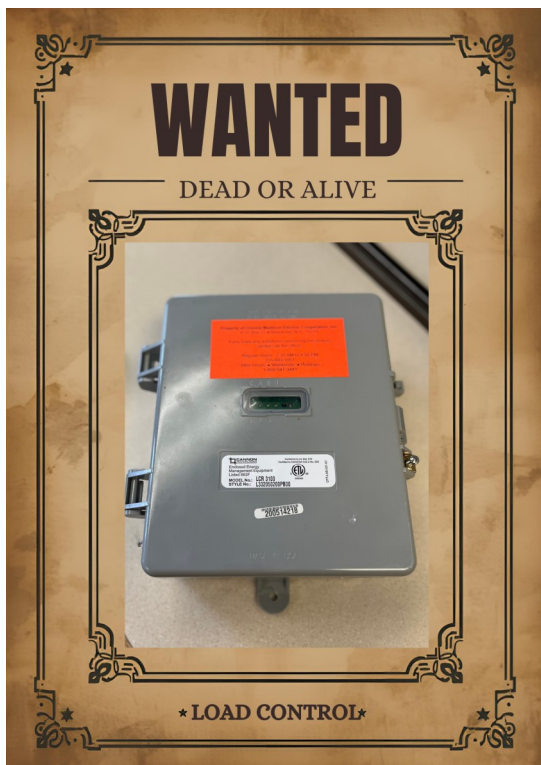
OMEC is pleased to announce the newest member of our team: Line Apprentice, Chris Collier.

Although a native New Yorker, hailing from near Rochester, Chris joins us from Mountainside Power in Watford City, North Dakota!

Chris has already proven he's a valuable addition to the team and we are so happy to welcome him aboard!



Legacy Program Ends



Our Load Control Program has officially ended. Begun in 2006, this initiative helped OMEC curb peak demand as well as conserve energy, but with new advances in technology, we will be transitioning to more effective methodologies in the future. If you haven't already spoken to Amy in the office, you will soon! She will be coordinating the removal of these devices. However if you'd prefer, you can have a qualified electrician remove them and drop them off or we can arrange a pick up.

Thank you to all those who participated in this program for the better part of two decades! We look forward to working with you on new and exciting energy efficiency programs in the future!

Save the Date

The office will be closed for the following holidays:

Christmas Eve

Wed. December 24

Christmas Day

Thurs. December 25

New Year's Day

Thurs. January 1

Martin Luther

King, Jr. Day

Mon. January 19

For the most up-to-date information regarding news, outages, contests, and more, like and follow us on Facebook!



Don't have social media?

You can still see our newsfeed on our website!

<https://oneida-madison.coop>

From Kites to Kilowatts... and Taxes?

Ben Franklin's kite made electricity famous; his quip made taxes inevitable.

If your calendar looks like ours, fall means school tax time... and just when you catch your breath after the holidays, along come property taxes. We feel it too. Even though we're a not-for-profit and tax-exempt in some areas like income tax, real property taxes aren't one of those exemptions. Our poles, wires, transformers, substations, buildings, and the land they sit on are all considered taxable real property.

"How do you even assess a power line?"

It's tough for a local assessor to value utility systems the way they value houses. That's why New York uses a two part process: The NYS Office of Real Property Tax Services (ORPTS) values poles, overhead lines, and transformer throughout our system. ORPTS reviews our inventory every year and certifies value back to each township. Our land, buildings, and yards are valued by your local assessor just like other taxable parcels. Towns, counties, and schools then apply their tax rates to those assessments just like they do for everyone else.

Balancing Reliability and Affordability

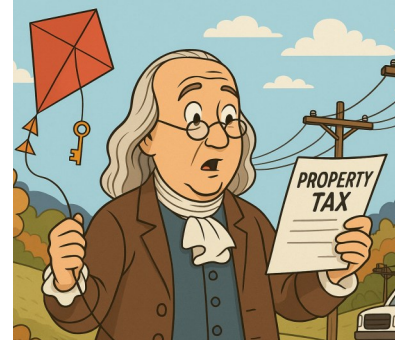
From time to time, statewide policies encourage utilities to rebuild or replace equipment sooner than we might otherwise plan. When upgrades happen early, some costs can remain on the books for assets that still had useful life, often called stranded costs. And, much like at home, new improvements can increase assessed value, which may affect property taxes on those facilities. We're committed to reliability, safety, and thoughtful modernization, and we do our best to sequence projects sensibly so members see clear benefits and steady, predictable costs.

Why are we telling you this?

Your bill covers much more than the flow of electrons. It supports a 24/7 system from construction, storm response, vegetation management, bucket trucks, safety training....and yes, property taxes that fund local schools and governments right here at home.

Bottom line:

We're proud to pay our fair share and put member dollars to work wisely. By timing upgrades properly and keeping assessments accurate, we aim to deliver the same Franklin-style practicality: reliable power, prudent spending, and plain talk about where the money goes.



By the Numbers

Towns & Counties



2 Counties
12 Townships
\$95,000
\$53 per member per year

School Districts



10 School Districts
\$143,000
\$80 per member per year





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OMEC RECOGNIZED FOR HIGH MEMBER SATISFACTION

Oneida-Madison Electric Cooperative was recently recognized by Touchstone Energy® as a member cooperative that received one of the top 5 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) scores for energy utility services among all cooperatives participating in measurement for Touchstone Energy in the third quarter of 2025. In Q3 (2025), OMEC received an ACSI score of **94** on a **100-point scale**.¹ OMEC's score is higher when compared to publicly measured cooperative utility scores reported in the syndicated 2025 ACSI Energy Utility Study and places OMEC 20 points higher than the average investor-owned utility score of 74, 19 points higher than the average municipal utility score of 75, as well as 18 points higher than the average cooperative utility score of 76.

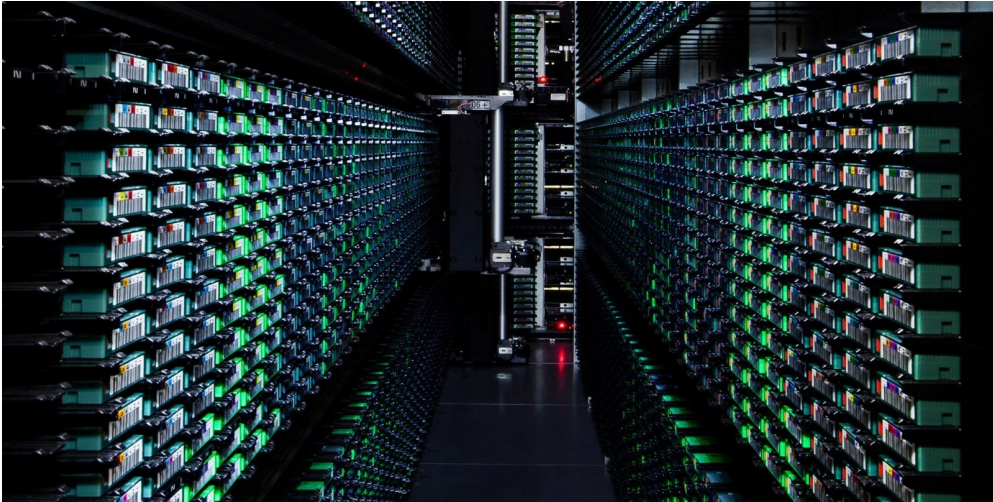
¹ Compared to publicly measured energy utilities in the ACSI® survey of customers rating their own energy utility. Results based on data provided by Oneida-Madison Electric Cooperative collected between June 2, 2025-August 1, 2025. ACSI did not regulate the survey administration or sample size. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC. For more about the ACSI, visit www.theacsi.org.

THANK YOU to all of our members who took our Cooperative Advantage survey over the summer! Your feedback is essential in helping us provide you with the most reliable and effective service! We are so proud to power your lives!



OMEC earns this award based on data modeled by the ACSI® in 2025. Award criteria are determined by the ACSI based on customers rating their satisfaction with OMEC in a survey independent of the syndicated ACSI Energy Utility Study. For more about the ACSI, visit www.theacsi.org/badges. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.

What the Heck is a Data Center Anyway?



A data center is a specialized facility built to handle the massive demands of artificial intelligence (AI) workloads. These centers contain the advanced IT infrastructure needed to train, deploy, and deliver AI

applications and services. Compared to traditional data centers, AI data centers require far more computing power, storage, networking speed, and cooling capacity.

In simpler terms: when you ask AI a question, it scans through every document it's ever been trained on to produce an answer in seconds. Just imagine the power it takes to search that mountain of information, pinpoint exactly what you need, and deliver it faster than you can type a Google search.

But this incredible capability comes with serious downsides, chief among them, enormous energy use, environmental impacts, security risks, and operational challenges.

To put it in perspective, data centers consume roughly 176 terawatt-hours (TWh) of electricity each year¹. (For scale, one TWh equals one trillion watts used for one hour.) And that number is expected to skyrocket in the coming decades. Even more striking: 30–40% of that energy is used just to keep systems cool, which also requires massive amounts of water.

These water-guzzling, energy-hungry facilities are spreading fast, with major clusters in Northern Virginia, Dallas–Fort Worth, Silicon Valley, and the Pacific Northwest. And don't be surprised if they start popping up in upstate New York too. With its plentiful water and affordable hydroelectric power, New York offers prime conditions for new data centers.

As NYS Assemblymember and Energy Committee Chair Didi Barrett warns, “This increased electricity consumption, combined with the accompanying need for infrastructure and generation to serve these large energy users, is a cost that is currently borne by all ratepayers and could further strain already cash-strapped New Yorkers.”

So, what's the true cost? That's still being debated. But one thing's certain: data centers aren't going anywhere. In the global race for AI dominance, they've become the battleground of a new kind of Cold War.

¹ This figure is from 2023 as reported by the United States Department of Energy.

At Home with Hazel

Cabbage is an often underrated vegetable. It can be found year-round, its economical and its delicious! Try this creamy, cheesy version as a side dish for your next holiday meal– you won't be disappointed!

Cheesy Cabbage Gratin

Ingredients:

1 medium head of green or savoy cabbage
(about 3½ lb. total), cut through core into 8 wedges

2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1½ tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste

1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste

2 medium shallots, quartered through root end

4 garlic cloves

2 cups heavy cream

1 Tbsp. thyme leaves, plus more for serving

1 Tbsp. unsalted butter

3 oz. Gruyère, grated (about 1½ cups)

½ oz. Parmesan, finely grated (about ½ cup)

Instructions:

Step 1

Place oven racks in upper third and middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Place cabbage on a rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with oil; season lightly with salt and pepper to taste. Roast until tender and edges are golden, 40–45 minutes. (This is an essential first step: It draws out the excess moisture, ensuring that the cream mixture doesn't get watery.)

Step 2

Meanwhile, bring shallots, garlic, cream, 1 Tbsp. thyme, 1½ tsp. salt, and 1 tsp. pepper to a simmer in a small saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until shallots and garlic are very soft, 15–20 minutes. Let cool slightly. Transfer to a blender; blend until smooth.

Step 3

Rub the inside of a 3-qt. shallow baking dish with butter. Arrange cabbage in dish so wedges are lying on a cut side; pour cream mixture over. Bake on middle rack, uncovered, until cream thickens, 30–40 minutes. Let cool 30 minutes.

Step 4

Heat broiler. Sprinkle Gruyère and Parmesan evenly over cabbage. Broil until cheese is bubbling and gratin is deeply browned, about 4 minutes. Top with more thyme.





Wattson's Window

It's that time of year again, darker mornings (and afternoons!), colder temperatures, and fewer birdies to watch from the window.

As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisp, I'm reminded how lucky I am to be spending my second winter indoors, warm, well-fed, and loved. It wasn't always this way. Once upon a time, I was a scared little fluffball with a too-tight kitten collar and a few battle scars. I didn't have friends, and I certainly didn't trust anyone, human or beast.

Then my life did a complete 180. My friends at the Co-op rescued me from Hamilton College, took me to a kind veterinarian, and loved me

from the start, even when I was about as cuddly as a cactus. They knew I might never get over my past or learn to trust again, but their patience and care never wavered. In the end, *I* was the one who changed. Now I'm playful, curious, affectionate and most importantly, content.

I share my story to remind you, dear friends, to be kind and generous this season, not for what you might gain, but simply because it's the right thing to do. That doesn't mean giving more than you can afford; sometimes kindness is as simple as being consistent, compassionate, or lending a paw to someone who needs it.

It's easy to get caught up in the noise of the world where things can feel divided and self-centered, but here at the Co-op, we do things differently. We live by the **Seven Cooperative Principles**: Open and Voluntary Membership, Democratic Member Control, Members' Economic Participation, Autonomy & Independence, Education, Training & Information, Cooperation Among Cooperatives, and, most importantly, **Concern for Community**.

The folks at OMEC showed concern for me when I was just a forgotten stray — and they care about you, too.

So this year, when the wind bites and the nights fall early, think of your neighbors who might need a little warmth, a meal, a hug, or just someone to listen. Let's think less about ourselves and more about lifting up others. After all, even the smallest act of kindness can change a life.

Purrs and head bumps,
Your Grateful Wattson

