

MAY 2015



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Highline Headlines

Volume 37
Issue 5



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

Office Closed
May 25th

For after hours
emergencies call
800.452.7819
or 319.385.1580

Learn more about
being safe by
visiting our website

Safety

www.accessenergycoop.com

Dividends Are Coming

Once a satisfactory level of margins or profits for 2014 was determined by the Board, the cooperative assigned the rest of the **margins** to you, the **members** (each of who owns a portion of the cooperative), according to the amount of energy purchases you made in 2014.

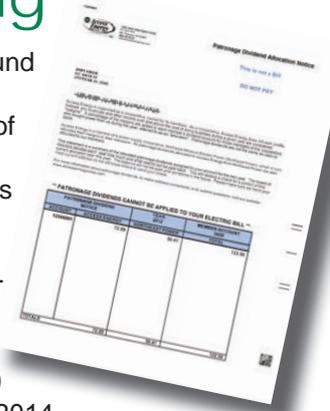
Each member has a dividend account at the cooperative where your dividend allocations accumulate. When the Board allocated the 2014 margins, your portion was moved to your dividend account. You will soon receive a notice of how much was allocated to your account.

This year Access Energy Cooperative allocated \$1,220,773 and passed through allocations from NE Power of \$631,117 or a total allocation of \$1,851,890.

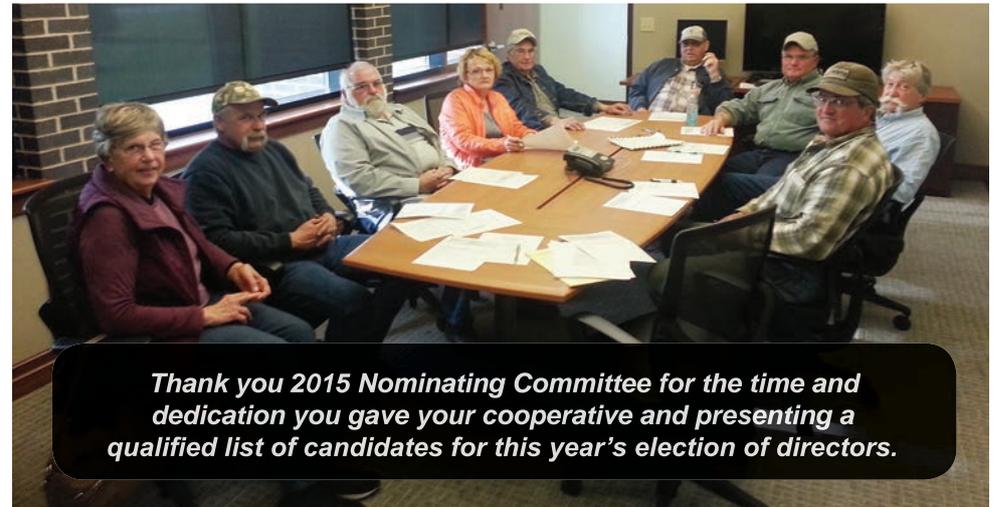
The amount of total allocations the cooperative has stored in the dividend accounts was then reviewed by the Access Energy Cooperative Board of Directors to determine whether or not to generate a dividend payment this year. After reviewing the cooperative's current financial position, the Board approved a

dividend refund this year in the amount of \$946,720. This refund is 51% of the remaining dividends for 1996, 36% of 1998, 25% of 1999 and 12% of 2014.

Dividend checks will be available to pick up at the annual meeting on August 4th. Any checks not picked up will be mailed after the annual meeting. Checks will be sent to the most current address we have on file. The cooperative will not be printing checks for amounts under \$5.00. These amounts will be added to next year's refund.



Annual Meeting of Members ~ August 4, 2015
Win the GRAND PRIZE of \$500 (must be present to win)
Kids can win a bike from Bickels in Burlington.



Thank you 2015 Nominating Committee for the time and dedication you gave your cooperative and presenting a qualified list of candidates for this year's election of directors.



Access Energy Receives Award

Strengthening communities and fostering economic opportunities through local partnerships are priorities of Access Energy Cooperative, who was recognized by the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) for outstanding commitment, support, and participation in business development projects and local community initiatives.

ATTENTION Confinement Facilities

In attempt to reduce risks associated with the avian influenza and other potential risks associated with poultry production or other confinement facilities, please contact our office as soon as possible, and provide us with the biosecurity protocol for your facilities. You can call 1-866-242-4232 or email your information to mktg@accessenergycoop.com. Thank you.



~BLOOD DRIVE~



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY
REGIONAL BLOOD CENTER

How life flows through our community.®

Save the Date

Thursday, May 28 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Access Energy Cooperative Meeting Room
Sign up by calling 319.385.1577.

Manager's Corner



General Manager/CEO Robert Swindell

With the recent outbreak of avian influenza impacting poultry growers, in addition to last year's porcine epidemic diarrhea virus which impacted the pork industry, it's become apparent to us that we need to be more proactive in assisting producers in the biosecurity of their facilities.

Currently we do not have complete information on which accounts serve livestock facilities, so I am asking for livestock producers that we serve to provide us information on which of

their cooperative accounts they house livestock in along with the type of livestock raised. We also want to make sure we are following your biosecurity protocol measures, so I am also asking that you provide us with any information you can share on this for your livestock facilities. You can call at 866-242-4232 or use the Contact Us form on our website at www.accessenergycoop.com.

Presently, our employees have been instructed to avoid non-essential visits to poultry facilities to help reduce the risk of spreading avian influenza. If we must go on-site to restore power, or for other essential reasons, our personnel will strictly adhere to the biosecurity protocols established at your facility. We are working with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, our state-wide organization, and with other agencies and organizations to continually monitor the situation and enhance biosecurity protocols if needed.

For member-owners who have backyard chickens or other poultry on their property, make sure to keep cages and equipment clean and don't share supplies with other poultry owners. Watch for the early warning signs of avian flu and report unusual signs of disease or unexpected death to a local veterinarian immediately. To learn more you can visit the following web sites:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/birdbiosecurity/biosecurity/links/step5.pdf, and http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/birdbiosecurity/biosecurity/basicspoultry.htm



BLOOD DRIVE

We will be hosting a blood drive for the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center on May 28 from 3 to 6 pm. at our office in Mount Pleasant. I would encourage all that are able to please stop in and donate.

GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

With my upcoming retirement later this year, the Board of Directors has begun the search for my replacement. Sullivan and Ward PC, the Cooperative's legal counsel, is assisting the Board of Directors in the process. The qualifications and information about applying can be viewed at <http://careers.cooperative.com/jobseeker/search/results/state/iowa>.

Putting Safety First this Month

In May, Access Energy Cooperative celebrates National Electrical Safety Month. While safety for our members is top priority year-round, May is a special time to acknowledge the importance of safety excellence.

This year, we're focusing on the electric safety **zone** in the home. There are many measures you can take to ensure the safety of your loved ones.

- Vacuum refrigerator coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that can reduce efficiency and create fire hazards.
- Ensure countertop appliances are located away from the sink.
- Place appliance cords away from hot surfaces, such as toasters, ovens and ranges. Cords can be damaged by excess heat.
- Store potholders and plastic utensils away from range to avoid fires or burns.
- Use lightbulbs with appropriate wattage for light fixtures. Overheated fixtures can lead to a fire.
- Check lamp cords to make sure they are not damaged or cracked. Do not attempt to repair damaged cords yourself.
- Extension cords should not be used to provide power on a long-term or permanent basis. Have additional receptacles installed by a professional to provide power where needed.
- Smoke alarms should be located on every level of your home, and in each bedroom.
- Test smoke alarms every month. Replace batteries once a year. All smoke alarms should be replaced at least every 10 years.
- Talk to your family about an emergency plan in the event of a fire in your home. If you have small children, include them in planning an emergency escape route – they are more likely to remember the plan if they're involved in creating it.

Electrical safety awareness and education can save lives. For more tips and information about electrical safety, visit www.accessenergycoop.com.

COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

Access Energy Cooperative

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Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641

Phone: 319.385.1577 or 866.242.4232
Fax: 319.385.6873

Website: www.accessenergycoop.com

Facebook:
facebook.com/AccessEnergyCoop

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

General Manager/CEO: Robert Swindell

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Assistant Editor: Cherity Wibben

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Rates for Services

Access Energy Cooperative is responsible for servicing and maintaining all facilities up to the point of delivery, including the meter. All wiring and equipment on the load side of the meter belongs to the member-consumer and is the member-consumer's responsibility to maintain. If the member-consumer calls the cooperative's personnel to correct an interruption of service and the cause is found to be in the member-consumer's wiring or equipment, or for any other work that is done by the cooperative on the load side of the meter, the following is a schedule of rates for services:

VEHICLE RATES

Pickup.....	\$1.00/mile
Trencher	\$75.00/hour
Digger Derrick.....	\$70.00/hour plus \$4.00/mile
Fork Lift.....	\$5.00/hour
Uni-Loader.....	\$25.00/hour
Basket Truck.....	\$30.00/hour plus \$2.50/mile
Skid Steer.....	\$45.00/hour
Maintenance Truck	\$20.00/hour plus \$2.50/mile
Chipper	\$50.00/hour
Excavator.....	\$45.00/hour
Dump Truck	\$2.00/mile

LABOR RATES (MIN. LABOR CHARGE \$75.00)

Hourly rate.....	\$70.00/person/hour
Overtime Rate	\$105.00/person/hour
Double time Rate.....	\$140.00/person/hour

LED Lights-Are They Worth It?

For the past several years, traditional incandescent bulbs have been phased out in favor of halogen, compact fluorescent (CFL) lights, and now on Light Emitting Diode light sources, or LED bulbs.

Known for their longevity and efficiency, LED lights **yield** an estimated operational life span of up to 50,000 hours. This **measures** out to 6 years of continuous operation. If you were to use an LED fixture for eight hours per day, it would take approximately 17 years before it would need to be replaced.

LED lights are different from other light sources, as LEDs do not contain a **gas** or filament of any kind. Instead, the entire LED is made up of a semiconductor, which is solid in nature and makes LEDs more durable. LED lights are small, packed electronic chip devices where two conductive materials are placed together on a chip (a diode). Electricity passes through the diode, releasing energy in the form of light.

Unlike CFLs that require a few minutes to warm up before reaching their full level of brightness, LEDs achieve full illumination immediately. LEDs can also be dimmed, allowing maximum flexibility in usage.

LED FACTS

- Eighty percent of the electricity used by an incandescent bulb is lost as heat.
- LEDs are ideal for outdoor use because of their durability. LED lights are resistant to vibrations, shock and external impacts such as exposure to weather, wind and rain. LEDs are temperature resistant and operate in colder outdoor temperatures.

When purchasing an LED light, look for the Energy Star label to ensure you have a genuine product for several **reasons**. There are poor quality LED products in the marketplace. Some of these products are manufactured with components that produce low light levels, don't stand up on long service life, or have exaggerated energy saving claims. Visit energystar.gov for more information about Energy Star LED lights.

While it is true that LEDs generally cost more to purchase than fluorescent and incandescent lights, they are much less expensive to operate over time. LEDs are energy efficient, so the replacement and maintenance requirements are dramatically lower. In addition, as with other electronics, prices are expected to come down as more products enter the market.

The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives **free** app, "Save Energy, Save Money" for iPhone, iPad, and Android devices, includes a lighting calculator showing the potential savings from replacing incandescent lamps with either CFLs or LEDs.

Talk to the energy experts at Access Energy Cooperative or visit www.accessenergycoop.com to learn about more ways to save energy around the home! *Source: Anne Prince, NRECA*

WITH APPRECIATION FOR

YOU

all

Thanks for all your hard work maintaining & getting the power back on after the stormy weather we have here in S. E. Iowa.

Have a safe year!

Thanks
Mr. & Mrs. Dave Harwood

Before Installing Solar Panels Know the Facts

So you're thinking about installing solar panels on your roof, but you have some questions. Access Energy Cooperative can help.

As with any other major purchase, it's vital that consumers research their options carefully. Here are a few facts you should know.

Consumers should know, for example, that even houses with large solar arrays still need the utility. When PV panels are not supplying enough power for your home, the electric grid makes up the difference, and when the panels are producing more electricity than needed, the excess goes back to the grid.

Because the sun doesn't shine at **night**, and some days are cloudy, almost all consumers will still rely on the electric grid unless they have backup power from a generator or battery. And if the power goes out, for safety reasons – the solar **system** will disconnect to prevent power from feeding back onto lines being repaired.

The cost of photovoltaic (PV) panels has dropped dramatically in the past few years, but this price reduction doesn't mean residential rooftop solar makes sense for everyone. Some houses have too much shade, which is great for saving money on air-conditioning – but bad for solar. Some roofs face north or do not have sufficient flat space to install solar panels.

We have recently conducted a survey of our membership, to explore your attitudes toward solar energy production. The board and management are in the process of evaluating the results and applying them to decisions to be made on whether or not we will proceed with offering any type of a community solar project to you. A utility-owned solar array can provide more electricity at a cost that is almost always cheaper than a residential system.

Also, by participating in utility-owned solar, homeowners can avoid the headache of installing a new electrical system on the roof. Nor do they need to worry about the safety of such systems.

Whatever you choose, Access Energy Cooperative can help you make a decision that makes the most sense for you.

Do Your Part to Help During Peak Alerts

The hot days of summer place a lot of stress on America's utility network. For many electric utilities, these hottest days create greater "peak loads" than at any other time of the **year**. A utility's peak load affects its electricity cost and this cost is ultimately passed along to its customers.

The greatest peak loads often occur in the late afternoon on summer days, when the air conditioning systems in most buildings are running, and when families first arrive home and start using household appliances. During these times we will announce a peak alert on radio stations in our service area. You can help reduce summer peak loads by adjusting your daily routine in a few small ways:

- ☀ Choose to do laundry in the morning or late evening.
- ☀ Use cold water instead of hot.
- ☀ Use a clothesline or indoor drying rack.
- ☀ Avoid running your dishwasher in the afternoon, too.
- ☀ Close your windows and draw the shades during the day to keep the sun from entering your home.
- ☀ Install exterior window shades, sun screens, or awnings to block summer sun before it enters your home.
- ☀ If you have window air conditioners, remove them periodically and clean their coils with hot soapy water and a stiff brush.
- ☀ Have your air conditioner serviced annually for ultimate efficiency.
- ☀ Change your filters regularly on your air conditioner.

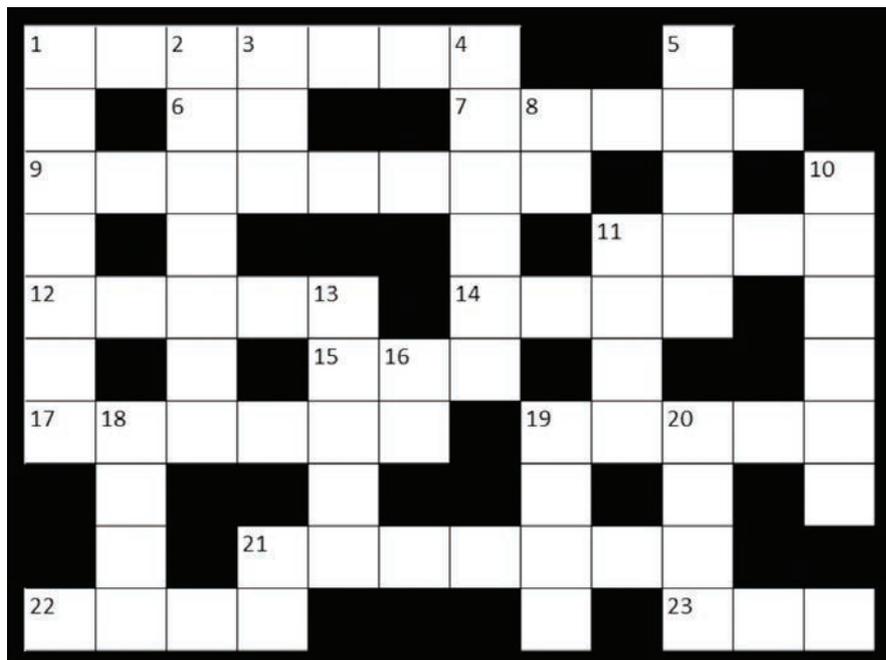
Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management (www.srmi.biz)

Win A \$25 Bill Credit

Access Energy Cooperative members can win a \$25 bill credit by completing the crossword. Send your answers in by May 29, 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 The cooperative assigns these back to you
- 6 Abbreviation for each
- 7 Because the sun doesn't shine during this, members with solar installations still rely on the grid for power
- 9 The LED lifespan does this to 6 years of continuous operation, or 17 years at 8 hours a day
- 11 Trimming trees helps prevent limbs from doing this and falling into our lines
- 12 Dense black wood
- 14 During National Electric Safety Month this year we are focusing on this safety place in your home
- 15 This mixed with tree limbs and power lines are a common cause of outages
- 17 If the power goes out, for safety reasons, this will disconnect from the grid to prevent power feeding back onto the lines
- 19 Follow us on Twitter @AccessEnergyC so you can read updates when we post this
- 21 We need to have your correct phone number linked to this for more efficient outage restoration
- 22 Download an app for this cost to calculate energy savings on light bulbs
- 23 Check out this for energy saving on page 4

Last month's crossword winner is Sharon Arnold from Fort Madison.

DOWN

- 1 These receive excess margins in their dividend accounts
- 2 There are several of these to look for energy star LED lights
- 3 LED lamps do not contain this
- 4 We often do this when we have a cold
- 5 Keep this number up to date with us for faster outage restoration
- 8 To be
- 10 Visit our website or call us to do this to your information
- 11 Trees limbs and power lines are a bad combination when combined with this
- 13 LEDs do this for an estimated operational life span of 50,000 hours
- 16 Centimeter
- 18 For many utilities, summer days create more peak load days than any other time of this
- 19 These limbs are a bad combination with power lines
- 20 Opposite of west

Keep Your Contact Information Up-to-Date

In the utility business, we know rough weather will occur, and sometimes power outages simply can't be avoided. To ensure your power is restored as quickly as possible, keep your contact information up to date to help Access Energy Cooperative. If we don't have the correct phone number linked to your home address, it makes it more difficult for you to report an outage. With correct information, our outage management system can predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem. Visit www.accessenergycoop.com or call 866-242-4232 to update your information.

Tree Trimming Helps Keep People Safe

To protect electric reliability and personal safety, it is important that Access Energy Cooperative periodically trims trees near power lines. Tree limbs and power lines are a bad combination, especially with storms involving high winds, lightning, snow, or ice. Trees are one of the most common causes of electric service outages.

Tree limbs and branches that extend into power lines also can pose a significant risk to public safety during any kind of weather. Anyone in close contact or trying to trim or climb such trees could be seriously injured.

Professionally trained crews trim trees around our primary transmission and distribution lines, rotating the areas they work in yearly. Franchise and easement agreements allow us to trim affected trees on private property. The goal is to trim no more than is necessary for public safety and electric service reliability. If we keep them trimmed we not only prevent limbs from touching our lines, we improve the risk of dead limbs that could snap and fall in to the lines.

Always check for nearby power lines before planting or trimming your own trees. Try to plant trees away from power lines. If a power line is in the vicinity, determine how tall and wide a tree is likely to be when it is fully grown. Placing low-growing trees near power lines will help prevent service problems and limit the need for tree trimming in the future. Trimming a tree near a power line will require a professional tree trimmer, and you should contact your electric utility about this.

Also, remember to contact Iowa One Call (IOC), by dialing 811 or by calling 1-800-331-5666, at least 48 hours in advance of any tree planting to have underground utilities marked. Please contact our office with any questions or concerns about tree trimming or planting. If questions or concerns persist, you may also contact the Iowa Utilities Board toll-free at 1-877-565-4450.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.
It's the law!!**



Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Keep cool this summer! ENERGY STAR certified refrigerators are about 9-10 percent more energy efficient than models that meet the federal minimum energy efficiency standard. Source: energystar.gov