

living with energy

IN IOWA



APRIL 2016

Put some buzz

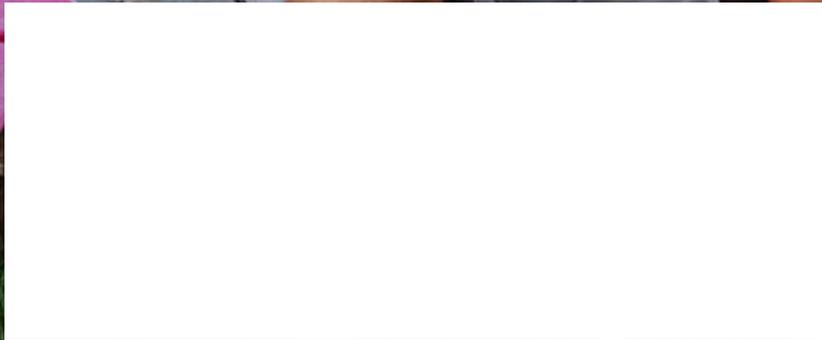
in your
landscape
with a
pollinator
garden

Win a set of 16
solar-powered
walkway lights!
See page 5

Co-ops
are helping
**keep the
lights on –**
2,000 miles
away

America has
mobilized for
**energy
efficiency**

Find out how
solar energy
can work for you



Upcoming Events

National Lineman Appreciation Day is April 11

If you see a line worker in the Access Energy Cooperative office or around your area, please take a moment to say thanks. You also can leave a Twitter message at #ThankaLineman. ⚡

SAVE THE DATE
JAKE McVEY
 Access Energy Cooperative Annual Meeting of Members
August 2, 2016
 McMillan Park, Mt. Pleasant
 5:00 p.m.



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

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Twitter: twitter.com/AccessEnergyC
E-mail: contactus@accessenergycoop.com
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Closed Saturday, Sunday and holidays

After Hours and Report Outages: 319-385-1580 or 800-452-7819

Payments can be placed in dropbox under flag pole. Visa and MasterCard accepted.

General Manager/CEO: Kevin Wheeler
Editor: Kimberly Davis
Assistant Editor: Cherity Wibben
Officers and Directors:

Jerry Barker	District 2	President
Fred Hickenbottom	District 1	Vice President
Joseph Heckethorn	District 1	Secretary
Marvin Newton	District 3	Treasurer
David Hollingsworth	District 1	Director
Larry White	District 2	Director
Ronald Campbell	District 2	Director
Marvin Holtkamp	District 3	Director
Victor Pierrot	District 3	Director

Student Leaders

Area students selected for Washington, D.C., trip

Shea Dahlstrom of Packwood and Cody Lee of Burlington have been selected to attend the 2016 Youth Tour on June 10-16. The annual event is an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by Access Energy Cooperative.

Shea and Cody will join 31 other students from Iowa and nearly 1,600 students from across the country who were selected by their electric co-ops to attend the event.

A junior at Pekin Community High School, Shea is the daughter of Shawn and Jill Dahlstrom. She's been the class president and is active in basketball, cross-country, track, drama and band. She's also a member of the National Honor Society, 4-H and her church.



Shea Dahlstrom

Cody is a sophomore at Burlington Community High School and is the son of Randy Lee. He's been involved in football, speech/debate team, Club M and theater. In addition, Cody is a mem-

ber of the Silver Cord volunteer program, Burlington Sportsman Club and the National Speech & Debate Association; he also volunteers for the Toys for Tots program.



Cody Lee

While on tour, Shea and Cody will learn about American history and government. They'll visit historical sites, including monuments, museums, the U.S. Capitol, federal agencies and other points of interest. They'll also have an opportunity to meet with their legislators in the House and Senate.

Access Energy Cooperative has been a part of the Youth Tour program for more than 50 years and currently selects two students each year to participate in the 5-day trip. The students are selected through an application and interview process.

With its main office located in Mt. Pleasant, Access Energy Cooperative provides electric service to more than 9,000 homes and businesses in 10 southeast Iowa counties. ⚡

From the Board

These members are running in the 2016 election for a seat on your board

Thank you to the 2016 Nominating Committee (right) for its active involvement in your cooperative. The Nominating Committee is charged with the responsibility of nominating qualified members to run for a seat on the board of directors.

The following members have been nominated by the committee to run in this year's election to be held at the annual meeting of members on August 2, 2016.



District One

- Fred Hickenbottom
- Michael Ledger

District Two

- Ronald Campbell
- Robert Paul Smith

District Three

- Marvin Newton
- Bradley Lake

It takes a balanced approach to provide power

BY KEVIN WHEELER

Isn't America wonderful? Every 4 years we get inundated with national figures wanting to be our president. They tour all over Iowa, tell us how great they are and we make a decision that's heard all over the world.

In the United States, this history is made as we exercise our political process. Right, wrong or indifferent, your voice makes a difference.

This is also the way your cooperative works. You have a voice with us. Every member has a vote during our annual meeting process. From electing directors to changing the bylaws, your voice is heard. But with that comes a big responsibility – making sure we reach the right decisions for the cooperative.

Every day, we provide our member-owners with safe, reliable and environmentally responsible power. We're able to provide this essential service because we use many types of fuel to generate electricity. Having diversity in our power resources helps us keep costs as stable as possible, should one type of fuel spike in price or be in short supply.

You occasionally may hear about base load and non-base load power sources. How these resources tie together to power your homes and businesses is important, and long-term planning plays a vital role in meeting your needs. Generation plants are typically long-term assets that last for several decades.

In the Midwest, base load power plants are most commonly fueled by coal, nuclear or large hydropower. The plants operate nearly 24 hours a day, seven days a week and provide a consistent and steady amount of power. Natural gas also is considered a base load power source. However, because natural gas plants cost more to operate, those plants generally are used as additional base load during

peak usage periods, such as hot summer days in Iowa.



Based on our member-owners' annual and average daily usage requirements, we plan ahead to know how much power we need to generate or purchase to meet those needs. Base load power plants run at constant levels, allowing these plants to provide the lowest-cost generation in a safe and efficient manner. Throughout Iowa and the U.S., base load power plants supply the majority of the power used by consumers. In Iowa, as a testament to our commitment to being good stewards of our environment, we continue to invest in upgrades to these base load plants to ensure they meet strict and changing environmental standards.

As part of our balanced approach to providing you with power from a variety of sources, we supplement base load power with intermittent resources, such as wind and solar. These are considered non-base load power because we have limited control over their power-generating ability.

For example, on a sunny day, solar panels can produce maximum output. Or, when wind speeds are steady and not too high or too low, wind turbines can generate a fairly consistent supply of power. However, during cloudy days or at night, we can't rely on solar power because it isn't generating a significant amount of energy. Because of the unpredictability of non-base load sources, we use them in tandem with base load plants to ensure that when our member-owners flip the switch for power, they can count on a reliable and adequate power supply to meet those needs.

Base load power sources are the backbone of our system for a number of reasons, including the fact that energy cannot be effectively stored. Advancements in energy storage,

such as batteries, have come a long way in recent years but it's still not economically feasible – or in some cases, reliable enough – to meet our member-owners' needs. Through our national partners, we invest in ongoing research to determine when and if technologies such as storage options may be viable for our member-owners.

As a member-owner of your not-for-profit electric cooperative, you may be thinking, "Why is all of this important to me?" Having a balanced and diverse energy portfolio is similar to having a diversified personal financial plan. When it comes to savings, it's not prudent to put all of your eggs in one basket. The same is true with sources of power generation. To achieve the best mix of reliability, efficiency, environmental responsibility and safety, we rely on multiple sources rather than just one type of power generation. ⚡

Kevin Wheeler is the general manager/CEO of Access Energy Cooperative.

Editor's Choice Contest

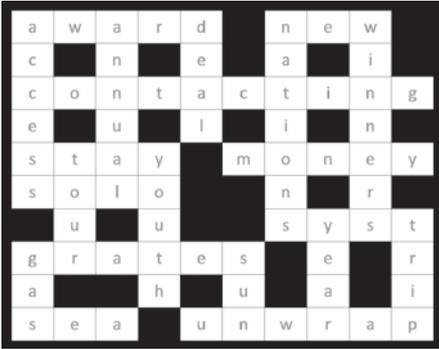
Win a set of 16 solar-powered walkway lights!

Safely light a sidewalk or spotlight your garden up to 8 hours at night with these Patriot Riesel Solar Path Lights. The lights have a stainless steel finish and cut glass shade and include a bright-white LED. Find more information at www.menards.com.



To enter the contest, go to the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com by April 30, 2016. ⚡

Where's the monthly crossword puzzle?



All good things must come to an end, and we've decided to retire the crossword puzzle. However, you now have even more ways to win a special prize or a credit on your power bill every month.

- **Editor's Choice Contest:** Check Page 5 in each issue for a chance to win an interesting energy-saving or high-tech prize – or up to a \$100 power bill credit! This month's prize is a set of 16 solar-powered walkway lights, and all members are eligible to win. Best of all, the winner is randomly chosen every month, and there's no obligation associated with entering!
- **Co-op Cooks Recipe Contest:** You can win a \$25 power bill credit for every recipe you submit that's published in the magazine. (Just ask Access Energy Cooperative member Aaron Kruse, whose recipe for Sweet Breakfast Rice appears on Page 8 of this issue!) The recipe categories change every month, and you'll find the details for sending in *your* favorite recipe on Page 9.

We'll also have other opportunities for you to win throughout the year, so be sure to read *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine every month. Good luck! ⚡

Leveraging new technologies and changing habits improves reliability

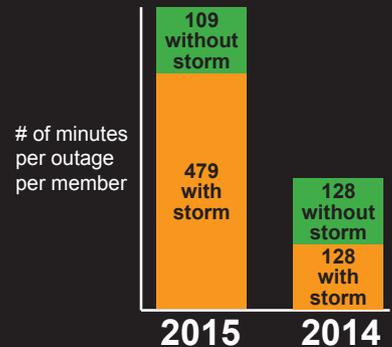
It's a simple premise: When you flip the switch at home, the lights should come on. At Access Energy Cooperative, we work hard to ensure you have electricity every hour of every day. It's what we do; we're here for you, our member-owners. Even as we upgrade the distribution system to improve reliability, we face continual threats, like a tornado or ice storm. Maybe a neighbor forgets to call before he digs up his backyard. Or perhaps someone slides off the road and hits a utility pole.

With 2,200 miles of electric distribution lines, we have a lot of ground to cover. So when the lights go out, we cover it as quickly as possible. Not too long ago, our only option was linemen driving throughout large areas to investigate a problem. Since then, we've invested in smart technologies that allow us to monitor our system remotely and pinpoint problems more quickly and accurately as they occur.

We also have great employees with tremendous expertise in maintaining and repairing our infrastructure. As your locally owned and operated not-for-profit utility, we deeply care about the areas we serve. We evaluate and

In 2015, the major categories for outages were major storms, power supplier interruptions and scheduled maintenance.

Our Reliability

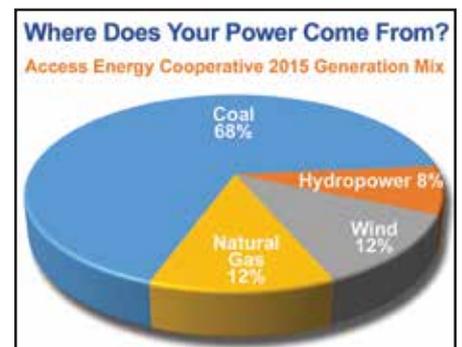


Our pole testing reports in 2014 showed a 1.4% rejection rate of poles needing to be replaced; 2015 was 3.3%. When we find a pole that does not meet inspection, it is replaced as soon as possible.

deploy cost-effective system upgrades and preventive maintenance strategies across our 10 counties. And, we work hard all year to keep trees away from power lines to prevent outages. This combination of expertise, technology and local focus helps us meet new challenges and exceed your expectations. ⚡

Access Energy Equipment and Service Fees

VEHICLE RATES	
Pickup	\$1.00/mile
Trencher	\$65.00/hour
Digger Derrick	\$70.00/hour plus \$3.00/mile
Fork Lift	\$5.50/hour
Uni-Loader	\$30.00/hour
Basket Truck	\$25.00/hour plus \$3.00/mile
Skid Steer	\$45.00/hour
Maintenance Truck	\$30.00/hour plus \$1.50/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



ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

IOWA ONE CALL

Paying your bill just got easier!

Access Energy Cooperative is excited to offer several new payment options for members. These choices not only provide quick and convenient ways to pay your bill, but also offer more opportunities for online and mobile account management and usage information.

SmartHub has replaced our eBill program, and it's a tool that provides convenient account management and detailed usage information on a computer website or your iOS or Android mobile device.

With our new billing system, you can:

- Make a payment
- Access payment history
- Look at your bill
- View your electric usage
- Update your account or contact information
- Communicate directly with Access Energy Cooperative

How do I sign up for SmartHub?

The SmartHub link is on our website: www.accessenergycoop.com. If you already use eBill, you can log in to SmartHub using the same e-mail and password you have always used. As a new user, you'll be required to enter your account number, last name or business name and your e-mail address.

Is the app secure?

Yes! All critical information is encrypted and no personal information is stored on your mobile device. Mobile devices do offer you the ability to store your log-in information for apps installed on the device. If you choose to store your log-in information, any person who has access to your mobile device can access your account.

How do I get the app for my phone?

Look for SmartHub in the Apple Store or in the Google Play store. (Search SmartHub. It's not case-sensitive, but it must be all one word.)

If duplicates appear, the correct app is provided by our partner, National Information Solutions Cooperative. When you open the app for the first time, you'll need to select and confirm that Access Energy Cooperative is your utility provider. You can then log in using your existing eBill username and password or create an account by following the prompts on the screen. The app is free to download and install.

Do I have to change the way I pay my bill in order to use SmartHub?

No, you can use all the features of SmartHub and continue to pay your bill as you currently do.

Is there a fee for paying my bill online?

As with the current online payment system, there is no fee for any online payments. The maximum amount that can be paid per credit card transaction is \$10,000. There is no limit for paying by check.

I have multiple accounts. Can I see them all in the app and on the web?

Yes, the web home page shows all of your accounts with the amounts due and links to other detailed information. On the app, tap the "Bill and Pay" icon. The total due of all accounts shows, and below it you can select different information by account. You can make payments on one or more accounts.

How current is the account information I see in the app or on the web?

The information is shown in real time. However, if you keep your



app or the web version open for an extended time, you should refresh the page by selecting a new option in order to ensure the information is still current. ⚡

