

living with energy

IN IOWA



AUGUST 2016

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION FOR MEMBER-OWNERS OF ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE



Electrical overloads are a major source of **home fires**

Try a new **fresh from the garden** recipe

Co-ops Vote: Make rural issues a priority in 2016

Ducts offer a hidden opportunity to **boost energy efficiency**



Upcoming Events



Aug. 11-21 Find Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa at the Iowa State Fair

Aug. 30- Sept. 1 Visit us at the Farm Progress Show

Sept. 5 Office Closed for Labor Day

Remember, if you have an event going on in southeastern Iowa that you would like our members to know about, add it to our online calendar at www.accessenergycoop.com.



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

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Student Leaders

Access Energy Cooperative sends two students on 2016 Youth Tour

High school students from across Iowa traveled to Washington, D.C., on June 10-16 to join more than 1,600 other students from around the nation for the 2016 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Access Energy Cooperative sent two representatives – Shea Dahlstrom of Packwood and Cody Lee of Burlington – on the all-expenses-paid trip. Youth Tour has been giving high school students the opportunity to tour the nation's capital for more than 50 years.

"The Youth Tour is the highlight of the summer for many students from Iowa, and we were proud to send 34 of our best and brightest to Washington, D.C., this year to participate," said Shelly York, director of the Youth Tour for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. "These students gained a first-hand understanding of the legislative process and made connections with others from across the country that will last a lifetime."

Students on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour participated in leadership training, engaged in one-on-one conversations with elected officials, jump-started their national peer network, learned about electric cooperatives and toured Washington, D.C.

The Youth Tour has sent high school students to Washington, D.C., for more than 50 years. Students apply and are selected for this program by their local electric cooperative, and nearly 50,000 students have participated in this pro-

gram. For more information on Youth Tour, visit www.accessenergycoop.com or www.youthtour.coop.



Shea Dahlstrom (left) and Cody Lee represented Access Energy Cooperative on this year's Youth Tour. In a note to Youth Tour director Shelly York, Shea described what the event meant to her:

"Being chosen for the Youth Tour is awesome, but also a huge responsibility. A few of us were chosen to better understand co-ops, rural electrification and to get up close and personal with the Capitol and our government officials."

"The group of us that was selected to visit Washington, D.C., for a week will take so much away from our experience by learning the accomplishments and history about people in rural communities who wanted electricity. The start of co-ops will stick with us forever."

"My Youth Tour D.C. experience was amazing, and I will never forget the people I met, places I visited and things I learned. I want to thank Access Energy Cooperative for sending me on this trip."



Certified photovoltaic (PV) products for roof-mounted solar power generating systems generally are reliable. Manufacturers test PV panels for hail impact, high wind and freeze-thaw cycles that represent year-round weather conditions. Unless your PV system uses a tracking device, it has no moving parts – but be sure to pay attention to the warranty. Most manufacturers offer at least a 20-year warranty for their PV panels.

Inverters usually have warranties between 5 and 10 years, with extended warranties of 15 to 20 years available at extra cost. The warranty should cover all parts and labor, including the cost of removing any defective component, shipping it to the manufacturer and reinstalling the component after it's repaired or replaced.

Get your home ready for the change in seasons

BY KEVIN WHEELER

Wow, where has time gone? It seems like just yesterday I was writing about the New Year. With another annual meeting completed, now we're talking about fall approaching. As summer winds down, we begin the treachery of heading toward fall and then winter. But before we get there, we still have some summer left to enjoy – as we attend county fairs, the state fair, local town celebrations and school registrations.



As the dog days of summer approach, it's time for us to remember all of the home improvement tasks we've put off. When the seasons change, it's a great time to make sure that the biggest appliance in your home – the furnace/air conditioner – is in top working order. As always, you need to make sure the filter is changed or cleaned, and it may be time to call a dealer for service on your unit.

It's always a good idea to make a trip around your home to make notes

on issues you can remedy when the weather is a little cooler. Take time to look at doors and windows for air leaks or avenues that allow air or bugs to enter the dwelling. Do some caulking before winter arrives; it's one of the cheapest weatherization tools on the market.

Let's enjoy the last few weeks of summer and continue to make memories with our families. It will only be a couple of more weeks until the kids will be back in school and we'll be looking at each other saying, "Where did summer go?" The next time we talk, it will be about how the colors of fall are here, football Friday nights and the crops.

I really enjoyed seeing our members at the annual meeting. If you didn't make it, I look forward to meeting with you in the near future. ⚡

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

Win a security camera to watch your home when you're not there!

When you're away, you'll see what's going on at home, day or night, with the Nest Cam. If the device sees or hears someone in your home, it immediately sends a message to your smartphone so you can call the proper authorities. The camera plugs into a wall outlet and connects to your Wi-Fi system – and there's even a speaker so you can scare the intruder away with a live message like, "You'd better get out now. The sheriff is on the way."



Retail price is about \$200 at big-box home centers, computer retailers and www.nest.com.

To enter this month's contest for a Nest Cam, complete the entry form at the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website (www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) by Aug. 31, 2016. ⚡

Saving Energy

An energy audit is the key to increasing energy efficiency

At Access Energy Cooperative, we believe in arming you with as much information as we can to help you save on your electric bill. An energy audit is an ideal resource for increasing efficiency and reducing energy consumption, because you'll find out how much energy you use – and why.

Our energy experts will come to your home and use a blower door test (*photo, right*) – in addition to thermal imaging to find the places where air is escaping and even crawling into your crawlspace to look for duct leaks. We'll find inefficient appliances, and

talk with your family about costly energy behaviors, such as standing in front of the refrigerator door mulling options or leaving the Xbox console turned on 24/7.

Some residential members have been able to shave hundreds of dollars off their bills over the course of a year by changing their habits, making improvements and upgrading appliances. We even have rebates to help you make some of the improvements recommended by the audit.

The types of efficiency improvements



suggested will vary, depending on the building and specific conditions. For example, the advice offered to members living in a classic old farmhouse could differ greatly from guidance given to members living in a new home. ⚡

For Sale

How much energy do your appliances use?

Have you ever wondered how much “juice” your appliances are using? You can find out how efficient your appliances really are with the Kill A Watt Electricity Usage Monitor, which is available from Access Energy Cooperative for \$38.



To assess an appliance’s energy use, just plug the Kill A Watt into a wall outlet and then plug an appliance into the monitor. A large LCD display counts consumption by the kilowatt-hour, and you can figure out your electrical expenses by the hour, day, week, month or even an entire year. You also can monitor the quality of your power by displaying voltage, line frequency and power factor.

For more information or to purchase a Kill A Watt, please call the cooperative at 319-385-1577 or 866-242-4232. ⚡

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

IOWA 811 ONE CALL

August 11 is National 8-1-1 Day

Safety Matters

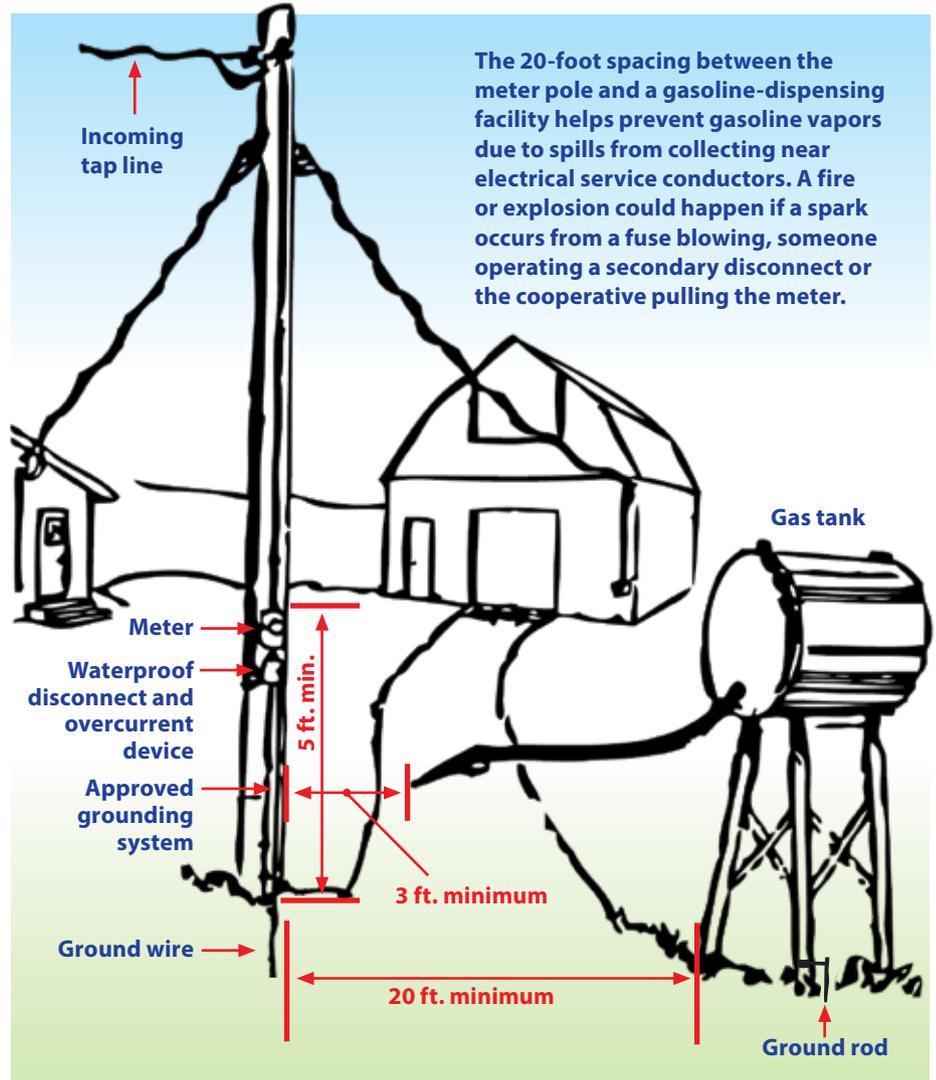
Practice safety with gasoline-dispensing facilities near electrical equipment

One of the most common safety violations found near electricity lines is the location of gasoline-dispensing facilities on farmsteads, in relation to the meter pole or farm buildings. Because of the hazards that exist in the vicinity of gasoline-dispensing facilities – especially to Access Energy Cooperative personnel where there’s a possibility of electric sparks or arcs igniting flammable vapors – the cooperative doesn’t permit the installation of meter poles or service entrances within 20 feet of a gasoline-dispensing barrel or tank. There also must be at least 3 feet between the gasoline-dispensing nozzle and any of the cooperative’s equipment.

Installations with less than the

required clearances should be modified to provide the required clearances as soon as possible. A violation of this requirement leaves the cooperative no choice but to disconnect your electricity until the hazard is corrected. Because of the considerable cost involved, it wouldn’t be practical for Access Energy Cooperative to change the location of existing meter poles.

In addition to these location requirements, please make sure your gasoline-dispensing facilities are electrically bonded to the electrical ground of the farm wiring system. Install a ground rod at your gasoline tank and connect the tank to the ground rod and to the farm wiring ground. ⚡



We respect your privacy and confidentiality

At Access Energy Cooperative, we recognize that a key element of the member/cooperative relationship is the trust that you place in us to respect the privacy and confidentiality of your personal information. As we continue to be committed to improving and expanding our services and delivery channels – and providing you with the highest quality of service – we recognize our members' needs and desires to preserve their privacy and confidentiality. While personal information about you is fundamental to our ability to efficiently provide you with quality service, your privacy is also very important to us.

The information we collect

Access Energy Cooperative will receive and retain information about members through:

- Information we receive from you on applications or other forms;
- Information about your transactions with us, our affiliates or others; and
- Information we receive from a consumer-reporting agency.

The way we use information

Access Energy Cooperative will use a collection of nonpublic personal information that's necessary to maintain and administer financial services. This information won't be shared with outside parties unless:

- The information is provided to help complete a member-initiated transaction (e.g., reporting agencies, document processing companies, etc.)
- The member has requested it;
- The disclosure is required by law (e.g., subpoena, investigation of fraudulent activity, etc.); or
- The disclosure is required by banking regulation (e.g., Fair Lending Reporting Act, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, etc.).

When member information is provided to any of the third parties mentioned above, that third party must agree to adhere to privacy principles that provide for keeping such information confidential.

Limiting employee access to information

Access Energy Cooperative limits employee access to member information to those with a business reason for knowing such information. All employees are educated on the importance of confidentiality and member privacy. Any employee that violates the financial privacy of our customers will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures and possible termination.

Information protection via established security procedures

Appropriate physical, electronic and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure information are put in place to prevent unauthorized access, maintain data accuracy and ensure the correct use of information.

Maintaining accurate information

Access Energy Cooperative has established procedures so that our members' financial information is accurate, current and complete in accordance with reasonable commercial standards. Requests to correct inaccurate information will be responded to in a timely manner.

Questions?

We at Access Energy Cooperative value our customer relationships. We want you to understand how we use the information you provide us with and our commitment to ensuring your personal privacy. If you have any questions about how Access Energy Cooperative protects your information, please call us at 319-385-1577 or toll-free at 866-242-4232. ⚡

Make rural issues a priority in 2016

During the past few months, millions of Americans trekked to local school gymnasiums, churches and community centers to cast votes in presidential, congressional and local races. The enthusiasm with which citizens are participating in this election season is encouraging and foreshadows a robust debate, now that the party conventions are over and we're headed for the elections.

In the months ahead, it would be wise for candidates to remember the 42-million-member electric cooperative community, a diverse and vast group of Americans that reaches into almost every district and every state. Electric co-ops provide coverage for 75 percent of our nation's landmass. They're a foundation in their communities and their members are making their voices heard this election on issues that matter most to them, such as affordable electricity, broadband internet access and job security for veterans.

To ensure that all electric co-op members are part of the debate this election, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association has launched the Co-ops Vote initiative. This nonpartisan program has three goals: increase rural voter registration and turnout, educate co-op consumers on key issues and elevate the influence of rural Americans in the outcome of this election.

By participating in the Co-ops Vote program and taking the pledge to make electric co-op issues a priority this November, consumers are sending a resounding message that candidates will need to put our concerns front and center in order to earn our vote. With millions of electric co-op members speaking out with one voice, we are already having a major impact in making our top issues part of the national conversation.

Stand up for the priorities of electric cooperatives in the lead-up to Nov. 8. Join Co-ops Vote at www.vote.coop. ⚡

