

living with energy

IN IOWA



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

MARCH 2018

Please Move Over and Slow Down for our linemen, whenever you see them working. It's the law!

Solve soil problems with
straw bale gardening

Access Energy Cooperative visits legislators at Iowa State Capitol

Win a 7-in-1, programmable electric cooker!

Your co-op's linemen are the **power** behind your power

Visit our website at www.accessenergycoop.com

UPCOMING EVENTS



- March 5 Nominating Committee Meets**

- March 6 Youth Tour Interviews**

- March 14 REC Day on the Hill**

- March 15 Scholarship application deadline**

- March 30 Office closed for Good Friday**

- March 31 Photo Contest deadline**

For more information on the programs and deadlines listed here, please visit our website at www.accessenergycoop.com, or call our office at 866-242-4232 from 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m. on Monday-Thursday or 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on Friday.



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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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Friday, 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Call our office 24/7: 319-385-1577.

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

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Larry White	District 2	Director
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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



TIP #1

You have 24/7 access to your account with SmartHub

Information on your account is available through both the SmartHub link on the Access Energy Cooperative website and the SmartHub app for your smartphone and other mobile devices. For secure account management functions and to easily pay your bill, visit our website at www.accessenergycoop.com and click on the SmartHub button at the top of the page. You can also download the app by scanning the appropriate QR code below – or by going to the Apple or Android app stores.



LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Access Energy Cooperative visits legislators at Iowa State Capitol

Several members of the Access Energy Cooperative Board of Directors and general manager/CEO Kevin Wheeler visited the Capitol to talk with legislators about issues affecting the members of Access Energy Cooperative and the energy industry. Thank you, legislators, for taking time out of your busy schedules to visit with our representatives!



Shown on the second floor of the Capitol between the two legislative chambers are (from left) board president David Hollingsworth; board

members Larry White and Fred Hickenbottom; Sen. Tom Greene; board members Marvin Newton and Marvin Holtkamp; and general manager/CEO Kevin Wheeler. ⚡

The value of electricity continues to shine

BY KEVIN WHEELER

How many of us remember dropping into Access Energy Cooperative's office with our parents or grandparents to pay the "light" bill? Whether you do that in person, by mail or online today, paying your monthly bill does a lot more than just keep the lights on.

Electricity keeps us connected to our modern world. Consider all the necessities and conveniences we enjoy, in part because of the power lines running to the electric meter outside your home.

Count up your televisions, desktop computers, laptops, tablets, printers, gaming consoles, music and video players, and personal assistant devices. Whether they get used every day or just occasionally, the electricity that keeps these devices working comes from Access Energy Cooperative.

Have you looked around your kitchen lately? Between the coffeemaker and toaster and microwave and electric skillet, a lot of us have added several modern small appliances.

If you have a craft nook or workshop, the power tools and machines you use to cut and shape your projects are either plugged in or recharged from the outlets connecting your household wiring to Access Energy Cooperative.



You use electricity to run all these devices – and we still keep the lights on, while you use the stove, heating and air-conditioning, and get hot water from the tap. The good news is that even as we rely more on electricity, it's still a bargain – especially compared to other things we pay for regularly.

Since 2011, expenses for medical care, residential rentals and education have increased at rates of 3 percent or more per year. Butter, meat and egg costs have been up by more than 1 to 2 percent annually, and even bread prices have risen better than a half percent on average.

Electricity costs rise about 1 percent a year, but co-ops across the country have reported a decline in average residential use per household since 2010. That means we're doing more things with less energy.

Kilowatt-hour use per household dropped by 8 percent between 2010 and 2016, slightly less than the 9 percent decline reported by all electric utilities nationwide.

When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner, and we're always looking for ways to work with you to make it even better. That's why Access Energy Cooperative urges energy efficiency, encourages you to look for ENERGY STAR® appliances and promotes technology designed

to give members more control over their electricity use. Members have 24/7 access to the information on their accounts with the **SmartHub** technology that's available both on our website and as an app for your mobile devices.

Energy performance dashboards, smart thermostats and power strips, and appliance settings that shift most water heating, laundry and dishwashing outside of peak rate periods help reduce the co-op's overall power demand. They also give you opportunities to control or even trim your monthly utility bills.

That's good for families, couples and individuals trying to live within their budgets. And it's going to become even more important as digital devices and Internet-connected technologies become a greater part of our lives.

The average home has 10 Wi-Fi connected devices now. That number is expected to explode to 50 by 2020. Technology and the gateways that keep it working use electricity, so you'll depend upon Access Energy Cooperative for more than just the power that keeps the lights on.

That's why we're always working to provide service that's reliable, affordable and even more valuable to our members – you, your family and your neighbors. ⚡

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

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a 7-in-1 electric cooker!

The Instant Pot 6-Quart Pressure Cooker combines functionality, user-friendliness and energy savings – all wrapped up in a countertop unit that lets you cook healthy food fast. Inside, there's a food-grade, stainless steel cooking pot, so you can use the appliance as a pressure cooker, slow cooker, rice cooker, yogurt maker, steamer, sauté pan and food warmer. The suggested retail is \$140; visit instantpot.com for more details.

For your chance at winning this Instant Pot, check the rules on the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website at www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com and complete the entry form no later than March 31, 2018. ⚡



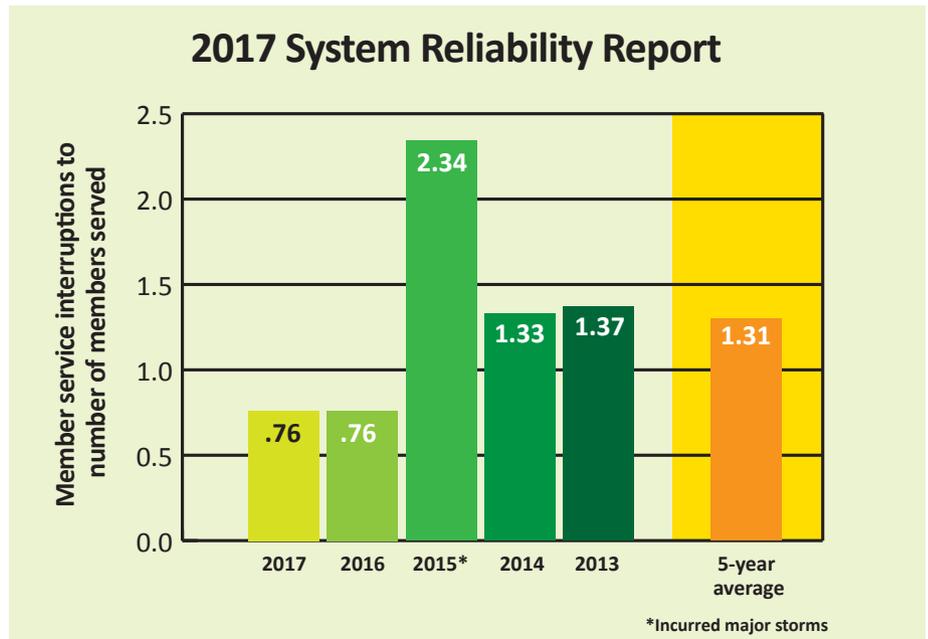
Keeping up with technology keeps your power on

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, such as a tornado or ice storm. Maybe a neighbor forgot to call before he dug up his backyard. Maybe someone slid off the road and hit a utility pole.

With more than 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. But 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 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.

For 2017, our outage reports show



a slight increase in the number and length of outages incurred by our members, mostly due to weather. There were no major storms last year, which helped tremendously; our stringent equipment and vegetation management plans are doing their job to keep outages down and your power reliable.

Our 2017 reports continued to show an increase in the number of poles rejected during safety inspections over the last 5-year average. We have been employing a new technology for the testing process, which is helping strengthen our pole-testing program – and create a safer system for you. ⚡

Program description	2017 program
Equipment inspections	Jefferson and Henry county areas
Vegetation management	Denmark, Batavia, Primrose areas and the southwest edges of our territory

NOTE OF THANKS

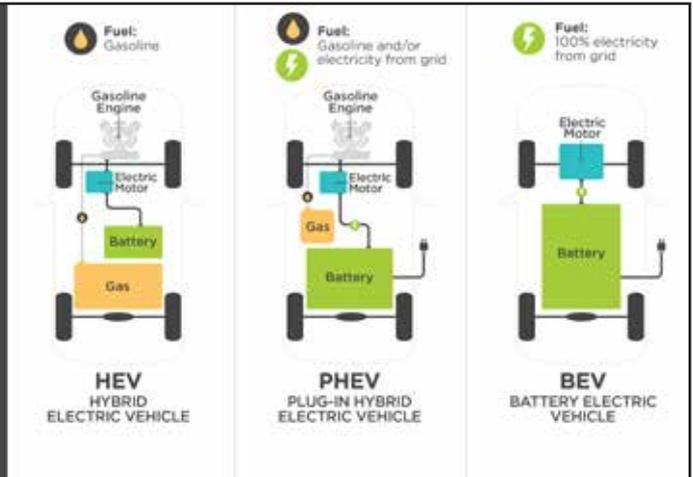
DEAR ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE:

The Carrington Pointe homeowners would like to thank your repair crew for their excellent work on our power outage on New Year's Day. It was so cold and they stayed and worked until they got it fixed. We sincerely appreciate their work and dedication.

Carrington Pointe Homeowners
Fairfield, Iowa

Types of Electric Vehicles

If you're looking to purchase an electric vehicle, use this cheat sheet to help you determine the various options. Drivers can choose between three types of electric vehicles (EVs). EVs are classified by the amount of electricity that is used as their energy source.





**MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN**



Jon is a lineman at Access Energy Cooperative. His job involves many dangerous hazards that he needs to focus on while he works. The last thing he needs to worry about is you hitting his truck when he's 40 feet in the air, getting someone's power back on. If you see co-op service trucks on the side of the road, **MOVE OVER AND SLOW DOWN**. It's the law!

STUDENT LEADERS

\$9,000 in scholarships is available to high school seniors

There will be six \$1,500 awards, two in each of the cooperative's three districts. Students applying for scholarships must be high school seniors receiving post-secondary education, and their parents or legal guardians must be members of the cooperative.

Applications are due in our office March 15, 2018. For more information, ask your guidance counselor, or visit www.accessenergycoop.com.



Summer help wanted!

Operations Department
Access Energy Cooperative

Seasonal help is needed this summer in the Access Energy Cooperative operations department. Applicant must have graduated high school by summer 2018 and must enroll in post-secondary education in the fall. Contact Diane Magnani at dmagnani@accessenergycoop.com.

ANNUAL MEETING



Save the Date!

**Aug. 7, 2018
at 5 p.m.**

**Access Energy Cooperative
Annual Meeting of
Members**

Everything is FREE!

NOTE OF THANKS



“ I just wanted to personally thank you for the great "Teachers Night Out" event. I absolutely had a great time! Thank you!! Loved the display too! ”

Deborah Vroom
Wisdom Quest