



Oakdale Electric Cooperative is in the process of replacing current meters with an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system. One of the features of this new system is an improvement in the capability to detect and report when meters are not functioning properly.

Let's review Oakdale Electric Cooperative's policy on meter tampering and power theft.

What is meter tampering?

Meter tampering is the diversion of power or the unauthorized alteration or manipulation of the cooperative's meter, wires, seals, or other apparatus in such a way as to prevent the meter from recording the amount of electric service supplied to the member.

Meter tampering is illegal, dangerous, and is strictly prohibited by the cooperative.

What are the dangers associated with meter tampering?

Electricity flowing through a compromised meter can cause an electrical devastation. A short circuit could produce an arc flash bright enough to cause blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of shrapnel-like, red-hot debris. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion, or fire can result from meter tampering. Only trained co-op employees wearing protective clothing should work on meters. Even a licensed electrician does not have permission to remove or alter a meter.

Meters are locked and sealed to protect members from the dangerous voltage inside. The leading cause of electrical fatalities is 120/240 voltage, the same amount located inside a meter. Low voltage does not mean low danger.

What is the consequence of meter tampering?

Oakdale Electric Cooperative takes meter tampering and power theft very seriously.

When Oakdale Electric Cooperative's AMI system detects either meter tampering or a meter malfunction, an alarm will be sent immediately to the co-op, prompting an investigation.

If there is evidence meter tampering occurred, disconnection of service will ensue. Prior to the meter being reconnected in the same member's name, the member must pay the meter-tampering penalty fee of \$500, a reseal fee of \$100, the estimated electricity charges, and any other charges that may have been related to previous disconnection.

What is the cost of meter tampering?

Electricity theft is not a victimless crime. Your not-for-profit co-op loses revenue and expends resources to investigate tampering. These costs are then passed on to the entire membership. As much as \$6 billion worth of electricity is stolen annually across the United States, according to one industry estimate.

Questions to ask if you suspect meter tampering:

- Is the plastic meter socket seal broken or missing?
- Is the metal tag on the meter broken or missing?
- Are there cut wires sticking out of the meter?
- Are there numerous wires or cables coming out of the meter?
- Are there strange objects or tools stuck in the meter?
- Is the meter turned upside down?
- Is the meter missing?
- Is the meter being worked on by someone other than a cooperative employee?
- Are there wires that are cut or hanging off the power line itself?
- Are there lots of extension cords snaking across a property for weeks at a time?

Contact Oakdale Electric Cooperative at 800.241.2468 immediately if you suspect meter tampering. All information can be given anonymously. It's too dangerous to ignore.



Only trained cooperative employees wearing protective clothing are allowed to work on a meter.



Resolve to make a positive change, WITH CHANGE, this New Year!

The first of the year has arrived, and once again you might be asking yourself where the past 12 months went. Life can be—scratch that—*is* hectic. Between work, family, civic obligations, and everything in between, you're used to running full throttle seven days a week, 365 days a year. Give yourself permission to slow down this New Year's, even if it's just for a few minutes, and take that time to reflect back and maybe resolve to hit the reset button.

The new year gives hope for a fresh start and provides the opportune time to set out personal achievement goals, better known as resolutions. Improving one's health, whittling away at debt, and spending more time with family/friends always rank high amongst resolution makers. Doing more good deeds for others has also shown to be a favorable resolve. Mix together motivation with realistic and attainable goals, and there is no stopping resolution success!

While your local electric co-op can't help you run a marathon, we can help you support your local communities with just a small donation on your monthly electric bill. It's called Operation Round Up, and we believe it would be a

worthwhile addition to any member's resolution list this year.

Oakdale Electric Cooperative first introduced Operation Round Up 14 years ago. The program's basis is simple. Members voluntarily opt to round up their electric bill to the next highest dollar (i.e. \$43.56 rounds up to \$44.00), with the spare change (44 cents) going into a trust fund used solely for community betterment donations. A single member's annual donation is never more than \$6, or approximately 50 cents a month.

Currently 1,500 members participate in Operation Round Up, and that number keeps increasing as word of the good will Operation Round Up bestows spreads. See the full list of donations made in 2017 on the facing page. What makes this program unique is that it's members helping members, exemplifying the seventh cooperative principle, Concern for Community. This guiding principle addresses the dedication and commitment to make our communities stronger now and for years to come. With over \$57,000 in monetary donations given to date, much positive change has been made locally with members' spare change, and it's only the beginning.

If you currently participate in Operation Round Up, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. If you haven't joined yet, now is the time to resolve to change that status. Enrollment is open year-round, and so easy! Complete the registration form at left and include with your next payment. Otherwise, sign up by visiting the oakdalerec.com website, or call the co-op's office at 800.241.2468 Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Resolve to participate in Operation Round Up this year and make a positive change, with change!

YES, I would like to participate in Operation Round Up!

Please round my electric bill to the next highest dollar, with the difference placed in Operation Round Up.



Member Name _____

Member Number _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP Code _____

Email address _____

Please return this form to Oakdale Electric Cooperative,
P.O. Box 40, Oakdale, WI 54649

Thanks, Barb

Oakdale Electric Cooperative extends its sincere appreciation to retiring Operation Round Up Board of Trustee member Barb Brooks, Reedsburg, for her dedication and commitment since 2002.

"I enjoyed my years spent volunteering for Operation Round Up, and I will always hold these memories in a special place in my heart," she said.

While we are sad to see Barb go, we wish her nothing but the best in the future!



2017 Operation Round Up Donations

Nekoosa Fire Department
 MS Snowmobile Tour
 Mauston Area Youth Soccer
 Lemonweir Elementary School
 Wilton Police Department
 S.E.A. of Change
 New Lisbon TRAP Team
 Neighbor for Neighbor
 New Lisbon Library
 AmeriCorps Farm to School
 nasa
 Royal High School Trap Club
 Remembering Jesse Parker Races
 Touched Twice United Free Healthcare Clinic
 Stepping for Hunger
 Parenting Place
 Ecumenical Bread Basket Food Pantry
 Neighbor for Neighbor Food Pantry
 Ontario Food Pantry
 Wilton Food Pantry
 Pittsville Area Neighbors Shelf
 Reedsburg Food Pantry
 St John Evangelical Lutheran Church Food Pantry
 Camp Douglas Food Pantry
 New Lisbon Food Pantry
 Community Sharing Pantry
 Wonewoc Union Center Food Pantry
 Elroy Food Pantry
 Necedah Food Pantry
 Couleecap, Inc.
 Reedsburg Area Helping Hands
 Mr. Ed's Community Thanksgiving Dinner
 Toys for Tots – Tomah
 Four member donations

Total for 2017 = \$7,600





OEC EMPLOYEE NEWS!



We welcomed Rachel Winrich, accountant, to Oakdale Electric in November. Rachel has a bachelor of science degree in finance from UW-La Crosse, and brings over 10 years of accounting experience to the cooperative. She was previously employed with Handishop, where she was the accounting coordinator for the organization.

Rachel and her husband, Josh, reside in Wilton with their two daughters Ryley (12) and Bayley (9). With both girls very active in sports, the majority of the couple's free time is spent at sporting practices, events, and tournaments. When time allows, the family enjoys getting their fishing boat out and exploring new bodies of water.

Linda Pierce took on a new, managerial role with the co-op as the manager of finance and administration. This well-deserved promotion comes following 18 years of dedication, hard work, and commitment to Oakdale Electric Cooperative, where Linda has served as the accountant for the past 17 years.



Linda and her husband, Kevin, live in rural Warrens where they enjoy leading an active, outdoor lifestyle with hobbies that include hunting, kayaking, snowmobiling, and taking scenic UTV rides. Their two adult children Cole (23) and Kelli (21) are both currently enrolled in college and pursuing their academic aspirations.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TURKEY WINNERS!

Thank you to all members who entered Oakdale Electric Cooperative's Annual 5 Days of Turkey Giveaways!

The number of entries has continually increased since the contest debuted in 2014, with a new record of 1,200 entries submitted for 2017. With such a great response from members, the drawing will return next year.

This year's lucky winners were:

- Day #1: Julie Steinhoff, Tomah
- Day #2: Donald Mentzel, New Lisbon
- Day #3: Richard Bonney, New Lisbon
- Day #4: Nancy Rybaski, Lyndon Station
- Day #5: Joshua Potter, Mauston



Bruce Ardel, General Manager

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Deana Protz, Editor



**Oakdale Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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.