

Playing it Safe Online

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones, and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms, and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identify, banking and health records, and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin-spice lattes, crisper air, and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect personal information is a year-round practice, at Consumers Energy, we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how Consumers Energy is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1. **Implement multi-factor authentication** (also known as two-step verification) on your accounts. The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.
2. **Update your software.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
3. **Think before you click.** Most successful cyber attacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted, or include unusual requests.
4. **Create strong passwords,** using long, unique, and complex words or phrases. Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity, and notify you of potential phishing websites.

continued on page 8-B ►

WIN

ONE OF TWO MONTHLY \$5 BILL CREDITS

THIS MONTH'S CONTEST:

Submit your answers to the Halloween Emoji Pictionary on page 8-C. The solutions will be published in the November edition of The Connection.

♦ ♦ ♦

Winners for the month of August:
 Ronald & Vicki Lyon, Cambridge
 Joe Toot, Nevada

Here's how to enter:

1. Answer the question or challenge posed each month.
2. Send answers to Consumers Energy with:
 - Name
 - Service Address
 - Account Number
 - Phone Number
 - Email Address
 Submit via email or mail:
 Email to: kglenney@consumersenergy.coop
 Subject line: Contest

 Mail to: Consumers Energy
 Attn: Contest
 2074 242nd Street
 Marshalltown, IA 50158
3. Winners' names will be drawn at random and published in upcoming issues of *The Connection*.

October 2023

Dates To Remember:

October

- 3 Bills Due
- 3 Automatic Payments Deducted
- 10 Email / Mail Bills
- 25 Automatic Payments Deducted
- 31 Halloween
- 31 Read Meters

November

- 3 Bills Due
- 3 Automatic Payments Deducted
- 5 Daylight Saving Time Ends

Playing it Safe Online *(continued)*

For the young people in your household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on, that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

Keeping the electric grid and your data secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For Consumers Energy, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather, and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op, we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members' information protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.



Bridget Itzen,
CEO/General Manager



PASSWORD DOS AND DON'TS

A strong password can make all the difference in protecting your personal information. Follow these tips for stronger passwords.

DO:

- Change the manufacturer's Wi-Fi password on your router.
- Use two-factor authentication.
- Use unique phrases (like lyrics to your favorite song) to remember passwords.

DON'T:

- Don't use common words or numbers like "password" or "1234."
- Don't use personal details like your date of birth in a password.
- Don't use the same password for multiple accounts.

October is
Cybersecurity
Awareness Month.

Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart



WANTED: Rural Iowa high school students who have a passion for leadership



Attend our webinar series in October for a chance to win Apple AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship! Learn more at IowaYouthTour.com

TUESDAY, OCT. 7 | THURSDAY, OCT. 19 | THURSDAY, OCT. 26
ALL SESSIONS BEGIN AT 7 P.M. AND LAST ABOUT AN HOUR.



Consumers Energy's students who attend all three sessions will also be entered into a random drawing for a \$100 debit gift card!



Board of Directors Elects Officers

The cooperative's Board of Directors elected its officers at its reorganizational meeting on August 24 following the election that took place at the Annual Meeting.



DENNY BECKMAN
President



CRAIG GRIFFIEON
Vice President



PAT VONAHNEN
Secretary-Treasurer



BOB MEIMANN
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

HALLOWEEN EMOJI PICTONARY

Guess the Halloween-themed item or activity! Enter the monthly newsletter contest by sending in your answers!

Contest details are on page 8-A.

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|--|
| 1 | | 7 | |
| 2 | | 8 | |
| 3 | | 9 | |
| 4 | | 10 | |
| 5 | | 11 | |
| 6 | | 12 | |

Daylight Saving Time ends November 5

The end of daylight saving time is a great time to go through your fall home maintenance checklist. Here are some items to include:

SET YOUR CLOCKS BACK ONE HOUR



RESET THE TIMER ON YOUR WATER HEATER



CHANGE YOUR SMOKE DETECTOR BATTERIES



- Check the expiration date on fire extinguishers and replace if necessary.
- Change the rotation of your ceiling fans to rotate clockwise at a low speed.
- Remove hoses, and shut off exterior faucets.
- Add weatherstripping around window and door frames. Get door sweeps ready.
- Measure attic insulation. It may be time to add more.
- Inspect your garage door.
- Remove any items from the garage that may freeze.
- Clean dryer vents.
- Schedule chimney cleaning and heating system maintenance.
- Replace furnace filters.
- Care for trees and shrubs.
- Rake leaves.
- Clean gutters and downspouts, and inspect your roof.
- Make exterior repairs.
- Seal gaps where critters could enter.
- Check walkways, railings, stairs, and driveways for winter safety.
- Start thinking about stocking up on winter supplies.
- Check your home for radon. Fall is a great time to check it! As the weather gets cooler and windows stay shut more, radon is more likely to get trapped in your home.
- Apply for rebates if applicable.

Questions? Contact Energy Advisor Jeff Lanning at 800-696-6552 or at info@consumersenergy.coop.

HELP US FIND THESE MEMBERS

Consumers Energy is holding unclaimed money resulting from Patronage Capital Credit payouts that are due to the persons listed below. If the cooperative does not hear from the owner within six (6) months, Consumers Energy is allowed to retain this property in accordance with Iowa law.



Christine Alderman; Clio, IA
Aubrey Alvarez; Ankeny, IA
Brian Anderson; Steamboat Rock, IA
Aaron Anderson; Ankeny, IA
Andrea Armstrong; Beaver Dam, WI
Taylor Aukes; Ankeny, IA
Betina Balli; San Antonio, TX
Elizabeth Baridon; Ankeny, IA
Charles Barnes; Urbandale, IA
Aaron Bazal; Ames, IA
Berkey Home Builders; Altoona, IA
Irene Berlau; Ankeny, IA
Alicia Biggerstaff; Ankeny, IA
Hailey Birdsall; Des Moines, IA
Kelli Boyle; Ankeny, IA
Brothers Construction/CSI Properties; Ankeny, IA
Katie Bryan; Woodward, IA
Michael Butler; Marshalltown, IA
Chris Calhoun; Waukee, IA
Koushik Chandra; Ankeny, IA
Chad Christy; Ankeny, IA
City Heights Coop; Ankeny, IA
Cory Clark; Norwalk, IA
Taylor Cluff; Ankeny, IA
Colonial Inn Iowa; Marshalltown, IA
Susan Cook Balduf; Steamboat Rock, IA
Amanda Coverdell; Ankeny, IA
David Cox; Marshalltown, IA
Nicole Crozier; Ankeny, IA
Alex Dahl; Ankeny, IA
Shea Daniels; Des Moines, IA
Zach Davis; Ankeny, IA
Tonia De; Ankeny, IA
Zachary Decker; Ankeny, IA
Mirka Deza; Ankeny, IA
James Dirck; Ankeny, IA
Dorcelle M Trowbridge Trust; North Richland Hill, TX
Logan Dunn; Ames IA
Misty Dutcher; Ankeny, IA
Jacob Eastin; Ankeny, IA
Ashley Elliott; Des Moines, IA
Katie Elsberry; Granger, IA
Jeremy Engler; Ankeny, IA
Lisa L Erickson; Cambridge, IA
Leann Fairchild; Nevada, IA
Teresa Ferguson; Nevada, IA
Terry Geerdes; Nevada, IA
Glem Homes LLC; Fort Dodge, IA
Lucas Goodman; Montezuma, IA
Douglas Gregory; Ames, IA
Joanie Grife; Marshalltown, IA
Lyndell Gulley; Santa Rosa, CA
Dylan Gurwell; Pleasant Hill, IA
Rachael Haas; Le Sueur, MN

Jennifer Hall; Johnston, IA
Brandon Hansen; Scranton, IA
Laura Harmeyer; Ankeny, IA
Ryan Heckman; Ankeny, IA
Noah Herold; Des Moines, IA
Hertz Corporation; Columbus, OH
Dana Hines; Ankeny, IA
Homeland Security Raduis; Clinton, IA
Ashley Hoppenworth; Ankeny, IA
Ethan Horras; Ames, IA
J & S Iowa Farms LLC; Ames, IA
Kelsi Johnston; State Center, IA
Janel Jones; Ankeny, IA
Jennifer Karns; Ames, IA
Cassandra Kennedy; Bondurant, IA
Matt Kenyon; Mallard, IA
Connor Kimrey; Nevada, IA
Machaela Kloberdanz; Waukee, IA
Daniel Kramer; Ankeny, IA
Kwality Custom Homes; Urbandale, IA
Lynn Larsen; Huxley, IA
Brian Lee; Conway, SC
Mariah Leiting; Nevada, IA
Danny Li; Lawrence, KS
Stacey Loux; Nevada, IA
William Lynch; Marshalltown, IA
Jonathan Makovec; Ankeny, IA
Mackenzie Manternach; Johnston, IA
Kim Markle; Marshalltown, IA
Jessica Marlatt; Nevada, IA
McCown Gordon Construction; Kansas City, MO
Laura McGinnis; Ames, IA
Jon McKee; West Des Moines, IA
Kyle McNulty; Ames, IA
Jillian Meier; Boone, IA
Stephanie Miller; Marshalltown, IA
Joseph Mitchell; West Des Moines, IA
Carter Mitchell; Grain Valley, MO
Paige Moore; Ankeny, IA
Matt Moothart; Rock Island, IL
Erica Morris; North Liberty, IA
Fadzanai Mukarakate; Altoona, IA
Dylan Muller; Ames, IA
Northwood Homes; Polk City, IA
Haleigh Olsen; Altoona, IA
Kade Olson; Ames, IA
Griffin Ormsby; Tipton, IA
Sarah Oxley-Kissinger; Nevada, IA
Rachel Paulsen; Ankeny, IA
Payless Shoe Source; Spokane, WA
Michael Pierce; Ankeny, IA
Larry Powers; Marshalltown, IA
Real Estate Owned, LLC; Marshalltown, IA
Dustin Reha; Polk City, IA
Mikayla Rich; Polk City, IA



Dorothea Ridgway; Nevada, IA
Kirstin Rodewald; Ankeny, IA
Jill Rudloff; Ankeny, IA
Samira Safari; St Louis, MO
Sai Nishie LLC; Marshalltown, IA
Sarah & Brian Bond; Indianola, IA
Jacky Sease; Altoona, IA
Jordan Shouse; Ankeny, IA
Showplace Builders; Grimes, IA
Tyler Sluis; Nevada, IA
Lucinda Smart; Ankeny, IA
Jessica Sparks; Nevada, IA
Celinda Stamy; Ames, IA
State Center Pork Co; State Center, IA
Andrea Stern; Ames, IA
Bruce Strassburg; Austin, TX
Dalton Taylor; Newton, IA
Margot Udelhoven; Prairie City, IA
Martha Vajgrt; Windsor Heights, IA
Troy Valline; Nevada, IA
Nathan Wiese; Marshalltown, IA
Megan Williams; Ankeny, IA
Kathrin Wilson; Nevada, IA
Windsor Homes Inc; Ankeny, IA
Bryce Witt; Polk City, IA
Nona Zelcer; Johnston, IA

Owners may claim this money by contacting the Member Services Department at **800-696-6552** or info@consumersenergy.coop.

ENERGY VAMPIRES WORD SEARCH

Are energy vampires hiding in your home? These electronic devices consume electricity even when they're not in use and can drain home energy bills.

Read the tips below to learn how you can fight energy vampires, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.



R W Y E S B G S V F S V V X Q
 X E M R M X X T V B N U D T O
 G P K X G K J C I B B J U I O
 J R X A R C N R E P M J V R E
 A V R T M P T Y Y I C Z U W L
 T R W Q U E D G U K N J P I O
 E R R A X N E K Z X C D E F S
 F E K Y S V Y F A Y E H Z E N
 Y R N L T F I L F A Q W O U O
 O A A W V Z D E H O X O L N C
 G N K Z T T Y S K R C L K A E
 T Q S D G M J S W W W X S N M
 Z E R E G R A H C E N O H P A
 B A C T T Z K Q N U X E M Y G
 L A P T O P C O M P U T E R S

Tips to Fight Energy Vampires:

- If your phone is juiced up, unplug your **phone charger**.
- Tell your parents to unplug the **coffee maker** when they're finished brewing.
- When you're finished playing that new game, unplug your **game console**.
- Unplug **laptop computers** when you're done with homework.



BAILEY BROCKMAN

**EMPLOYEE
SPOTLIGHT**



JOB: JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN



DREAM VACATION: RANGER RIDE



FAVE PERFORMER: GEORGE STRAIT



FAVE FOOD: PIZZA

Appliance Recycling through the cooperative will end in December 2023



Consumers Energy's agreement with CLEAResult will end in December 2023.

If members have a working refrigerator, freezer, or window air conditioner, call CLEAResult before December 15, 2023, at

855- 838-7817

to have appliances picked up.

Limit of three (3) operational appliances per member address.

Consumers Energy directors are honored for every 5 years of service to the cooperative.

At the August Board Meeting, Consumers Energy recognized the commitment and dedication of these directors.



CONSUMERS ENERGY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1 - Marshall, Jasper, & Tama Counties:
Denny Beckman
President
dbeckman@consumersenergy.coop

Bill Hobson
Director
whobson@consumersenergy.coop

Pat VonAhnen
Secretary-Treasurer
pvonahren@consumersenergy.coop

District 2 - Story County:
Arden Greiner
Director
agreiner@consumersenergy.coop

Bob Meimann
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
rmeimann@consumersenergy.coop

Steve Quick
Director
squick@consumersenergy.coop

District 3 - Polk County:
Craig Griffieon
Vice President
cgriffieon@consumersenergy.coop

Tony Lem
Director
alem@consumersenergy.coop



Jennifer Sease
Director
jsease@consumersenergy.coop

Energy Efficiency Cost per kWh:
\$0.000381



To report an outage, call 800-696-6552.

For the most accurate outage updates, check SmartHub or www.consumersenergy.coop for messages, the statewide outage map, or call Consumers Energy.

WAYS TO PAY YOUR CONSUMERS ENERGY BILL




Automatic recurring monthly payments




Online or the app
www.consumersenergy.coop

In person

By phone 24/7
844-201-7196




By mail



By dropbox

 2074 242nd Street | Marshalltown, IA 50158

 641-752-1593 | 800-696-6552

 641-752-5738

 www.consumersenergy.coop

 info@consumersenergy.coop

OFFICE HOURS
7:30 AM - 4:00 PM
MONDAY - FRIDAY



ROUND-UP FOR RENEWABLES

- Contribute to renewable energy projects in the cooperative's service territory.



APPLIANCE & CFL BULB RECYCLING

- Get paid to recycle old, working fridges, freezers, and window air conditioners! Call CLEAResult at 855-838-7817.
- Recycle CFL bulbs at the cooperative office for FREE!

For information on ways to pay or programs and services offered, contact the Member Services Department.