

living with energy

IN IOWA



FEBRUARY 2017

New rebate program announced for Access Energy Cooperative members! ▶ See Page 12

High school students:
Win an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. — and make your own history!



Visit our website at www.accessenergycoop.com



UPCOMING EVENTS



Feb. 21 Access Energy Cooperative Capitol Visit

Feb. 24 Youth Tour Application Deadline

March 7 Youth Tour Interviews

March 15 Scholarship Application Deadline

March 22 REC Day on the Hill

March 31 Photo Contest Deadline

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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Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641

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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Friday, 7 a.m.-3:30 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
David Hollingsworth	District 1	Secretary
Marvin Newton	District 3	Treasurer
Joseph Heckethorn	District 1	Director
Larry White	District 2	Director
Robert Smith	District 2	Director
Marvin Holtkamp	District 3	Director
Victor Pierrot	District 3	Director

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

Our system works around the clock, year after year

BY KEVIN WHEELER

Your electric cooperative has been around for a long time – 78 years to be exact. We've witnessed the many ways electricity has transformed the communities we serve and our rural landscape. Before electricity, today's household tasks were hard work and dangerous. For example, cooking and washing clothes involved a lot of manual labor. Thankfully, practically everything we do – from entertainment to our jobs – is impacted by the ease of electricity.

One thing that hasn't changed since rural Iowa was electrified is our mission to provide electricity to you. Because we've been reliably, efficiently and safely delivering electricity to homes and businesses for decades, some of our member-owners ask why they still need to pay for a system that should have been paid for by now.

The truth is, most – if not all – of the original system was paid for many years ago. The original infrastructure, which includes poles and wires that were paid for many years ago, has likely been or is currently being replaced. When you have a system that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, equipment needs to be replaced at regular intervals.

Imagine if you had a car that was 78 years old, and it was driven all day, every day. By now, either the car would not be operating or every part of the car would have been replaced many times. The same is true for utility infrastructure. While poles and wires generally have a life span of 30-40 years, some may not last as long due to a variety of conditions. For example, a major ice storm can cause power lines to snap and poles to break regardless of their age.

Paying for an electric cooperative system can be compared to paying for your home. Over many years or

decades, the original tract of land and the physical property are paid in full. But infrastructure updates such as a new furnace, air conditioner, windows and roof are required, not to mention updates to appliances, carpeting, flooring and paint. Consider how inefficient it would be to heat your home with a 78-year-old furnace. The same logic applies to your co-op, as we need to replace vehicles and equipment over the years to serve you best. Aside from the costs of hard assets at the co-op, there are also the costs of property taxes, insurance, regular maintenance, and staffing that contribute to our overall system costs.

The original co-op infrastructure fulfilled the expectations of that time in terms of reliability and affordability. Over the years, many of those needs have changed. What's in place today is an ever-improving distribution system that allows us to meet increasing demands for kilowatt-hours in an efficient manner.

Not only has the need for electricity increased, but also our processes now result in reduced outage times. We work to extend the life of infrastructure through maintenance at regular intervals too. Poles are routinely tested for safety, and we trim vegetation throughout our system on cycles to maintain a high level of reliability.

To balance reliability with affordability, we upgrade our system when and where it makes sense to do so. We balance financing upgrades and replacements with debt and equity so that we can keep your rates affordable, while providing power that you can count on for your home or business. ⚡



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

Board appoints nominating committee for director election

Your Board of Directors is elected by and from the membership of Access Energy Cooperative, and a Nominating Committee made up of cooperative members has been appointed to begin the process of selecting nominees to run for the three district seats that will be up for election later this year. Each of our three districts will elect a director to fill a position for a term of 3 years.

Terms that will expire with the 2017 annual meeting to be held Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2017, are:



David Hollingsworth



Jerry Barker



Marvin Holtkamp

- **District 1** – David Hollingsworth
- **District 2** – Jerry Barker
- **District 3** – Marvin Holtkamp

In order to serve on the Board of Directors, you must be a member of the cooperative and a bona fide resident of a premise served by the cooperative. The 2017 Nominating Committee includes these members:

- **District 1** – Brandon Ledger, Stockport; Kenneth Whitham, Fairfield; and Susie Greiner, Douds
- **District 2** – Bob Wilson, Bob Scarff and Charles Sutter; all of Mt. Pleasant
- **District 3** – Bill Schurk, Burlington; Myrna Folker, Donnellson; and Dean Mabeus, Wever

Anyone interested in running for a seat on the board may contact a member of the Nominating Committee prior to its meeting on March 14, 2017. For more information on the board election process, visit our website at www.accessenergycoop.com. ⚡

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

If you win, you might get your power bill paid next month!

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (of which Access Energy Cooperative is a member) is celebrating its 75th anniversary, and it wants to make this an especially memorable event for a lucky member-owner at one of Iowa's local electric cooperatives. So, it's going to pay the March 2017 power bill (through a bill credit up to \$150) for the randomly chosen winner of this month's Editor's Choice Contest!



Please visit the all-new *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com to review the rules and to complete the entry form no later than Feb. 28, 2017. If you don't have a computer, go to a library, senior center or other facility that offers computers for the public to use. And stay tuned: Later this year, we'll have a mail-in contest just for those few folks who don't have a home computer or easy access to one! ⚡



New scholarship program available to high school seniors

The Access Energy Cooperative Board of Directors has approved a new scholarship program for high school students. Six \$1,500 awards will be available – two awards in each of the cooperative's three districts.

For a map of the districts and more information on the scholarship program, please visit our website at www.accessenergycoop.com. The deadline for submitting applications to our office is March 15, 2017. ⚡

ANNUAL MEETING



Save the Date!

Aug. 1, 2017 @ 5 p.m.

Access Energy Cooperative Annual Meeting of Members

Everything is FREE!

IN THE NEWS

Photo contest entry deadline is drawing near

For the 2018 Calendar (2016-17 photo contest), we're looking for more of those fantastic



photos of rural settings in southeast Iowa like the ones we've received in previous contests. We'll be choosing 12 photos as winners to be placed in the large photo areas above the calendar pages, as well as to receive \$50.

Please submit entries by March 31, 2017, to:

Photo Contest

c/o Access Energy Cooperative
P.O. Box 440
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

For complete contest rules, visit www.accessenergycoop.com

FINANCIAL MATTERS

New rebate program announced for 2017



The following rebates are currently available for qualifying purchases by members of Access Energy Cooperative.

For more information about rebates, check our website at www.accessenergycoop.com.

Rebates are only available to service locations that use more than 6,000 kilowatt-hours on an annual basis. Eligible services include lake homes, shops, barns, etc.

Category	Rebate
ENERGY STAR® window air conditioner	\$50
Electric Water Heater	
New construction or replacing gas	\$250
Replacing electric	\$150
Heat Pump Water Heater	
New construction or replacing gas	\$150
Ground Source Heat Pumps	
Indoor unit and loops	\$750/ton
Replace existing indoor unit	\$400/ton
Dual-fuel and mini-split heat pump	\$250/ton
Air-to-air source heat pump	\$100/ton

Business lighting rebates

- Must have at least 10 eligible fixtures (fluorescent T-5 and T-8 lighting systems with electronic ballasts, LED and occupancy sensors) at a commercial, industrial or Ag business to qualify for rebate.
- Bulbs and fixtures must be evaluated by Access Energy Cooperative to determine eligibility, based on an audit of existing lighting prior to any installation of new equipment. A knowledgeable employee from the business will need to be present to guide the cooperative representative through the initial walk-through lighting audit.
- Total rebate amount is limited to \$30,000 per member per year and will not exceed 40 percent of the total equipment cost.

Free energy audit and rebates for improvements

- Conducted by a qualified Access Energy Cooperative representative
- Blower door test to check for leaks
- Inspect insulation, doors, windows, lighting, appliances and much more.
- Weatherization improvements suggested at audit eligible for incentive up to 50 percent of the project cost; maximum rebate is \$500.

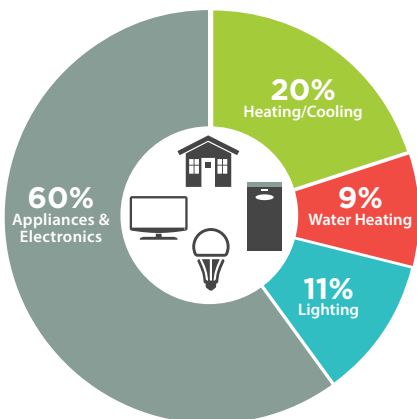
Low-interest loans

Access Energy Cooperative has low-interest loans available for the cost of materials and labor for energy efficiency home improvements in new or existing structures. For more details, visit our website or call our office at 866-242-4232. For a complete list of rebate qualifications, go to our website at www.accessenergycoop.com.

Photo: Rheem Manufacturing Company (www.rheem.com)

How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that appliances and electronics account for the largest amount of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2015 Annual Energy Outlook. *U.S. residential sector electricity by major end uses.

Here's what you said



Access Energy Cooperative conducted a survey late last fall to find out your communications preferences. We appreciate hearing from almost 20 percent of our membership to give us a representation of your needs.

We're excited to see that 91 percent of the respondents said they were reading all or at least part of the magazine. It's a crucial tool for us to communicate with you what's happening at your cooperative. Your favorite parts of the magazine are the recipes and energy efficiency articles, so we'll be sure to keep those coming.

We also found out that the majority of you find our national award-winning Access Energy Cooperative calendar to be valuable,

so we'll continue to provide that each year in the annual meeting packet that arrives in your mailbox in July.

Another opportunity we discovered is that a large portion of our membership is interested in receiving outage and energy efficiency information through social media avenues. We'll be exploring offering some of these options in upcoming months.

Our biggest surprise is how many of you miss the crossword puzzle that we used to run in the *Highline Headlines*. We heard you and will work on finding a way to bring it back.

Thanks again to everyone who participated, and congratulations to the bill credit winners of \$50! ⚡

Deadline is approaching for Youth Tour applications

Access Energy Cooperative sends two students to participate in the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., in June of each year. The trip is an activity-filled week, affording these high school youths the opportunity to learn firsthand what it's like to be involved in politics, community development and today's social issues.

While in Washington, more than 1,700 students from across the country will:

- Visit historic sites
- Explore the Smithsonian museums
- Take a cruise on the Potomac River
- Meet with their senators and representatives and learn about the process of government
- Discuss current issues
- Increase their knowledge of cooperative electric utilities and American history

The deadline for applications to reach our office is Feb. 24, 2017.

For more details on the Youth Tour program, please visit our website at www.accessenergycoop.com. ⚡

CO-OP VIPS

Access Energy Cooperative employees celebrate 85 years of service!

Congratulations to these employees who received an award of service for years of dedication to the cooperative. And thank

you to all our employees who work hard every day to provide our members with safe, reliable and efficient service. ⚡



Jennifer Helling
5 years



Jon Trumpold
10 years



Diane Magnani
15 years



Bob Ruby
15 years



Gary Stevens
15 years



Jim Mills
25 years



Chuck Rila
25 years



Kimberly Davis
30 years