

2021 Annual Meeting of Members General Manager Report

I don't know about you about you but I am sure glad 2020 is over? Your board had to make the hard decision to have a virtual meeting earlier in the year based on the current information they had at the time. The reason the decision had to be made so early, is we must follow all the directives set forth in the articles of incorporation for the annual meeting. It takes cooperative employees months to prepare for and publicize the meeting to make sure everything is completed and ready on that day. As always the safety and well-being of our members and employees is of the utmost importance.

During the past year Access Energy Cooperative's employees have been very flexible with the changing environment we have all endured. They continue to exceed members' expectations while providing safe, reliable and efficient service. They should all be commended for their dedication to the cooperative.

2020 was a year of cooperation among cooperatives, one of the 7 cooperative principles under which we operate. We assisted neighboring cooperatives during the derecho that hit Iowa, and sent employees to Louisiana to assist with the aftermath of a hurricane. This not just a thank you to the employees who went to assist others. When they leave, a tremendous burden is placed on the remaining employees to continue meeting the needs of our membership. Thank you all employees.

We encourage you to stay informed with what is happening at your cooperative, by reading the monthly Living with Energy in Iowa magazine, following us on Facebook and our website, and read your bill stuffers. We use these tools to communicate with you things you need to know.

For Access Energy Cooperative, our greatest asset is our ability to balance doing what's right for our members while working to ensure the long-term sustainability of your cooperative. There were no rate increases in the year 2020, and there are none anticipated for 2021. Our last rate increase was in 2016.

A major part of keeping our electric system up and running involves proactive vegetation management. More than just tree-trimming, vegetation management involves proactive planning and inspections to anticipate potential issues that could disrupt your power. We inspect all vegetation in our service territory on a 5-year cycle, and use contractors to take care of the work that needs to be done to keep the vegetation under control. Tree branches and limbs making contact with power lines is a main cause of blinks and outages and a safety issue, so we work hard to keep those limbs trimmed back and out of the way. Maintaining this 5-year cycle has resulted in a tremendous decrease in vegetation-related outages. If you notice branches or other vegetation that is growing too close to power lines or poles, please contact us and let us know.

We encourage you to read and/or watch the President's and Treasurer's reports available on the website. If you have any questions please contact us at the office. I will be happy to visit with you. Your cooperative is financially sound because your board makes responsible decisions with your money. As we move forward through these trying times, one thing you will not have to worry about is your cooperative. We continue to strive to provide the level of service you have come to expect and deserve. Our employee base is outstanding and you should be proud to have them working for you. At Access Energy Cooperative, we do more than just provide electricity. We power lives and the communities we serve in. Having access to safe, reliable, and efficient service provides a stable foundation for your quality of life, and we take that responsibility very seriously, serving you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for 365 days a year.

I want to personally thank you for allowing me to be part of this amazing organization. We cannot wait to see you next year at the Annual Meeting of Members on August 3, 2022, at McMillian Park in Mount Pleasant.

Please be safe and take care. If you have any questions, please call our office.