

December 2015



Highline Headlines

Volume 37
Issue 12

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Access Energy Cooperative is dedicated to exceeding members' expectations for safe, reliable, efficient service while being a good citizen in our communities.

Office Closed
Dec. 24 & 25
Jan. 1
For after hours emergencies call
800.452.7819 or 319.385.1580

Visit our website for youth programs and contests for 2016
www.accessenergycoop.com

Give Thanks for Electric Co-ops

What would life be like if community leaders had not founded Access Energy Cooperative more than 75 years ago? **Living** in the U.S. today is a different **era**—it is nearly impossible to imagine life without electricity. So many of our modern conveniences that improve the quality of our lives are dependent on electricity to make them work. From the alarm clock that wakes us up, to the refrigerator that keeps our morning milk cold and **fresh** to the HVAC unit that keeps us cool in the summer and warm in the winter. And so much of our entertainment, whether it comes from the TV, radio or computer, depends on the kilowatt-hours that your electric co-op provides. Just think, there would be no smartphones or cell phones if there were no electricity.

Businesses of all kinds rely on electricity to produce and sell the products we need. So, it is no wonder that many electric co-ops feel that, while our primary product is electricity, we are really in the quality of life business.

As we celebrate the season that reminds us to be thankful for all that we have, it is important to remember the 1.3 billion people in the world that still live

without reliable electric service. That is equal to about four times the U.S. population!

Many of the things we take for granted living in the U.S. are much harder and more time consuming for people in developing countries around the world. We are proud members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) that is working through their affiliate, NRECA International, and the NRECA International Foundation to help bring power to people in developing countries like Haiti and Liberia. (<http://www.nreca.coop/it-starts-with-power/>)

We are thankful that our community ancestors right here had the **vision** and foresight to do for ourselves what needed to be done, gathering our friends and neighbors to form our electric co-op. As the electric business of the 21st century continues to **evolve**, you can count on Access Energy Cooperative to continue to strive to exceed your expectations for safe, reliable and efficient electric energy needs. More importantly, we are here to help improve the quality of your wonderful life.

Source: Adam Schwartz

Good-bye Highline Headlines. Hello Living With Energy!

This will be the **last** edition of the Highline Headlines printed for Access Energy Cooperative. The good news is, next month you will be receiving the Access Energy Cooperative edition of the Living With **Energy** magazine! This magazine will include all of the information you are used to reading about our cooperative – including the crossword puzzle! – and so much more. It is filled with safety and energy efficiency information, recipes, and information about the electric industry. This magazine is published by our statewide association, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), for electric cooperatives across the state. You will find information specific about our cooperative on pages 4, 5 and 12. You will still be able to submit the crossword puzzle for a chance to win \$25, submit recipes for contests, and keep up to date on our cooperative and news across the state.

The Living With Energy Magazine is mailed on the 5th of each month – so look for it in your mailbox in January and let us know what you think!



2016 Programs & Contests

Seniors

Scholarships Available

Three \$500 scholarships are available for qualifying high school seniors who will be receiving post-secondary education and whose parents or legal guardians are members of Access Energy Cooperative.



Deadline is March 16, 2016

Sophomores & Juniors

Win a Trip to Washington DC



Access Energy Cooperative will be sponsoring two students on an exciting all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. June 10-16, 2016.

To be eligible to **apply** for the Youth Tour trip, students must be a high school sophomore or junior attending a school in southeast Iowa.

Deadline is Feb. 26, 2016

Everyone

2016 Photo Contest Begins

It's time for the 12th annual photo contest with selected entries to be used in the 2017 Access Energy calendar. We're looking for photos of rural settings in southeast Iowa including landscapes, animals, buildings or people in any season of the year. Fifty dollars will be awarded to each photographer whose entry is selected as one of the 12 featured photos. Submit all entries to: Photo Contest, c/o Access Energy Cooperative, PO Box 440, Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641.



Deadline is March 31, 2016

DETAILS ABOUT ALL OUR PROGRAMS AND CONTESTS ARE AVAILABLE:
www.accessenergycoop.com 1800 W. Washington, Mt. Pleasant, IA 1.866.242.4232

Manager's Corner



General Manager/CEO Robert Swindell

As I wrote last month, our rates will be going up on April 1, 2016. At the November Board meeting the Board approved an overall increase of 9.31% for non-industrial members. The increase will range from 10.48% for single phase customers to 7.3% for large power members requiring power between 200 to 5000 kilowatts. Including industrial members whose loads exceed 5000 kilowatts, the overall increase drops to 7.9%, with industrials receiving a 4.5% increase.

COST OF SERVICE STUDY

You are probably wondering why there is such a large spread in increase

between the different types of members. It is a result of the "Cost of Service Study" or COS. The COS is a detailed analysis of what it costs to provide electric service to different types of members, based on their load characteristics. One significant difference between industrial members and non-industrial members is the amount of plant required to provide service to them. By plant, I am referring to the poles, wire, transformers and other equipment required to meet your electric needs. We have over \$74,000,000 in plant to serve our 9000 non-industrial members, where we have less than a million dollars in plant to serve our industrial members. Industrial members also pay for 100% of the plant we use to serve them, so we don't incur any interest expenses on it. Our industrial members are served directly from Northeast Power's transmission network, so the amount of maintenance is small in comparison to the maintenance of the 74 million dollars of plant for the non-industrial members.

Even between the different non-industrial members there are different costs to serve. Once again, the difference in the cost to serve single phase, and commercial and large power members, is driven by the amount of plant required to serve different classes of members. Where the three phase network is allocated to all of the non-industrial class of members, all of the costs associated with the operating and maintenance of the single phase lines are paid for by our single phase accounts.

Sixty six percent of our lines are single phase, so you can quickly understand why our single phase rates are higher than the other rate classes. Our goal in setting rates is to recover the cost of operating the cooperative and to avoid one class of members subsidizing another. We will continue to share information on the rate increase with you in the coming months.

Thank You

Not only is this the last edition of HighLine Headlines, as we will start using Living with Energy in Iowa to keep you up to date on the happenings at Access Energy Cooperative, but this is also my last article with the cooperative. I am retiring at the end of December. I want to thank everyone for the support they have provided over my career. I have been blessed to have worked with people who are dedicated to doing their best to serve you, our members. I will always be thankful to Don Atwood, Max Hollander, Lynn Johnson, Jim Beckman, Loren Reif, Ralph Ruby, Frank Hasenclever, Dwight Krebill and Adrian Overberg, the Board of Directors that was willing to take a chance on a young engineer from Missouri to manage the cooperative. I ask that you give my successor, Kevin Wheeler, the same support you have given me over my time with the cooperative.

COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

Access Energy Cooperative
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Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641

Phone: 319.385.1577 or 866.242.4232
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Website: www.accessenergycoop.com

Facebook:

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Twitter

twitter.com/AccessEnergyC

Email:

contactus@accessenergycoop.com

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Payments can be placed in the dropbox under the flag pole.

Visa and Mastercard accepted.

After Hours Emergencies call:

319.385.1580 or 800.452.7819

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The Complexities of EPA's Clean Power Plan

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulation to limit greenhouse gas emissions from power plants will have a big impact in Iowa. Labeled the "Clean Power Plan," it aims to reduce nationwide carbon dioxide emissions from power plants by 32 percent below levels recorded in 2005.

Iowa's goal will be a 42% reduction. And Access Energy Cooperative, along with other electric cooperatives in Iowa, will work with other utilities in the state in partnership with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives to achieve this reduction.

More than likely, power plants, especially those that use coal, will be forced to shut down before they have been fully paid for. In these situations, electric co-op members will have to continue paying for a power plant that no longer operates while also paying for electricity.

What does that mean for you, our members? Unfortunately, it probably will mean higher electricity bills.

But we're still crunching the numbers. The Clean Power Plan is an extremely complex and far-reaching regulation. In fact, it's probably the single most complex regulation co-ops have ever confronted.

The rule affects cooperatives and our members more than other sectors of the utility industry. This is because cooperatives are unique among utilities.

As you know, we are a not-for-profit organization that provides electricity to about 8000 member-owners across 10 counties in southeast Iowa. We don't have investors who can foot the bill for expensive new plants or equipment for which we haven't budgeted.

Access Energy Cooperative is more than just poles and lines. We look out for our members every day.

Co-ops do a lot more than provide electricity. We want to improve our communities. We offer scholarships to high school seniors, and an educational trip to Washington D.C. for two students each year. We offer educational programs

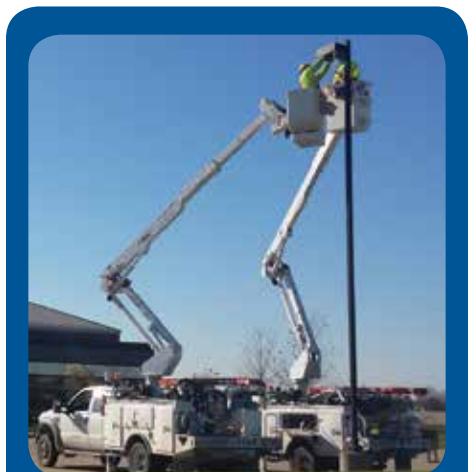
on energy efficiency, renewable energy and electrical safety. We work closely with area economic development issues and projects. We help our small communities with projects they just do not have the equipment to handle themselves.

We have this same concern for community when it comes to regulations and other policy changes that will increase the cost of electricity. Some folks may not notice an extra \$10 added to their bill, but many others are already struggling to get by.

The potential cost increase is why we've been so engaged on this issue. That's the root of our concern because we're ultimately concerned about our members.

We're keeping up the fight and working for legislative and legal solutions in partnership with co-ops from around the country. Our top concern remains providing you, our members, with safe, affordable and reliable electricity.

Source: Mark Hayes



Access Energy Cooperative crew work on replacing high pressure sodium lights with new efficient LED bulbs in the parking lot in front of the Mount Pleasant facility.

Cooking up Energy Savings

For many of us, the best holidays involve home-cooked meals and wonderful aromas of turkey, stuffing and baked goods wafting throughout the house. It means a busy kitchen and a bustling house full of family and friends. If this rings true for you, despite the increased kitchen activity, you still have an opportunity to save energy during the holidays.

CUT CARBS (CARBON) PAINLESSLY

In addition to being the “heart of your home,” your kitchen could pump savings back into your wallet. According to the Department of Energy, cooking accounts for 4.5 percent of total energy use in U.S. homes. This number, combined with the energy use associated with refrigeration, dishwashing and hot water heating means that as much as 15 percent of the energy in the average American home is used in the kitchen. So, saving energy here can have a significant impact on your household budget.

For example, when preparing side dishes, baked goods, soups and such, consider using small appliances like a **cro**ck pot, toaster oven, microwave or warming plate instead of your conventional oven or stovetop. These small appliances are a smart, energy-saving alternative, typically using about half the energy of a stove.

SEAL IN EFFICIENCY

When using your oven, don't peek! Opening the oven door can lower the temperature by as much as 25 degrees and causes your stove to work harder (consuming more energy) to return to the desired cooking temperature. If your recipe **calls** for baking the dish more than an hour, it is not necessary to preheat the oven. If your oven is electric, you can likely turn the oven off for the last five to ten minutes of cooking and allow the residual heat to complete the job. Clean burners and reflectors increase efficiency and offer better heating, so don't neglect this small but important task.

Just as keeping the oven door closed seals in efficiency and enables the stove to operate more economically, the same rules apply to the refrigerator and freezer. Keep the doors closed as much as possible so cold air doesn't escape. However, leaving the door open for a longer period of time while you load groceries or remove items you need is more efficient than opening and closing it several times.

If you are entertaining a large group, you may be able to give your furnace a brief holiday. When your oven is working hard and you have a house full of guests, the heat from the stove and the guests will keep your house comfortable, enabling you to turn down the thermostat.

CLEAN UP WITH ENERGY SAVINGS

When it's time to clean up, extend fellowship to the kitchen, and wash and dry dirty dishes by hand. This uses less energy than a dishwasher. However, don't leave the water running continuously, or you will waste energy. If you do use the dishwasher and rinse dishes before loading them, use cold water. Run the dishwasher with full loads only, and if possible, use the energy-saving cycle. Note that dishwashers that have overnight or air power dry settings can save up to 10 percent of your dishwashing energy costs.

By adapting these efficient practices in your kitchen, energy savings will be one more thing to be thankful for this holiday season.

Source: Anne Prince

15% of energy used in the average American home is in the kitchen.



Levon Mullen and Eli Harscher, employees of Access Energy Cooperative, Mt. Pleasant, IA, attended the Overhead and Aerial Basket School at the AMEC Training Center on October 26-29 in Jefferson City. The course emphasized safe and efficient live line work practices and procedures to the class. Field instruction focused on the proper application of protective insulating equipment, live line tools and aerial devices utilized when installing and maintaining energized lines and equipment. AMEC and instructors from several of Missouri's electric cooperatives were assisted by Dick Miller, Marcal Ropes & Rigging Inc., during the school.

Tips for a Safe and Happy Holiday Season

The holidays are upon us. For many, that means more celebrations with friends and family, travel, decorations, cooking and shopping. Access Energy Cooperative wants you to stay safe during the holidays, so here are a few tips to consider as you gear up for the season.

INSPECT YOUR SEASONAL ITEMS

Take a few moments to carefully inspect all your holiday items to ensure everything is in safe, working order. A few things to look out for include:

- Brittle insulation on wires
- Rodent damage to wires
- Chafed or frayed wires, especially at stress points
- Worn switches with the potential to short circuit
- Corroded metal parts
- Broken legs, unstable bases and other tip-over hazards

EXTENSION CORDS ARE TEMPORARY

They are designed for temporary use and should never be used as a permanent or long-term solution.

NEVER DEFEAT SAFETY DEVICES

There are reasons why some devices have fuses, some plugs have three prongs instead of two and one prong is wider than the other on two-prong outlets. When those safety features get in the way of your grand holiday décor plans, you might be tempted to tamper with or defeat those features. Don't do it! If your plugs won't fit together, that means they're not designed to work together. Rather than tampering with a safety feature, find a safe solution.

LOOK UP AND LIVE

When working outside with a ladder, be mindful of the location of overhead power lines. Always **carry** your ladder so that it is parallel to the ground. Before placing your ladder in an upright position, look around to ensure you are a safe distance from any power lines.

BEWARE OF POWER LINES THROUGH TREES

Over time, tree branches can grow around power lines running along the street and to your home. If those branches come in contact with power lines, they can become energized, too. If your holiday plans call for stringing lights through trees, this can create a safety hazard. If you notice tree limbs that are too close to electric lines, contact Access Energy Cooperative.

STAY AWAY FROM YOUR SERVICE CONNECTION

The overhead wire bringing power from the **utility** pole to your house is dangerous. You should treat this line the same way you'd treat any other power line on our system. Maintain a safe distance – even if that means a small **gap** in the perfect gingerbread house outline of lights. If you must perform work close to your service entrance, contact Access Energy Cooperative, and we can send out a crew to temporarily wrap the wires in a protective shroud.

READ THE FINE PRINT

If you take a few minutes to read and understand the specifications and limitations of your lights and other electrified holiday decorations, you can save yourself a great deal of work and frustration in the long run. For example, the **tag** at the end of an extension cord will tell you if it's rated for outdoor use, whether it will remain flexible in cold temperatures and how much energy it can safely handle. Similarly, holiday lights will tell you how many strings can be safely linked together.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE KIDS...AND PETS

If you have small children, you've probably spent a great deal of time making sure every square inch of your home is childproof and pet proofed. But sometimes the joy of celebrating the holidays makes us a little less vigilant about electrical safety. Make sure your holiday décor receives the same level of safety scrutiny you apply to all of the permanent items in your home.

Tell Us What You Think

Our tri-annual survey of membership will start toward the end of this month and continue through early January. You may get a phone call with some detailed questions about what you think about Access Energy Cooperative.

We greatly appreciate your participation in telling us how we are doing and if there are ways we can improve on exceeding your expectations for safe, reliable, efficient service.

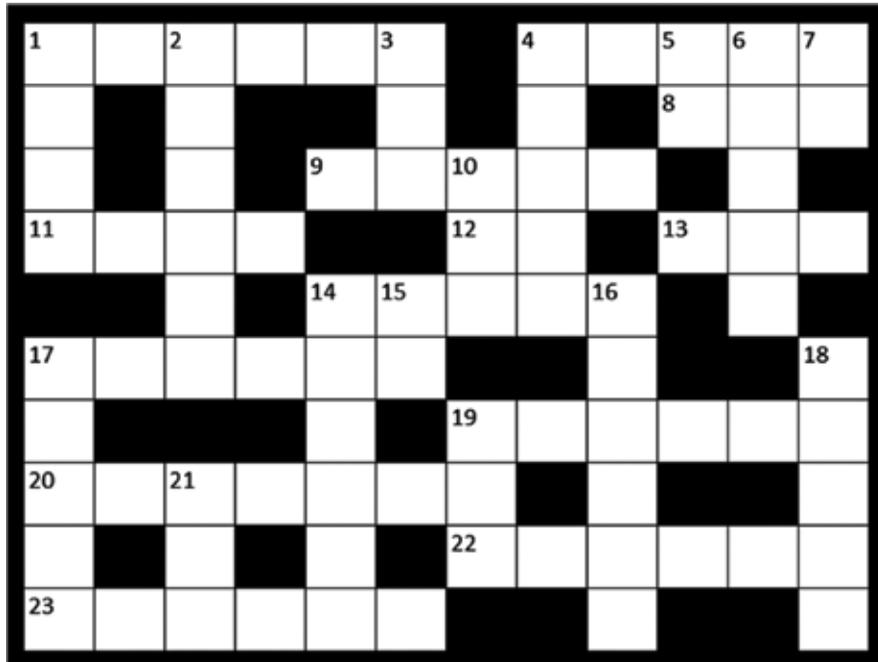


Win A \$25 Bill Credit

Access Energy Cooperative members can win a \$25 bill credit by completing the crossword. Send your answers in by December 21, 2015, to: Access Energy Cooperative, Attn: Crossword Puzzle, P.O. Box 440, Mount Pleasant, IA 52641. Most of the answers are bold and highlighted elsewhere in this issue of the Highline Headlines. If more than one person answers all of the questions correctly by the deadline, a drawing will be held to determine the winner.

Name _____

Address _____



ACROSS

- 1 Doing this today in the U.S., it is impossible to imagine it without electricity
- 4 Use this kind of pot to save energy when cooking
- 8 This is on extension cords and tells you if it is safely rated for outdoor use
- 9 In order to do this for the Washington DC trip, you must be a sophomore or junior student
- 11 We will send two students on this to Washington DC
- 12 Illinois
- 13 A span of time marked by character, events, changes on earth, etc
- 14 Electricity helps keep your milk this way
- 17 We provide help for communities with projects they don't have the equipment to do this to it
- 19 Bob Swindell will do this at the end of December
- 20 The overhead line bringing power to your home from this pole is dangerous
- 22 As the 21st century continues to do this, you can count on us for safe, reliable energy
- 23 Your new cooperative magazine is called living with this

Last month's crossword winner is Lisa Calhoun of Mt. Pleasant.

DOWN

- 1 December is this edition of the Highline Headlines
- 2 Thankfully our ancestors had one of these when they formed our cooperative
- 3 Stay away from power lines, even near this in lights
- 4 If your recipe does this for baking longer than an hour you don't need to preheat the oven
- 5 Overtime
- 6 Always do this with your ladder so it is parallel to the ground
- 7 kilogram
- 10 A favorite dessert for the holidays
- 14 If you are doing this to a kite, stay away from power lines
- 16 All American food at baseball games
- 17 Holidays mean wonderful smells throughout this
- 18 We offer educational programs on energy that we can do this to
- 19 Type of dark bread
- 21 This can accumulate on electric lines in the winter and can cause an interruption of service

THE VALUE OF Electricity
Electricity is expressed on a daily basis using EIA
2013 Average U.S. Monthly Residential Bill of \$111

\$4.79
average cost of a Big Mac® meal

\$3.70
average daily cost of electricity

Big Mac® is a registered trademark of McDonald's Corporation. McDonald's Corporation does not endorse or sponsor this material. Source: Economist.com, 2015.

Idle Service Invoices to be Mailed in January

Notices for idle services (any service that has been in place but not used for 12 months or longer) are mailed out this month. If you received a notice, please review it and determine whether or not you wish to retain the service. If you no longer wish to retain the service, please complete and return the notice to our office. For any idle services that we have not received a form to remove it, we will send out an invoice for the annual idle service fee in January.

The annual fee for an idle service is currently \$107, which covers the cost of the cooperative's investment in the facilities. This fee cannot be divided into monthly installments.

If you receive an idle service letter and are no longer the owner of the property, please notify our office at 1-866-242-4232.



Alan Raymer, Energy Advisor at Access Energy Cooperative, delivers a water heater to Lisa Diener for a new Habitat for Humanity home.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Remember to close your fireplace damper (unless a fire is burning). Keeping the damper open is like leaving a window wide open during the winter, allowing warm air to escape through the chimney.

Source: energy.gov