

# living with energy

IN IOWA

Access Energy Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

APRIL 2018

Help our linemen stay safe – Move Over and Slow Down when you see them working ▶ See Page 5

## Sprout young gardeners at home

You are there: a (careful) day in the life of a lineworker

Focus on quality when managing a renovation contractor

Board of Directors proposes change to Articles of Incorporation

Visit our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)

UPCOMING EVENTS



**April 29** 100 days before the 2018 Annual Meeting on Aug. 7

**May 28** Office closed for Memorial Day

**Aug. 7** Annual Meeting

For more information on the programs and deadlines listed here, please visit our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://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.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

# Access Energy Cooperative meets legislators during REC Day on the Hill

Access Energy Cooperative is active on the political scene to make sure the cooperative's interests are conveyed to legislators on the local, state and federal levels. For example, the co-op's staff and board of directors visit frequently with local legislators to make sure they understand the cooperative business model. Rest assured that local legislators are working on your behalf.

In March, electric cooperatives throughout the state converge on the Iowa Capitol for REC on the Hill. The cooperatives take over the rotunda to set up displays, ranging from safety to energy efficiency, for legislators. Our goal is to make sure they can make very informed decisions on



issues regarding the cooperative. We also make personal visits with the legislators that day to talk about issues that may affect your cooperative and the utility industry.

We thank our legislators for taking time out of their busy days to meet with us. ⚡



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

**Office:** Access Energy Cooperative  
1800 W. Washington St., P.O. Box 440  
Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641

**Phone:** 319-385-1577 or 866-242-4232

**Fax:** 319-385-6873

**Call Before You Dig (Iowa One Call):** 800-292-8989

**Website:** [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/AccessEnergyCoop](https://facebook.com/AccessEnergyCoop)

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/AccessEnergyC](https://twitter.com/AccessEnergyC)

**E-mail:** [contactus@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:contactus@accessenergycoop.com)

**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.

**General Manager/CEO:** Kevin Wheeler

**Editor:** Kimberly Davis

**Assistant Editor:** Chery Wiben

**Officers and Directors:**

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



TIP #2

## You have 24/7 access to your account with SmartHub

With SmartHub you can:

- Check your power usage
- Contact our office
- Pay your bill
- Check our news feed
- Report a service interruption
- Access custom widgets



Information on your account is available through both the SmartHub link on the Access Energy Cooperative website ([www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)) and the SmartHub app for your smartphone and other mobile devices. You also can download the appropriate app by clicking on the appropriate QR code below – or by going to the Apple or Android app stores.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

iOS



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# April 9 officially is Lineworker Appreciation Day, but we appreciate *our* lineworkers all year long!

BY KEVIN WHEELER

As April arrives, it brings with it the showers that produce spring flowers. It also heralds the beginning of a potentially stormy season that can inherently include power outages. While Access Energy Cooperative strives to provide reliable electricity to our members, there are times when Mother Nature has other plans. Most of us can ride out a storm from the comfort and convenience of our homes. However, there's a group of professionals that spring into action when the weather takes a turn for the worst – co-op employees, including lineworkers, who have one of the most dangerous jobs.

Braving stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers often must climb 40 feet or more, carrying heavy equipment to restore power. Listed as **one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.**, lineworkers must perform detailed tasks next to high-voltage power lines.

To help keep them safe, lineworkers wear specialized protective clothing



and equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect lineworkers from electrical shock. While the gear performs a critical function, it also adds additional weight and bulk, making the job more complex.

In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing to the top of a pole to repair a wire. They're also information experts that can pinpoint an outage from miles away and restore power remotely. Line crews use their iPads and cell phones to map outages, take pictures of the work they've done and troubleshoot problems. In our community, Access Energy Cooperative lineworkers are responsible for keeping more than 2,200 miles of lines working across 10 counties – to bring power to your

home and our local community 24/7, regardless of the weather, holidays or personal considerations.

While some of the tools that lineworkers use have changed over the years – namely the use of technology – the dedication to the job has not. Being a lineworker is not a glamorous profession. At its essence, it's inherently dangerous, requiring them to work near high-voltage lines in the worst of conditions, at any time of the day or night. During tornados, wildfires or storms, crews often work around the clock to restore power.

While April is known for spring showers, there's also a day set aside to "thank a lineworker." Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 9. During the month of April, if you see any lineworkers, please pause to say thank you to the power behind your power. Let them know you appreciate the hard work they do to keep the lights on, regardless of the conditions. ⚡

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

## SAFETY MATTERS

### April is Lineworker Appreciation Month



**MOVE OVER  
SLOW DOWN**

Remember to  
**#ThankALineworker**

At Access Energy Cooperative, we appreciate our linemen – and you should too! After all, when the lights go out, it's their time to shine. When bad weather rolls in, they roll out. And they're always ready to help, 24/7. But it isn't easy. Their jobs involve many hazards that they need

to focus on while they work. The last thing they need to worry about is you hitting their truck when they're 40 feet in the air, getting your power back on. So, if you see a co-op service truck on the side of the road, please **MOVE OVER AND SLOW DOWN**. It's the law!

Looking for this month's **Editor's Choice Contest**? Please go to [www.livingwithenergyiowa.com/](http://www.livingwithenergyiowa.com/)!

## STUDENT LEADERS

## 2018 Youth Tour winners announced

Evelyn Winer of Fairfield and Maddie Williamson of Mount Pleasant have been selected to attend the 2018 Youth Tour on June 8-14. Evelyn and Maddie will join 36 other Iowa students and 1,800 students from across the country that have been selected by their electric cooperatives to attend the annual Youth Tour.

The awards include all-expenses-paid trips to Washington, D.C., sponsored by Access Energy Cooperative, which 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.

A sophomore at Maharishi School, **Evelyn Winer** is the daughter of Carol Chesnutt and Paul Winer. She has been active



in speech, student council, piano lessons, voice lessons, screenwriting and play production. She is also an avid participant in the Interact Rotary Club.

A junior at Mount Pleasant Community High School, **Maddie Williamson** is the daughter of Steve and Courtney Williamson. She participates in varsity basketball and track, and also has been involved in the Iowa Amateur Athletic Union basketball program for many years.



While on tour, Evelyn and Maddie will learn about American history and government. They'll visit historical sights 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. ⚡

## SAFETY MATTERS

## Items on utility poles are a safety hazard – and illegal

Although it may seem like a good idea, mounting things on utility poles creates serious safety hazards for Access Energy Cooperative lineworkers who must climb poles to restore power or perform routine maintenance. Signs, satellite dishes, deer stands, birdhouses, balloons, flags and basketball nets all can be dangerous obstacles. In addition, the staples, nails, tacks and screws left behind can snag utility workers' boots or puncture safety clothing, making lineworkers vulnerable to slipping or even electrocution.

In addition to being hazardous, tampering with utility poles can be costly. Posting signs or attaching other objects to utility poles is in violation of Access Energy Cooperative's electric tariff, section 19. Individuals are



subject to disconnection and possible legal action.

Access Energy Cooperative encourages members to contact local zoning officers to inquire about where signage can be posted legally. ⚡

## HOW YOUR CO-OP WORKS

## Do you have questions or concerns about our complaint procedure?

As a member-owner of Access Energy Cooperative, assistance is available to you for resolving questions, comments or concerns about your electric service. Access Energy Cooperative has trained representatives available to answer your questions and address any concerns you may have.

### Here's how to contact our office:

**Write:** Access Energy Cooperative  
P.O. Box 440  
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641  
**Call:** 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:**

**Write:** Customer Service  
Iowa Utilities Board  
Dept. of Commerce  
1375 E. Court Avenue,  
Room 69  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0069  
**Call:** 515-725-7321 or  
877-565-4450  
**E-Mail:** [customer@iub.iowa.gov](mailto:customer@iub.iowa.gov)



## APRIL ENERGY SAVER

Periodically inspect your dryer vent to ensure it's not blocked. This will save energy and may prevent a fire. Manufacturers recommend using rigid venting material – not flexible plastic vents that may collapse and cause blockages. #energyefficiency ⚡

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

## Nominating committee names board candidates

Thank you to the 2018 Nominating Committee for your 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 Aug. 7, 2018:

### District 1

**Joseph Heckethorn** – 29349 115th St., Stockport, IA 52651

**Marvin Larson** – 2533 170<sup>th</sup>, Fairfield, IA 52556

### District 2

**Glen McCollum** – 2766 Graham Ave., Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

**Larry White** – 1144 225th St., Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

### District 3

**Robert Chesnut III** – 3571 Hwy 16, Wever, IA 52658

**Jerry Francy** – 3193 Nebraska Ave., New London, IA 52645



Members of the 2018 Nominating Committee were (clockwise from lower left) Myrna Folker, Tim Meyers, Dean Mabeus, Kenny Whitham, Bob Scarff, Bob Wilson, Randy White and Brandon Ledger.

## Board of Directors proposes change to Articles of Incorporation

The Board of Directors has the responsibility of periodically reviewing the Articles of Incorporation of the Cooperative to determine if any modifications are in order. At its Feb. 15, 2018, meeting, the Board identified an area where it felt the Articles should be modified. Cooperative members will be asked to cast a ballot, either by mail or at the annual meeting scheduled for Aug. 7, 2018, for the proposed amendment to the Articles of Incorporation. Ballots will be mailed to all members with the Official Notice of the Annual Meeting.

The amendment would add a new Article setting forth dispute resolution provisions. This will apply to disputes between the Cooperative and a member, former member or customer who has received electric service from the Cooperative.

The text would direct the parties to attempt to resolve the dispute in good faith. In the event the matter is unable to be resolved by the parties, the applicable regulatory body would then handle the dispute over which it has jurisdiction (such as the Iowa Utilities Board). If no regulatory body has jurisdiction over the matter, then the text of the proposed Article sets forth a procedure for mediation of the dispute. If mediation is not successful, then arbitration is available to the parties. The dispute resolution provisions would not be applicable to the Cooperative's collection of past due accounts or to matters where the amount in dispute could be handled in small claims court.

The Board certainly does not anticipate any disputes with the membership; however, the Board deems it to be in the best interest of the Cooperative and the members to establish a process for resolving disputes that is efficient, fair and cost-effective in the event a dispute should arise. Many of the contracts to which the Cooperative is a party include dispute resolution provisions, and this Amendment would provide such a process for dealings between the Cooperative and its members.

You are encouraged to vote in favor of the proposed amendment to the Articles of Incorporation. Should you have any questions regarding the proposed Amendment, please do not hesitate to call or stop by the office. The full text of the proposed Amendment can be obtained from the office and will also be mailed to members with the ballot. ⚡

## ANNUAL MEETING

# THE BOYS

Aug. 7, 2018  
at 5 p.m.

Access Energy Cooperative  
Annual Meeting of  
Members

## Save the Date!

Everything  
is FREE!

## 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](mailto:dmagnani@accessenergycoop.com).