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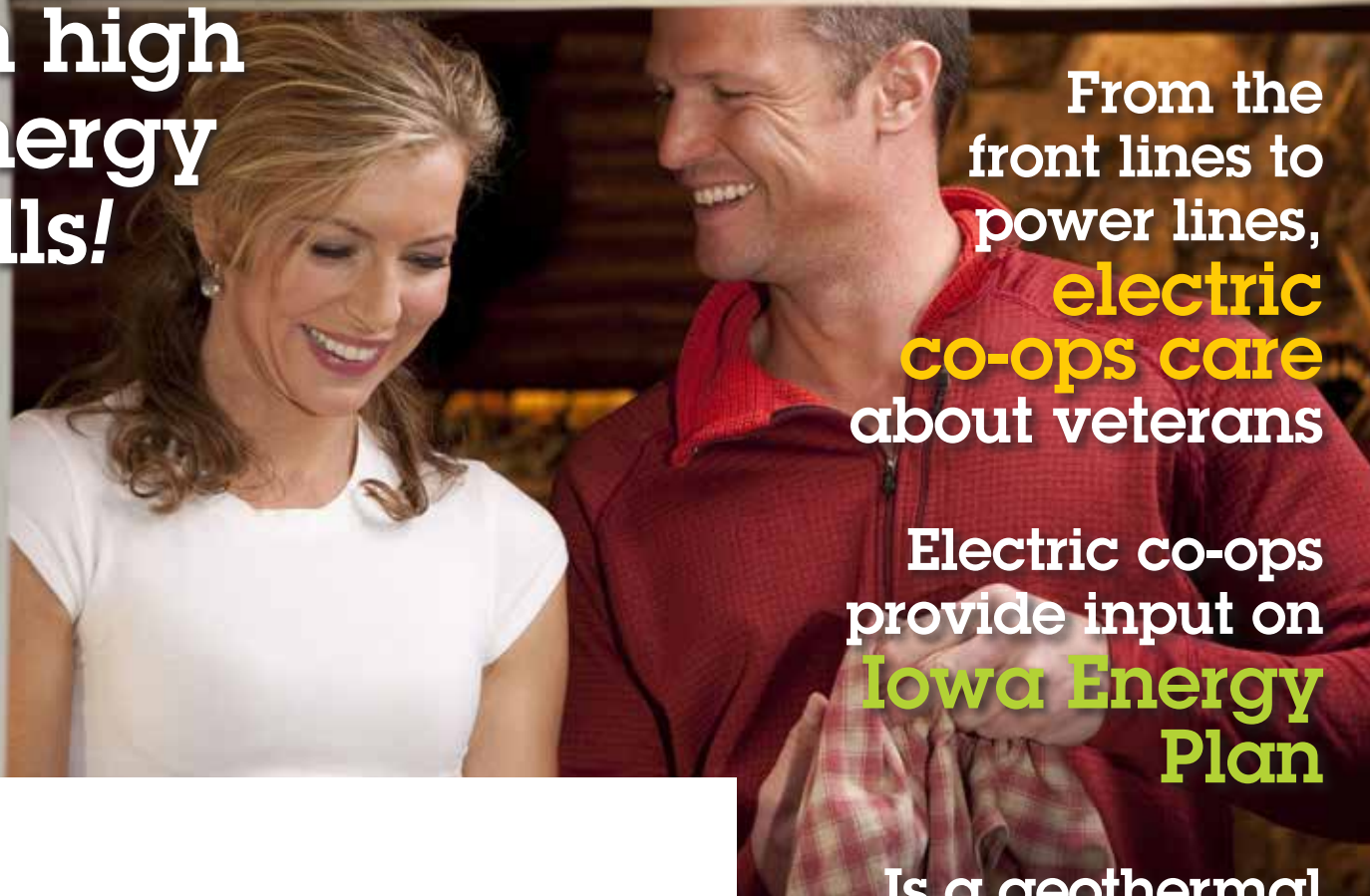


SEPTEMBER 2016

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION FOR MEMBER-OWNERS OF ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

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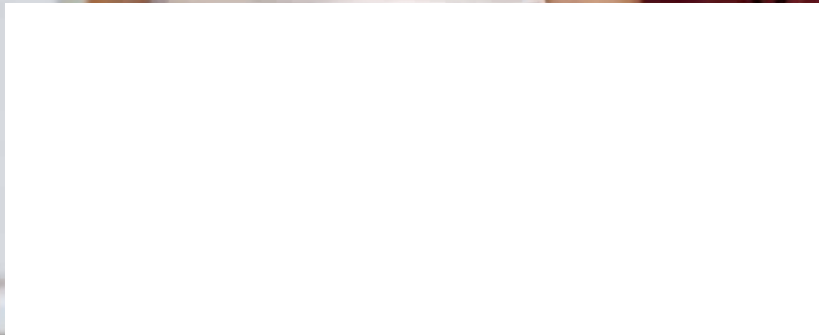
on high energy bills!



From the front lines to power lines, electric co-ops care about veterans

Electric co-ops provide input on Iowa Energy Plan

Is a geothermal heat pump right for you?



Local Perspective

From the front lines to power lines, electric co-ops care about veterans

BY KEVIN WHEELER

Electric co-ops have long had a special affinity for veterans, perhaps because they both are so closely aligned in outlook – focusing on service, mission and country. Maybe it's because a disproportionate number of veterans come from rural communities and return to their hometowns following active duty. Or maybe it's due to the shared work ethic of teamwork, cooperation and a “get it done” attitude. Most likely, it's all of the above.

At Access Energy Cooperative, we're among the more than 900 electric co-ops across the country to support and honor our nation's veterans of all generations. We're grateful to have veterans within our ranks, and we're



proud to serve veterans and their families within our local community. In addition to providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity, we care for the veterans' community in a variety of ways.

We're not alone in our efforts to honor and serve veterans. As part of our national network of electric cooperatives that span 47 states and cover 75 percent of the nation's landmass, there are countless programs that our family of co-ops has initiated. At the national level, we support the “Serve Our Co-ops, Serve Our Country” program, a nationwide initiative aimed at employing and honoring veterans, military service members and their spouses. This program came from a great vision of forming a national coalition with the shared goal of hiring veterans into co-op jobs across America – and setting them up for success in their local communities.

As part of a co-op veteran outreach effort, America's electric cooperatives are working closely with federal partners, including the Department of Energy, Department of Labor, Department of Defense, Veterans Administration, labor unions and other trade associations on an industry-wide veterans' hiring initiative, The Utility Workforce Initiative. Together, these groups are establishing a national employee resource group, Veterans in Energy, which will launch later this year to provide transition, retention and professional development support to

military veterans working in the energy industry.

At the local level, electric co-ops across America have created their own programs tailored to the unique needs of their community. For example, in Kentucky, Pennyrite Electric Cooperative printed more than 10,000 “thank you” cards that members signed and later were delivered to troops on active duty at nearby Ft. Campbell.

Many electric co-ops sponsor “Honor Flights,” enabling veterans from the Korean conflict and WWII to visit war memorials in Washington, D.C., at no charge. In the small town of Fort Dodge, Kansas, Victory Electric Cooperative partnered with the local VFW to create the “Vittles for Vets” program aimed at stocking the food pantry at the Fort Dodge Soldiers Home. Many of the veterans living there and in surrounding communities have limited incomes, and the food pantry helps them meet basic needs.

Other co-ops are forging strong partnerships with the military bases in their service territories. In Wyoming and North Dakota, co-op leaders and staff serve on military-civilian boards and committees that support activities initiated by their respective bases.

While the activities may differ, a commitment to veterans is apparent at every electric co-op across the nation. We are proud to be a part of the cooperative network that honors and supports veterans of all ages, ranks and branches of the military. 🚀

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



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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First 250 receive a FREE blanket
at two Mount Pleasant home football games
September 23 @ 7pm
Mt. Pleasant vs. Ft. Madison
October 14 @ 7pm
Mt. Pleasant vs. Fairfield

Consumer Protection

Here's how to handle a concern about your electric service

As a member-owner of Access Energy Cooperative, assistance is available to you in resolving questions, comments or complaints about your electric service. Access Energy Cooperative has trained representatives available to answer your questions and address any concerns you may have. Contact our office by writing Access Energy Cooperative, P.O. Box 440, Mount Pleasant, IA 52641 or calling 866-242-4232.

If your question is related to our service, rather than rates, and your concern is not resolved, you may request assistance from the Iowa



Utilities Board by calling 877-565-4450 toll-free; by writing to Iowa Utilities Board, 1375 E. Court Ave., Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069; or by e-mailing customer@iub.iowa.gov.

How Your Co-op Works

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Access Energy Cooperative is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's pro-

grams or activities.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call 866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; by fax to 202-690-7442; or by e-mail to program.intake@usda.gov. This is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Editor's Choice Contest

You have 12 chances to win this month!



For a chance to win one of a dozen Blackout Buddy H₂O emergency lights this month, complete the entry form at the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com by Sept. 30, 2016.

In the Community

Help others by contributing to RECare

RECare is a program where members help other members in need. You may make a one-time contribution to the RECare program, or you may enclose an amount each month with your monthly electric bill. Just one dollar a month will help others. In the past fiscal year, members contributed \$2,671.49 to help other members!

The Iowa Community Action Program administers this program, and recipients must meet their guidelines.



Member Authorization Form

I would like to make a:

- One-time contribution of

\$ _____

- Monthly contribution of

\$ _____

(That will be added to my bill)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

ZIP Code _____

Phone # _____

E-mail _____

Account # (if known) _____

Financial Matters

The dividends are coming!



If you weren't able to make it to the annual meeting of members Aug. 2, your dividend check was recently mailed to you. Accounts with payments of less than \$5 will continue to accumulate and will be paid in the year they reach or exceed \$5.

After reviewing the operating revenues for 2015, your Board of Directors approved a dividend retirement of \$969,670. The refund is applied against years 1996, 1999, 2000 and 2015. The cooperative paid 100 percent of the remaining dividends for 1996, 29 percent of 1999, 61 percent of 2000 and 13 percent of 2015. A pass-through amount of \$245,350 is from Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative.

As an Access Energy Cooperative member, you own the cooperative. Unlike other electric utilities, we exist to make sure your needs are met – not to make a profit. As a member-owner, you share in the profits in the form of dividend checks. We work hard every day to keep your rates as low as possible. We also strive to earn your trust and excel at providing you with reliable service.

If you'd like to know more about dividends, check the co-op's website at www.accessenergycoop.com.

Annual Meeting

Even rainy weather couldn't

Members of Access Energy Cooperative celebrated the 2016 Annual Meeting of Members on Aug. 2 at McMillan Park in Mount Pleasant. Even with the downpour of rain throughout most of the day, the crowd was estimated at 3,300.

Members received a warm welcome from Mount Pleasant Mayor Steve Brimhall, and Kevin Wheeler was introduced as the new general manager/CEO of the cooperative. During the business session under the tents, speakers reported on "Working Together" and the cooperative's growth and contribution to the communities.

Access Energy Cooperative also was recognized for its economic development accomplishments and commitment to local communities, having been instrumental in numerous development projects and initiatives in southern Iowa. Some examples given were the Iowa Fertilizer Company's major investment near Wever (resulting in significant job creation), Heartland Co-op near Fairfield and MM Composite's new manufacturing

facility at the Crossroads Industrial Park in Mount Pleasant.

Dividend checks totaling \$969,670 were available for members to pick up at the meeting. Checks were later mailed to members unable to attend the meeting.

Other highlights of this year's event included an outstanding performance by singer Jake McVey and a great meal served by Mount Pleasant Hy-Vee. And even though some of the activities had to be cancelled due to the weather, people still enjoyed the drive-a-tractor by Joel Proennecke and Dick McGohan, carousel and ground train rides from Midwest Old Threshers, free popcorn from the IReNew renewable energy trailer, a live line demonstration on being safe around electricity, free blood pressure checks, and information from the Henry County Health Center, Milestones, and the Area Agency on Aging. There also were booths on the new Smarthub billing venue, the Coop Connections® Card and Coops Vote – in addition to energy efficiency and safety information. ⚡

Congratulations to these members who won bill credits at the Annual Meeting

Every member who attended the meeting received gifts such as a paring knife and energy-efficient lightbulbs, but the happiest member this year was Trisha DeVore, who took home the Grand Prize of a \$750 bill credit. (Next year, we'll start over with a \$250 bill credit for the Grand Prize.)

Eldon P. Taeger won the \$100 bill credit for mail-in ballots. In addition, these members won \$50 electric credits donated by Sherrill Electric: Rochelle Heisel, Terri L. Bailey, Donald Wasson, Wesley J. Shafer, Judith D. Bartachek, Mt. Pleasant Golf & CC, Kevin Hohl, Raymond Robbins, Kenneth Baldwin and Julie Carpenter.

Winners of \$25 credits included Mike Prosser, Richard L. Smith, Marjorie Ireland, G V M Corporation, Van Meek, Wilbur H. Lyon, Fine White Hog Farm, Bradley Lake, Robert Kiefer, Keith O. Pratt, Ronald R. Fillingner, James Wellman, Keith R. Webber, Jerry L. Pleasant, Mike Foster, Bill Simon and Earl Griffin.



keep the crowd away!



▲ Tractor and carousel rides were favorite activities for kids of all ages.



▲ (From left) In recognition of the cooperative's leadership in project development, Iowa Area Development Group president Rand Fisher presented the organization's Impact Award to Access Energy Cooperative general manager/ CEO Kevin Wheeler and president Jerry Barker.

▼ Thousands of Access Energy Cooperative members turned out for the annual meeting.



▲ Cody Lee (left) and Shea Dahlstrom were on hand to talk about their adventures representing Access Energy Cooperative on this year's Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.



Fred Hickenbottom
District One



Robert Smith
District Two



Marvin Newton
District Three

The results are in for the board election

Fred Hickenbottom, Robert Paul Smith and Marvin Newton were elected as directors to serve 3-year terms on the nine-person board. Following the meeting, the board of directors held their annual reorganizational meeting, and these directors were elected as officers of the Access Energy Cooperative Board of Directors: Jerry Barker, president; Fred Hickenbottom, vice president; David Hollingsworth, secretary; and Marvin Newton, treasurer.