

MARCH 2026

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

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of one kilowatt-hour**

Power players of the grid

Pasta and pizza night recipes

Last chance for Youth Tour and scholarship applications ▶ See Page 13

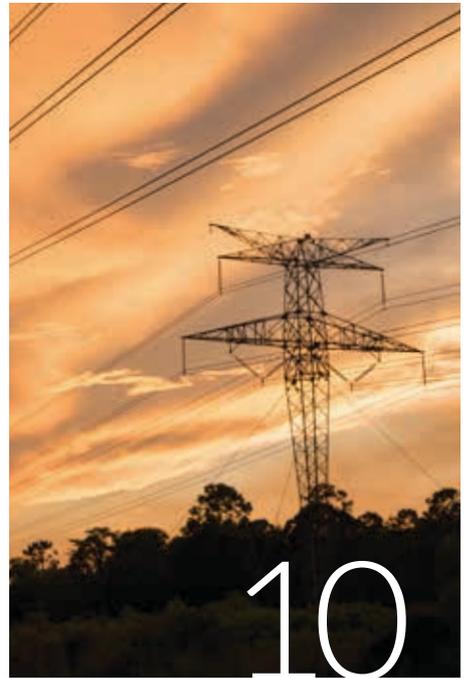
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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Stacey Snyder, a Butler County REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES CHAMPION UTILITY WORKER SAFETY

BY JAY CEPERLEY



As we enter the month of March, Iowa's electric cooperatives are proud to recognize and celebrate the essential work of utility workers across our state.

Iowa Utility Worker Appreciation Day, observed each year on March 8, offers an important opportunity to honor the dedication, professionalism and service of the men and women who keep our communities connected, safe and reliably powered. These workers respond at all hours, often in hazardous conditions, to restore electricity and maintain the systems that power modern life. Their commitment ensures that Iowa families, farms and businesses receive dependable service every day.

A longstanding commitment to safety

Iowa's electric cooperatives have always maintained a strong and unwavering commitment to safety. This priority is deeply rooted in our mission of powering lives and informs how we serve our members, support our employees and protect the communities we operate in. We have consistently championed initiatives that improve the safety of Iowans, including hands-free driving legislation designed to reduce distracted driving, as well as the "Move Over, Slow Down" law, which requires motorists to move over and slow down when passing work vehicles on the roadside. These efforts reflect a broader goal: ensuring that not only utility workers, but all community members, can work and travel safely throughout our state.

With the 2026 Iowa Legislative Session fully underway, Iowa's electric cooperatives are actively engaged at the Capitol to ensure that our

members' voices are heard. Safety remains one of our highest priorities, shaping not only our daily operations but also our advocacy efforts.

Strengthening protections for utility workers

This year, our ongoing commitment to safety is reflected in new legislation proposed by Iowa's electric cooperatives that would increase penalties for individuals who threaten, harass or assault utility workers while they are performing their duties. Lineworkers are often required to enter unpredictable, high-risk environments to restore power, post for disconnection and trim vegetation. When they encounter hostile or aggressive behavior, the dangers they face increase significantly. Because Iowa law requires these workers to respond in such situations, they deserve the

strongest possible legal protections already given to other public servants like first responders, corrections officers and healthcare workers.

Regardless of the outcome of this year's legislation, Iowa's electric cooperatives will continue advocating for robust protections for utility workers. Our commitment to safety remains steadfast. These efforts reflect our longstanding mission: to champion safety, support our workforce and serve the best interests of the communities we proudly power.

Jay Ceperley is the advocacy coordinator for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.



March 8 is
Iowa Utility Worker
Appreciation Day

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN AN EMILE HENRY PIZZA STONE AND COOKBOOK!



Finished with Emile Henry's proprietary glaze, this 16-inch pizza stone produces perfectly crispy crusts. The piece withstands exceptionally high heat, so it can be used in the oven or on the grill. Plus, chef and author Alexandra Stafford showcases pizza in her latest cookbook. Each recipe focuses on seasonal ingredients and is paired with a complementary salad.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than March 31.

You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified.

The winner of the Ninja Crispi Air Fryer from the January issue was **Ray Netherton**, a **North West REC** member-consumer.

ENTER ONLINE BY MARCH 31!



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Dates to Remember

MARCH 2	Read meters
MARCH 3	Bills due
MARCH 3	Automatic payments deducted
MARCH 8	Daylight Saving Time begins
MARCH 10	Email/mail bills
MARCH 17	St. Patrick's Day
MARCH 25	Automatic payments deducted
MARCH 31	Read meters
APRIL 1	End of winter moratorium
APRIL 3	Bills due
APRIL 3	Automatic payments deducted



YOUTH TOUR

- FREE trip to D.C. in June!
- Educational and FUN!
- Offered to members' high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors



Academic



Lineworker



SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
\$1,000 scholarships for academic and lineworker applicants

WHAT GOES INTO THE COST OF ONE KILOWATT-HOUR?

BY BRIDGET ITZEN



In last month's newsletter, we explored **how when you use electricity matters**, particularly during peak demand periods. Now, we're continuing that

conversation by breaking down **what makes up the cost of a single kilowatt-hour (kWh)** – from generating electricity to maintaining the local system that delivers it to you.

When you flip a switch or plug in a device, electricity feels simple. But behind that 1 kWh of power is a lot of planning, infrastructure, and coordination working together to keep your lights on safely and reliably.

A kWh is simply a measure of energy – using 1,000 watts for one hour – but the cost of that kWh reflects much more than just the electricity itself.

Here are the main pieces that make up the cost of a kWh:

Power supply

This is the cost of generating or purchasing the electricity your cooperative delivers to your home or business. Power supply costs can change based on fuel prices, weather, and how much electricity is needed across the region.

Transmission

High-voltage transmission lines move electricity long distances from power plants to local substations. These large systems are maintained and operated by regional transmission organizations and utilities, and those costs are shared among members.

Distribution system

This is the local system owned and maintained by your electric cooperative – poles, lines, transformers, substations, and equipment that bring power from

TERM OF THE MONTH

A **kilowatt-hour (kWh)** is a unit of energy that shows how much electricity you use over time.

For example:

- A 1,000-watt space heater running for one hour = **1 kWh**
- A 100-watt light bulb running for 10 hours = **1 kWh**
- Charging a smartphone uses only a small fraction of a kWh

Your electric bill is based on how many kWhs you use during the month – not how many devices you own, but how long and how often you use them.

the substation to your meter. Maintaining this system requires ongoing investment to ensure reliability, safety, and quick response during outages.

Operations and maintenance

Behind the scenes, lineworkers, engineers, member service staff, and other employees work every day to operate the system, maintain equipment, respond to outages, and assist members. These costs help ensure safe, dependable service year-round.

System improvements and reliability investments

Replacing aging infrastructure, upgrading equipment, and strengthening the system against storms and outages all help keep electricity reliable now and into the future.

Together, these components determine the cost of each kWh you use. Because electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, rates are set to cover the actual cost of providing service – no more and no less.

Bridget Itzen is the CEO/General Manager of Consumers Energy.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Curious how the cost of a kilowatt-hour shows up on your bill? See information on where you can explore each charge in more detail and better understand how your bill is calculated on Page 12.

Make a difference in YOUR cooperative!**BECOME A DIRECTOR FOR CONSUMERS ENERGY****Are you interested in making a difference in your community?**

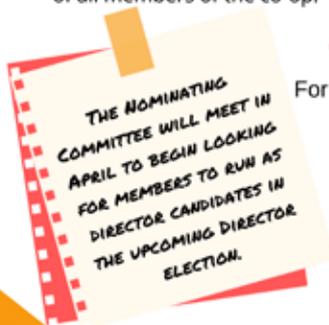
As a member of Consumers Energy, you have an opportunity to make a difference – for your cooperative, for its members, and for the communities it serves.

Cooperative Principle #2 - *Democratic Member Control* – means that **you**, the member, decides who represents you on the cooperative's Board of Directors and determines the direction of our locally run, not-for-profit, **member-owned** business. A director's decisions will impact issues such as rates, rights-of-way, and work plans.

Director terms are for three years and board meetings are typically held once a month. Information on how to vote will be sent to members in July.

What is the role of the board of directors?

The board of directors' main responsibility is to provide oversight of the CEO/General Manager who manages the staff and operations of the cooperative. The board also develops and oversees the strategic direction and objectives of the co-op; ensures appropriate risk oversight and compliance; performs duties diligently and impartially; and works for the good of all members of the co-op.

**The Nominating Committee will be looking for candidates SOON.**

For more information on director positions, running for a seat on the board, or how to get in contact with members of the Nominating Committee, **contact the cooperative:**

By phone:
800-696-6552
Request Bridget Itzen or Kippen Krough

By email:
admin@consumersenergy.coop

Daylight Saving Time begins

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

March 8

**SET YOUR CLOCKS
AHEAD
ONE HOUR**



**RESET THE TIMER?
ON YOUR WATER
HEATER**



**CHANGE YOUR
SMOKE DETECTOR
BATTERIES**



- Check the expiration dates on fire extinguishers and replace if necessary.
- Change the rotation of your ceiling fans to rotate counter-clockwise.
- Clean your oven and range. An oven or range darkened from heavy use absorbs more heat, reducing efficiency.
- Vacuum refrigerator coils. Dust that builds up on refrigerator coils causes the motor to work harder, using more energy.
- Clean or replace HVAC filters. A dirty filter can slow air flow and cause your system to use more energy.
- Clean out dryer vents. Blocked dryer vents may make your machine work harder than necessary.
- Drain a few gallons from your hot water heater. Draining the sediment out of your hot water heater will help it run more efficiently and last longer.
- Clean your grill.
- Sweep out your garage, and clear the salt and grime from winter.
- Get rid of leftover or expired medicine.
- Apply for rebates if applicable. Scan the QR code here or type www.consumersenergy.coop/rebates in your browser.

SCAN HERE
FOR REBATES



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

A NATIONAL VIEW WITH LOCAL ROOTS

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN



Mike Partin
President of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



Leslie Kaufman
Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

In 2025, Mike Partin was elected president of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). He began working for the members of Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative in central Tennessee in 1998, has served as CEO since 2015 and has represented Tennessee on the NRECA board of directors since 2019. NRECA is the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives across the U.S.

During the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' (IAEC) annual meeting in December, Partin sat

down with Leslie Kaufman, IAEC executive vice president and general manager, to discuss important energy topics. More than 375 Iowa cooperative leaders and directors were in attendance to engage in the discussion. We are pleased to share a snapshot of the discussion with *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* readers.

Leslie Kaufman: Mike, you serve as both president of NRECA and CEO of your local electric cooperative. Why is it so important for cooperative leaders to be involved at the state, regional and national levels?

Mike Partin: Engagement matters because this industry is changing fast. Whether you're a director or a staff member, you don't come to the table just to hear reports. You come to make a difference. If we think we're on an island as one cooperative, we're doing our members a disservice. The best ideas come from learning what other cooperatives are facing and how they're responding. Electric cooperatives serve nearly 60% of the nation's landmass, and

rural areas, including places like Iowa, are growing. To stay ahead, we have to lean into leadership, training and collaboration. That's how we remain drivers of innovation in our communities.

Kaufman: As you travel across the country, what common challenges or trends are you hearing about from electric cooperatives?

Partin: One big issue is data centers. They're moving into rural America, and that creates opportunity but also risk. We need to have reliable energy capacity to serve those loads. A key question is also how to serve that load without shifting costs onto existing members. Those agreements must be structured carefully.

Cybersecurity is another growing concern. A decade ago, we weren't talking about ransomware. Now it's a real threat. On the East Coast, some cooperatives recently went into major storms unable to access their systems and maps because of cyberattacks. That's something no cooperative can afford.

Workforce development is also a top priority. How do we recruit, train and retain good people, especially as experienced workers retire and younger employees come in with different expectations?

Kaufman: From an advocacy standpoint, what are the top priorities for NRECA right now?

Partin: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reform is at the top of the list. The system is broken. Currently, cooperatives can wait five or six years for reimbursement after a major disaster, forcing them to borrow just to stay afloat. That's not sustainable.

We're pushing legislation that would require FEMA to act within 120 days and reimburse interest if delays continue. Of the 435 congressional districts, 433 experienced a disaster declaration in the last decade, so this issue affects everyone, including Iowa. That's why cooperative leaders are actively talking with their elected officials and helping move this forward.

Kaufman: You stepped into the NRECA presidency during a new presidential administration. How does that affect the way NRECA operates in Washington, D.C.?

Partin: One of the biggest challenges is policy whiplash. Our industry, especially generation and transmission cooperatives, makes 60- to 80-year investments, but national energy policy often swings dramatically from

one administration to the next. That uncertainty makes planning harder.

What we're seeing now is more recognition that electricity is foundational. Data centers, manufacturing and national defense all depend on reliable, baseload (24/7) power. Energy security is national security. That understanding gives us a chance to push for policies that support an all-of-the-above approach to generation and faster permitting for needed infrastructure.

Kaufman: You've talked about some powerful moments you've experienced in leadership. Is there one that really stands out?

Partin: One that still gives me goosebumps is seeing lights come on for the first time in a village in Guatemala through the electric cooperative international program. Walking up a ridge at night and seeing that village lit up reminds you of why this work through the NRECA International Program matters.

Another moment was being at the White House and seeing one of my linemen standing behind the President of the U.S. No matter your politics, that's a powerful reminder that the people who keep the lights on matter.



Scan the QR code to learn how Iowa's electric cooperatives support international electrification.

Kaufman: Partnerships are critical in Washington. Who are some of the key allies cooperatives work with?

Partin: Depending on the issue, we partner with municipal utilities, investor-owned utilities, farm organizations like Farm Bureau and homebuilders. Strategic alliances help open doors and amplify our voice. For three years running, NRECA has been named the most effective trade association in Washington, D.C., but that effectiveness comes from collaboration. Relationships matter.

Kaufman: From a CEO perspective, what keeps you up at night?

Partin: Safety, without question. We know how to build lines and restore power, but keeping employees safe is the responsibility that weighs heaviest. Am I doing enough? Am I setting the right tone? Am I leading by example?

That concern doesn't change when I put on my national hat. Whether at the local or national level, leadership means making sure people go home safe at the end of the day.

Kaufman: With all the challenges facing the industry, what gives you hope?

Partin: The people. When I attend director trainings or emerging leader programs, I see how committed electric cooperative folks are. They all "signed up" to make a difference.

This is not a stale industry. There's innovation everywhere, from technology to workforce development to global electrification. I truly believe there's never been a more exciting time to be part of America's electric cooperatives.

Electric cooperatives were founded to power possibility, and that mission continues today, from Iowa's rural communities to villages halfway around the world. As Partin reminded attendees, the cooperative model works because it puts people first and because leaders are willing to step up, engage and shape the future together.

Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.





RASPBERRY-CHIPOTLE BARBECUE CHICKEN PIZZA

- 1 thin ready-made pizza crust
- ¼ cup red raspberry preserves or jelly
- ¼ cup hickory smoke flavored barbecue sauce
- ¼ teaspoon ground chipotle chili powder
- 6 ounces chicken, cooked and cubed
- 2-3 tablespoons onion, chopped
- 1½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Place pizza crust on a pizza pan. Mix preserves, barbecue sauce and chili powder. Spread mixture evenly over dough. Top with chicken, onion and cheese. Bake at 425 degrees F for 12-20 minutes, until cheese is melted and pizza crust edges are golden brown. Raspberry preserves can be substituted with Concord grape jelly. *Serves 4, two pieces per person*

Mary Grossman • Carroll
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

SPINACH AND CHICKEN PESTO PIZZA

- 1 ready-to-serve, 12-14-inch pizza crust
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup pesto
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 cups fresh baby spinach leaves, washed
- 1 cup chicken, cooked and diced
- ¼ cup roasted red bell peppers, chopped and drained
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- hot pepper flakes, to taste

Place pizza crust on an ungreased pizza pan and brush the edges with olive oil. Spoon pesto onto the middle and spread evenly out to the crust. Top with mozzarella, spinach, chicken, red bell peppers, garlic salt and hot pepper flakes. Bake at 425 degrees F for 10-12 minutes, or until crust is golden brown. *Yield: 6 servings*

MacKenzie Rutter • Ankeny
Consumers Energy

TOMATO AND FETA BAKED PASTA

- 12 ounces rigatoni pasta, cooked and drained
- 1½ cups ham, chopped
- 4 large plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup feta cheese
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese
- 1½ teaspoons dried thyme
- 1 cup half and half
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Place cooked pasta in a buttered 9x13-inch dish. Mix ham, tomatoes, cheese and thyme. Spread over pasta, then pour half and half over top. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and bake at 375 degrees F for 20 minutes. Stir and continue baking 40 minutes longer. *Serves 6*

Hana Hartter • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

GOAT CHEESE MUSHROOM PASTA

- 1 8-ounce box of your favorite pasta
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ red onion, diced
- 1 package baby bella mushrooms, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 4 ounces plain goat cheese, cubed
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon rosemary
- 1 teaspoon thyme

Boil noodles until al dente. While boiling, place a pan on medium heat, add olive oil and onion. Cook until translucent, then add mushrooms. As the mushrooms soften, add garlic and sauté for another 30 seconds. Place the goat cheese in the pan and add heavy cream. Add rosemary and thyme. Once goat cheese is combined with the cream to create a smooth sauce, toss drained noodles into the pan and coat. *Serves 3-4*

Monika Olmstead • Huxley
Consumers Energy



Visit www.ieclmagazine.com and search our online archive of hundreds of recipes in various categories.

UPSIDE DOWN PIZZA

- 1½ pounds ground beef, pork or turkey
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- optional vegetables: mushrooms, onion or green pepper (chopped)
- pepperoni
- 1 16-ounce jar spaghetti sauce
- 1 cup flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese
- Parmesan cheese

Brown meat with salt, pepper and optional vegetables. When the meat is cooked, drain fat. Mix the meat with pepperoni and spaghetti sauce. Add mixture into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Mix together flour, eggs, milk and oil into a pizza dough. Sprinkle the mozzarella cheese on meat mixture in baking dish then top with dough. Finally add parmesan cheese. Bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour. *Yield: 12 servings*

Judy Jackson • Hedrick
Access Energy Cooperative

SALMON PASTA

- 1 12- or 16-ounce salmon filet
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ package Gustare Vita tagliatelle (8 ounces)
- 1 tablespoon salted butter
- 1 cup yellow onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup white wine
- ⅓ cup sundried tomato paste
- 1 12.5-ounce jar alfredo sauce
- fresh basil, optional for garnish

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and place salmon on prepared baking sheet. Pat salmon dry with paper towel. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and paprika. Bake at 425 degrees F for 4-6 minutes per half inch thickness, until 145 degrees F and salmon flakes easily with fork. Meanwhile, cook tagliatelle according to package directions in a large pot of boiling salted water. Drain, reserving ½ cup pasta water. Return pasta to the pot and keep warm. Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add butter and sauté onion until translucent. Add garlic and cook about 30 seconds, until fragrant. Pour in wine and simmer until reduced by half. Stir in sundried tomato paste and alfredo sauce. Cook until heated through. Add sauce to cooked pasta and toss until coated. If sauce is too thick, add reserved pasta water until desired consistency. Flake salmon into large pieces and gently stir into pasta. Garnish with fresh basil if desired. *Serves 4*

Pam Dick • Dexter
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

CHICKEN ORZO

- 2 chicken breasts
- salt
- black pepper
- paprika
- onion powder
- red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ onion, chopped
- 1½ cups orzo pasta
- 1 16-ounce can chicken broth
- spinach leaves, to taste
- splash heavy cream
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan

Cut chicken into large serving size pieces and add seasonings to taste. Sear chicken on both sides in medium skillet, then lower heat and add butter. Cover and continue until cooked through. Remove chicken and brown garlic and onion in the drippings. Add orzo, allow to toast while stirring. Add chicken broth, spinach and heavy cream. Stir slowly on medium heat while distributing all evenly. Add chicken and cook on low until orzo is done and all flavors have permeated throughout. Serve topped with parmesan cheese. *Serves 4*

Marilyn Alferts • Neola
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

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ICE CREAM RECIPES

THE REWARD :

\$25 BILL CREDIT FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is March 31

I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream! We're looking for your favorite **ice cream recipes** - anything from homemade blends to desserts with ice cream or tasty toppings. Selected submission will appear in our July issue to celebrate National Ice Cream Month. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.



EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com

MAIL: Recipes

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POWER PLAYERS OF THE GRID

BY ANTHONY BUCKLEY

Transmission lines move enormous amounts of electricity efficiently across regions.
Photo Source: NRECA

Every time you flip a switch, you're connecting to one of the most complex systems ever built, also known as the North American electric grid. Often called the largest interconnected machine in the world, this network spans the U.S., Canada and parts of Mexico. It includes thousands of generators, hundreds of thousands of miles of transmission lines and millions of miles of distribution power lines all working together to keep the lights on day and night.

But how does electricity actually get from a power plant to your home? And where do electric cooperatives fit in? Let's break it down.

The U.S. electric grid has three major components: generators, transmission and distribution. Each plays a critical role in delivering electricity where and when it is needed.

Generators: Making the power

In the U.S., most power plants produce electricity by burning fossil fuels or by harnessing renewable resources like solar, wind and water. To ensure

that enough electricity is generated to keep the lights on at an affordable price, two main structures exist.

The first is a "vertically integrated" model, where in some regions, a single utility owns everything from power plants to power lines and delivers electricity directly to consumers.

In other areas, a second model is used. Instead of one company making and delivering power, many companies sell electricity in a competitive market. Utilities buy electricity from these generators and deliver it to consumers like you. In this model, a group called a regional transmission operator (RTO) or independent system operator (ISO) helps keep everything running smoothly. They make sure enough power is available every second of the day. This system is called a wholesale market, and it lets utilities buy extra power when they need it.

Most electric cooperatives don't own large power plants. Instead, they purchase power through long-term contracts, wholesale markets or from

their generation and transmission cooperative (G&T), a member-owned utility that serves multiple co-ops in a designated region. G&T cooperatives are owned by distribution co-ops like yours. There are 64 G&T cooperatives across the U.S., and they often own power plants and transmission lines. G&Ts also plan for the future by investing in new generation sources, building infrastructure and integrating renewables, all while staying true to the cooperative model: member-focused, not profit-driven.

Once electricity is generated, it doesn't stay at the power plant. It begins a long journey to reach homes, farms and businesses. Power must travel across regions to where it's needed most, and that's where the transmission system comes in. These high-voltage lines act like energy superhighways, moving electricity efficiently over hundreds of miles before it's stepped down for local distribution and, ultimately, for the devices you use every day.

Transmission: The energy superhighway

Transmission lines move enormous amounts of electricity efficiently across regions. Most distribution co-ops don't own these transmission lines, but they rely on their G&T cooperative to handle this part of the journey. G&Ts make sure power gets from the plant to your local co-op.

However, the electricity carried by transmission lines cannot be used as is because the voltage levels are too high. That's the job of the distribution network, which is the final step that brings power to your lights, appliances and devices.

Distribution: The last mile

The distribution network is the "last mile" segment of the electric grid and delivers generated energy

from the transmission network to consumers. The high-voltage power from transmission lines is converted to lower voltages that home appliances, electric vehicles and personal devices can use. This is where your electric cooperative comes in to keep local lines maintained and power flowing to members 24/7.

Understanding how power moves from generation to your home helps explain why reliability and affordability depend on teamwork and collaboration between your local co-op, its G&T partners and the broader grid. Together, co-ops are preparing for tomorrow's challenges, so you can count on safe, reliable power for years to come.

Anthony Buckley writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

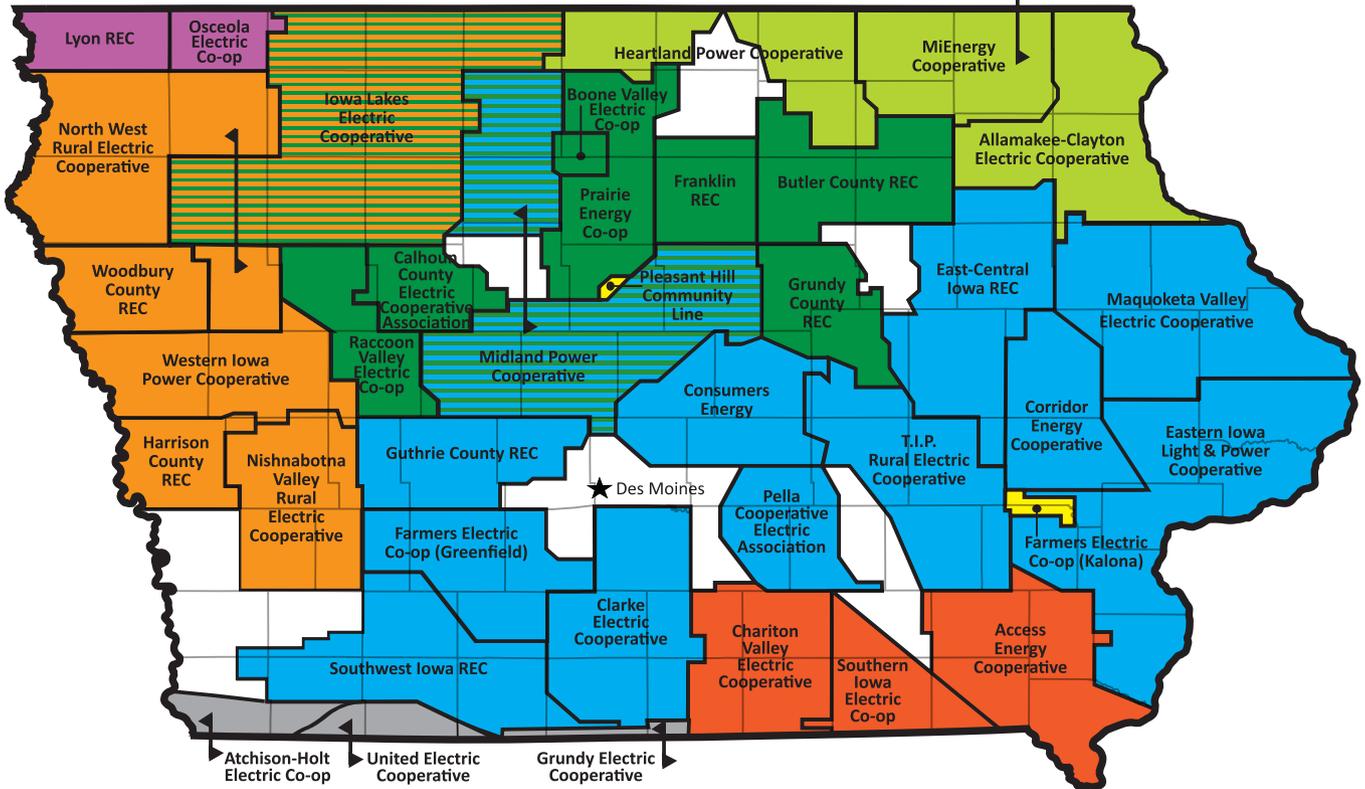


The complex electric grid includes thousands of generators, hundreds of thousands of miles of transmission lines and millions of miles of distribution power lines all working together to keep the lights on day and night. Photo Source: NRECA



Your local electric co-op maintains distribution power lines to keep electricity flowing to members 24/7. Photo Source: Dairyland Power

Electric Distribution Cooperative Members of IAEC:



Generation & Transmission Cooperative Members of IAEC:

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- N.W. Electric Power Cooperative / wholesale power from Associated Electric Co-op
- Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative / wholesale power from Associated Electric Co-op
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative / wholesale power from Basin Electric Co-op
- L & O Power Cooperative / wholesale power from Basin Electric Co-op
- Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative / wholesale power from Basin Electric Co-op



Spring Scattergories

Send in words that start with each letter for each category.

G R O W



- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Baby animal | Spring activity |
| Something pink | Garden vegetable |
| Garden plant | Something yellow |
| Spring flower | Kind of bird |
| Vacation spot | |

Answers to last months contest challenge:

1. Love letter 2. Candlelight dinner 3. Puppy love
4. Love birds

Winners for January:

James and Sheila Arney, Marshalltown
Bryan and Heather Knight, Alleman



WIN ONE OF TWO MONTHLY \$5 BILL CREDITS IN THREE EASY STEPS!

1. Answer the question or challenge posted each month.
2. Send answers to Consumers Energy with the following info:
Name, Service Address, Account #, Phone #, and email address.
3. Submit via website, email or mail:

Scan the QR code below and submit your entry using the co-op's website.



kkrough@consumersenergy.coop
Subject line: CONTEST



Consumers Energy
Attn: CONTEST
2074 242nd Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158



HOW TO READ YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

Your electric bill tells a story. Our *How to Read Your Electric Bill* page explains each section of your statement so you can better understand how your electricity costs are calculated.

Visit <https://www.consumersenergy.coop/how-read-your-electric-bill> or scan the QR code to visit our website for more information.



AUTHORIZATION FORM

Choose only one option:

- Yes, I would like to participate in the Operation Round-Up Program. I wish to have my monthly electric bill rounded up the highest dollar.
- Yes, I would like to participate in the Operation Round-Up Program. I wish to contribute \$ _____ per month to the Operation Round-Up Program, and the amount will be added to my monthly electric bill.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Email _____

Phone Number _____

Account Number _____

Please return to: Consumers Energy
2074 242nd Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158

OPERATION ROUND-UP



Operation Round-Up® is a voluntary program designed for members who wish to donate “small change” each month to cooperative members who need economic assistance with winter electric bills. Members who participate may have their monthly bill rounded up to the next dollar amount or choose to donate a specific amount each month. The co-op then annually distributes the Operation Round-Up funds to local community action agencies within Consumers Energy’s service territory to assist low-income families with winter heating bills and winterization of homes.

How does the program work?

Members may choose from two ways to participate in Operation Round-Up. The option you select will begin with the first bill issued after your Operation Round-Up Authorization Form is received.

Option 1: Round up your bill

Your monthly electric bill is automatically rounded up to the next whole dollar. For example, a bill of \$160.27 would be rounded up to \$161.00, with the extra 73 cents donated to Operation Round-Up.

Option 2: Set a monthly donation

Choose a specific dollar amount to donate each month, which will be added to your electric bill.

Submit your Authorization Form

Want to help neighbors in need with winter heating assistance? Enroll in Operation Round-Up by completing the Authorization Form in this magazine and returning it to our office. You may also sign up online by scanning the QR code or visiting www.consumersenergy.coop/operation-round-up.



IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES DISCUSS PRIORITIES AT LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

More than 150 senior staff and directors from Iowa electric cooperatives, including Consumers Energy, were in Des Moines Jan. 13 for a legislative “welcome back” reception at the start of the 91st Iowa General Assembly. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the reception in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, and FUELlowa.

This year, electric cooperatives are again focusing on protecting Iowa’s defined electric service territories, an important law that helps ensure every corner of the state receives consistent, cost-effective electric service. Another legislative challenge that could resurface involves third-party or “community solar” proposals that would attempt to allow non-utility solar developers to provide retail electric service inside an established utility’s service area, in direct conflict with service territory law. Iowa’s electric co-ops are also seeking to further protect utility workers, who encounter threats, harassment, and assaults while on the job.



ARE YOU A MEMBER WHO QUALIFIED FOR LIHEAP?

Consumers Energy wants to help our members avoid additional fees and disconnection. Don't wait until the last minute to check the status of your account.

The winter moratorium for disconnecting electric service ends April 1.

Here's how the co-op can help:

- **Do you have PAST DUE BALANCES?** Call the co-op to address overdue bills and accumulated balances.
- **Do you need info on PAYMENT PLANS?** Call the co-op to review payment plan options to stay current and connected.
- **Do you need OTHER ASSISTANCE?** Consumers Energy gives members resources for assistance organizations.



Contact the Member Services Department at 800-696-6552 to see what options are available.

WAYS TO PAY YOUR CONSUMERS ENERGY BILL



SmartHub app



In-person at headquarters location



By mail



Automatic monthly payments



By phone 24/7
855-939-3832



By drop box
Allow 2-3 business days for payments to reach headquarters.

LAST CHANCE TO APPLY

Youth Tour

Apply to win a FREE weeklong trip to Washington, D.C., June 14-20, courtesy of Consumers Energy! Available to dependents of Consumers Energy members.



Deadline to apply: March 24

Academic Scholarship

Apply for one of Consumers Energy’s \$1,000 academic scholarships available to graduating high school seniors! Available to dependents of Consumers Energy members.



Deadline to apply: March 17

Lineworker Scholarship

For those pursuing a career in the powerline industry, apply for Consumers Energy’s \$1,000 Lineworker Scholarship! Available to residents in the State of Iowa.



Deadline to apply: March 17

REPORT POWER OUTAGES

To report an outage, call

800-696-6552

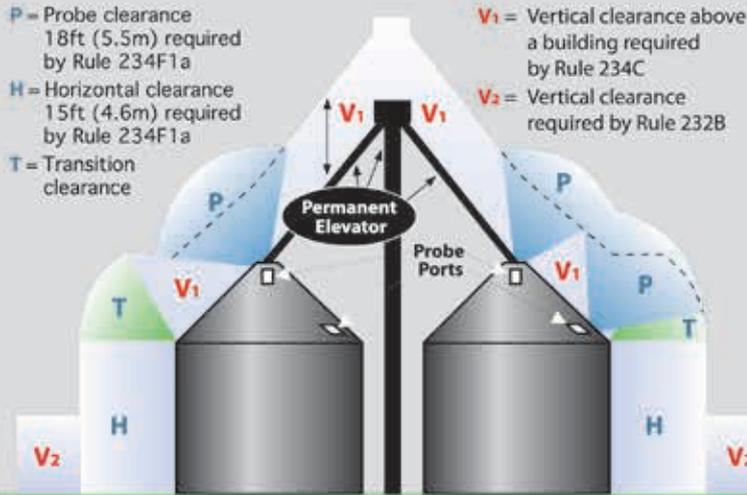
Phones are answered 24/7!

For the most accurate outage updates, visit Consumers Energy’s Outage Center at www.consumersenergy.coop/outage-center, check messages on SmartHub, or call Consumers Energy.



Scan here to visit the co-op’s outage center.

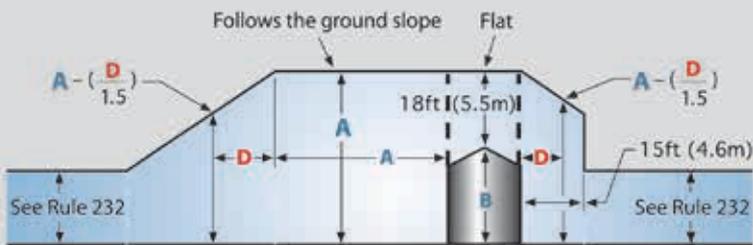
Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators



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Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors or elevators

ELEVATION



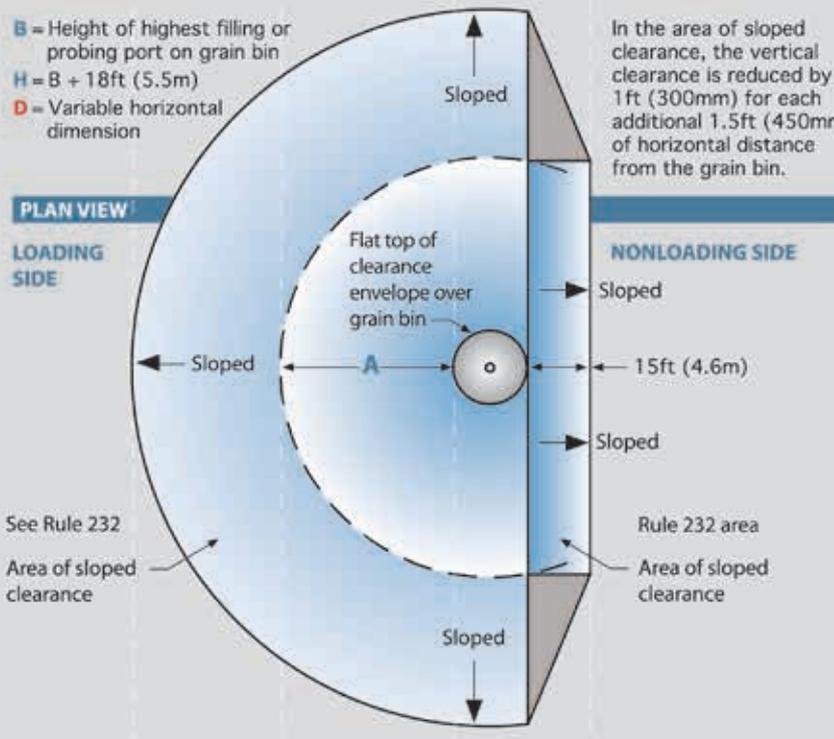
B = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin
H = B + 18ft (5.5m)
D = Variable horizontal dimension

In the area of sloped clearance, the vertical clearance is reduced by 1ft (300mm) for each additional 1.5ft (450mm) of horizontal distance from the grain bin.

PLAN VIEW

LOADING SIDE

NONLOADING SIDE



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MAINTAIN PROPER CLEARANCE AROUND GRAIN BINS

The state of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors and elevators. According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 – 25.2(3) b: *An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2023 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234F. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after Sept. 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after Dec. 24, 1997.* The Iowa Utilities Commission has adopted this language.

Your local electric cooperative is required by the Iowa Utilities Commission to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants and city and county zoning officials. The drawings on this page show the required clearances, but your co-op's policies may be more restrictive. If you have any questions concerning these regulations – or what needs to be done before you begin placing a new grain bin or moving an existing one – please call your electric co-op for help.

These drawings are provided as part of the Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2023 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication.

Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents of these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.

LUCKIER THAN A FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

March is a time to celebrate all things Irish, including proverbs like “a good friend is like a four-leaf clover; hard to find and lucky to have.”

I’ve been thinking about the clubs that have thrived in Iowa’s small towns and rural neighborhoods, like the Friendly Club my grandma and mom belonged to. While many of those clubs are memories now, I was lucky to be a guest at Carol Hardy’s home in Lohrville for the January meeting of the Adaza Thursday Club.

My friend Lou Blanchfield tipped me off that the club is 100 years old. I asked how one becomes a member. “Your mother-in-law invites you!” joked Lou, noting that her mother-in-law Margaret’s grandmother was a charter member.

True to the club’s name, members still gather on the first Thursday of the month in each other’s homes. Their club has even outlived Adaza itself.

Keeping Adaza alive in spirit

Adaza’s story began in 1881. Around this time, the railroad put in a stub track southeast of the new Calhoun County town of Lohrville, at a little spot called Cottonwood. When a landowner named Captain Albert Head stepped off the train in 1882, he looked at Cottonwood and said, “Ain’t it a daisy?”

That offhand comment transformed Cottonwood into Adaza, which grew to include general stores, a grain elevator, creamery, hotel, blacksmith, bank, lumberyard, post office, school and two churches.

Adaza started fading by the 1920s. The Methodist Episcopal Church disbanded in 1924. Undeterred, a group of ladies met at Ruth Baldrige’s home on Aug. 6, 1925, and created the Adaza Thursday Club. They elected club officers, set dues at 25 cents a year, and established roll calls and programs for upcoming meetings.



A recent meeting of the Adaza Thursday Club at Carol Hardy’s home in Lohrville.

Through the decades, club members also hosted picnics, wedding showers and baby showers with skits and plenty of homemade food. New members were advised to wash their windows and bleach their porch steps before hosting club. For many years, Irene Rossmanith, followed by Pat Schmitt, dutifully recorded the club’s activities, submitting this Adaza news to local newspapers.

The club endured, even as Adaza dwindled to a ghost town. By 1981, dues were \$2 a year – “still a bargain for nine or 10 get-togethers with friends and neighbors,” noted “The History and Memories of Adaza: 1881-1981.”

Still gathering, still connected

While many of those friends and neighbors are gone, the ties that bind are strong. Jane (Hardy) Beschorner, Marty (Guess) Hennesy and her sister Ann (Guess) Gemberling, are second-generation club members. Most members today reside in a 10-mile radius of Adaza.

Dues (\$5 a year) are donated to food pantries, the high school after-prom party or flowers for club members who are ill. While members still enjoy refreshments at meetings, gone are the ornate glass snack-set trays that every good hostess used back in the day.

Sometimes this fun bunch schedules field trips to area orchards, wineries



A Maple Bacon Onion Cheese Dip was served at the meeting (recipe pictured below).



or the local care center, where they visit club member Barb Winkelman, who’s almost 99.

Other times the ladies get crafty. A few years ago, they had a jewelry-making workshop to transform Swarovski crystals into earrings and necklaces. The crystals were extras from the chandeliers at the renovated Community Memorial Building in Lake City. Club members donated the jewelry to support fundraisers for this historic gem.

Newer members like Marilyn Parker appreciate how the club helps them get to know more people. All the members treasure their deep friendships – gifts that are hard to find and lucky to have. “It’s fun, and we like each other,” said Jane Beschorner. “Why wouldn’t we keep getting together?”

Were there any clubs like this in your neighborhood? Share your stories with me at yettergirl@yahoo.com.

Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family’s Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at www.darcymaulsby.com.



Scan the QR code for the Maple Bacon Onion Cheese Dip recipe pictured above.



The magazine
for members of
Iowa's electric
cooperatives

IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

March 2026

Visit our website at
www.consumersenergy.coop

WHERE WE HAVE MEMBERS WE ACTIVELY LIVE OUR COMMITMENT



Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative
The power of human connections[®]

As your **Touchstone Energy[®] cooperative**, we are your energy community. The power we provide is much more than a way to keep the lights on, it plugs into the family, friends, and neighbors that make up your local co-op.