

JANUARY 2025

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**Understanding the
demand charge**

Youth program information

Recipes: Bread winners

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Cindi Miller, a Guthrie County REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

A GRATEFUL FAREWELL: REFLECTING ON MY STATEWIDE SERVICE

BY KENNY VANDENBERG



Last month, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) held its 2024 Annual Meeting in West Des Moines, with the theme of “Powering Lives, Empowering Communities.”

With a statewide leadership transition in 2024, it was a year of new beginnings at IAEC. But amidst change, we remain steadfast in our cooperative mission to help Iowa’s electric cooperatives power lives and empower communities every day.

The annual meeting was a bittersweet time for me as it signaled the end of my six-year tenure on the IAEC board, where I most recently served as board president. It has been an honor to represent the electric cooperatives of District 1 on the statewide board, and I found myself reflecting on the many things that our statewide trade association has accomplished in the past six years, including:

- Keeping safety as our top priority, with fiscal responsibility also a priority.
- Seeing great participation in IAEC’s educational and safety training opportunities for co-op staff and directors.
- Witnessing cooperation among cooperatives and restoring power in the wake of two derechos.
- Meeting the COVID pandemic challenges head on and creating more ways to connect with Iowa’s electric cooperatives virtually and digitally.
- Launching our first statewide Shine the Light contest in 2021 to celebrate our cooperative commitment to community.
- Introducing our Cooperative Leadership in Iowa Program in 2023 to equip emerging leaders at Iowa’s electric cooperatives.

- Sending two crews of volunteer linemen to rural Guatemala (in 2019 and 2024) to bring the advantages of electricity to underserved areas.
- Maintaining a credible reputation while defending local co-op governance with legislators and regulators.
- Welcoming Leslie Kaufman as IAEC’s new executive vice president and general manager in July 2024.

None of these accomplishments would have happened without the foresight of the IAEC board along with support from Iowa’s electric co-ops and the statewide staff.

The power in stepping outside of one’s comfort zone

I want to thank the current board members as well as past board members who have helped me along the way over the past six years. There are not enough words to thank the IAEC staff for their help, knowledge and willingness to go above and beyond.

Serving on the IAEC board was the furthest thing from my mind all those years ago, but a few individuals challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and expand my knowledge of the electric industry. If it weren’t for their encouragement, I wouldn’t be here looking back on what was accomplished. I owe these folks a huge thank you for believing in me and giving me a little push.

So, as I pass the baton to new statewide directors at the start of a new year, I challenge each of you to step out of your comfort zone, try new things and get involved in your community. You will be amazed at what you will learn and the lifelong friendships that will develop.

I wish you and your family a blessed year!

Kenny Vandenberg is the outgoing board president for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and currently serves as board president of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative.

EDITOR’S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN A STAINLESS STEEL BREAD MACHINE!

The KBS stainless steel smart bread machine has 17 settings for making bread, jam, yogurt, cake, pizza dough and more! Plus, it features an automatic fruit and nut dispenser. It bakes up to a 2-pound loaf, with three crust settings in light, medium and dark. An ultra-quiet 710-watt motor makes kneading quick and even, strong and durable, so the dough is soft and elastic. A unique ceramic bread pan uses safe nanotechnology to achieve a nonstick effect.



ENTER ONLINE BY JAN. 31!

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month’s contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than Jan. 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa’s electric cooperatives to win. There’s no obligation associated with entering, we don’t share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified.

The winner of the iRobot Roomba from the November issue was **Edward Mosbach**, a **Prairie Energy Cooperative** member-consumer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JAN. 16	Board meeting
FEB. 20	Board meeting
FEB. 28	Youth Tour application deadline
MARCH 6	Youth Tour interviews
MARCH 15	Scholarship application deadline
MARCH 15	Lineworker scholarship application deadline
MARCH 20	Board meeting
MARCH 31	Photo contest entry deadline

You can access your account information at any time using SmartHub on our website at www.accessenergycoop.com or through the SmartHub app for mobile devices. Use SmartHub to report outages to save time and ensure that it goes directly into our system to notify us. You can also call our office at 866-242-4232 for account information or to report service-related concerns.



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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UNDERSTANDING THE DEMAND CHARGE

BY KEVIN WHEELER



Electric cooperatives started telling members in the 1970s to “Use all you need but need all you use” regarding energy use. This still stands and can also be applied to how you manage your energy demand. At Access Energy Cooperative, we encourage members to continue using power how you need it. Demand charges put our member billing in line

with how the cooperative is billed and helps even out inconsistencies of members subsidizing the energy needs of other members who put higher demands on our system. We understand that electric bills can be complicated, but understanding your bill can help you learn how to control it.

Base charge and energy charge

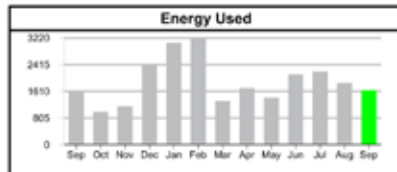
In general, most utilities charge a basic fee for service, which

Account: 11111001 **Map Loc:** 0000-00-000-000-0 **Desc:** HOUSE **Rate:** 101
Service Address: 1234 ANYWHERE ST

Meter Reading Details				Detail of Charges	
Meter 123456789 Multiplier 1.0					
Current Reading:	Sep 17, 2024	6,184	Demand set date and time	08/25/2024 11:00	
Previous Reading:	Aug 19, 2024	4,544			
Total Energy Used	(1,640 kWh x 1.0)	1,640			
Demand	(10.26 kW x 1.0)	10.26			

Days	kWh/Day	Cost/Day	
This Month	29	57	\$7.87
This Month	Last Month	Last Year	
Avg Temperature (in degrees Fahrenheit)	68	70	70

Rates Effective 4/1/2024



CALL FOR DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

Your board of directors is elected by and from the membership of Access Energy Cooperative.

Three seats are up for election in 2025, one in each of the three districts. Board members are to be elected to a term of three years.

Terms that will expire with the 2025 annual meeting to be held Tuesday, Aug. 5, include:

- District 1: Fred Hickenbottom
- District 2: Robert P. Smith
- District 3: Marvin Newton

This month, the board of directors will be appointing a nominating

committee who will select candidates to run for the expiring terms. Anyone interested in running for a seat on the board may contact a member of the nominating committee. The list will be posted on our website at www.accessenergycoop.com and in this magazine or you can call our office at 866-242-4232.

Qualifications to serve

To serve on the Access Energy Cooperative board of directors, you must meet all the qualifications as specified in the cooperative Bylaws, Section 3 as summarized below.

No member shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold any position of trust in the Cooperative who:

for Access Energy Cooperative members is called the “Base Charge.” The “Energy Charge” on your bill is the charge for how many kilowatt-hours (kWh) or the amount of electricity you used for the month. Understanding the “Demand Charge” of an energy bill is more complicated and may require additional information to understand.

Demand charge

Electric demand is the rate at which electricity is used at a given time and is measured in kilowatts (kW). All Access Energy Cooperative accounts are billed a “Demand Charge.” It is listed on your bill and represents the 15-minute interval when you used the highest amount of electricity during that billing period. The date and time are printed next to the demand charge indicating when you set that demand.

To put this into context, your dishwasher and clothes washing machine both use electricity. The amount of electricity they use is the same regardless of when you use them. If you use them at the

same time, you demand more electricity at that time. If you use them at different times, your demand is lower.

The best way to reduce demand is to spread your electrical usage over time.

Let's see how setting a demand works

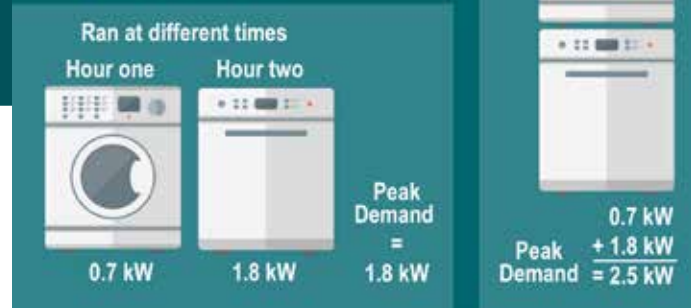
When your washing machine runs for an hour it uses 0.7 kW.

This is your demand on our system for power. When your dishwasher runs for an hour it uses 1.8 kW. If you run both of them at the same time, your demand is 2.5 kW. Your demand becomes the total of the two added together because you need that much power at the same time.

If you could change your habits and run only one of them at a time, your highest demand for those two

Appliances running at the same time cause your demand to be higher than if you were to run them separately at different times of the day.

Demand is the total amount of electrical power being consumed at a given time.



hours would be 1.8 kW, because it is the most demand you used at one time. The highest demand you set in one month is the highest amount of electricity used during a 15-minute interval in your billing cycle.

If you ever have questions about your electric bill or demand, please contact us at 866-242-4232.

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

1. Is not a bona fide resident of premises served by the Cooperative
2. Is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members
3. Within five (5) years preceding a director candidate nomination was an employee of the Cooperative
4. Is a close relative of a director or employee of the Cooperative, with close relative being defined as: spouse, cohabitant, mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister, brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, and natural, step and adopted children

5. Within fifteen (15) years preceding a director candidate nomination been convicted of a felony whether by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, plea of guilt or plea of nolo contendere
6. Becomes the full-time employee or agent of another director or employee
7. Becomes the full-time employer or principal of another director
8. Is the incumbent of or candidate for an elective public office other

than on a school board, board of supervisors, township trustee, township clerk or member of the State legislature

When a membership is held jointly, either one, but not both, may be elected a director, provided, however, that neither shall be eligible to become or remain a director or hold a position of trust in the Cooperative unless both shall meet the qualifications herein above set forth.

PROPERTY TAXES PAID

Property taxes are used to help fund important things such as education and city and county government. Even though Access Energy Cooperative is a not-for-profit organization, your cooperative pays property taxes for the poles, wires and transformers on our lines, plus another tax bill for the office and warehouse. Your cooperative pays taxes in all 10 counties we serve.

The following is a breakdown of the property taxes paid in 2024.

COUNTY	AMOUNT
Davis	\$227
Des Moines	\$7,478
Henry	\$226,697
Jefferson	\$62,678
Keokuk	\$27
Lee	\$39,482
Louisa	\$26
Van Buren	\$21,314
Wapello	\$7,750
Washington	\$5,289
TOTAL	\$370,968

ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Access Energy Cooperative is offering \$9,000 in scholarships to high school seniors! This includes six \$1,500 awards, with two in each of the cooperative's three districts.

Applicants must be a high school senior receiving post-secondary education. Parents or legal guardians must be members of the cooperative. More details and applications can be found on our website at www.accessenergycoop.com.



Applications are due in our office March 15, 2025. Winners will be chosen and announced at their senior awards ceremonies.

ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE LINeworker SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Up to two \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded per year to students enrolled, or planning to enroll, in a one- or two-year electric lineworker program, such as the Northwest Iowa Community College Powerline program in Sheldon or the utilities/lineman program at State Technical College in Linn, Missouri.

2025 timelines

- March 15 – Application deadline
- April 30 – Awards will be announced by this date
- Award recipients have until March 31, 2026, to apply for initial scholarship payment

Eligibility requirements

- Must be a high school graduate

- Must maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or above
- Must reside in southeast Iowa in the general Access Energy Cooperative service area (not limited to Access Energy Cooperative territorial boundaries)

Find an application:

- By visiting our website at www.accessenergycoop.com
- By contacting the Access Energy Cooperative office in Mount Pleasant at 866-242-4232.
- At all high school guidance counselor offices in southeast Iowa.

Complete details can be found at www.accessenergycoop.com.





SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS: WIN A FREE TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Access Energy Cooperative will send up to two students on an all-expense-paid Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., in June 2025!

Application details

We are accepting Youth Tour applications through Feb. 28, 2025.

Students must attend a school in southeast Iowa in one of the 10 counties served by Access Energy Cooperative. Applications and information can be found on our website at www.accessenergycoop.com and at all high school guidance counselor offices in southeast Iowa. Personal interviews to choose our student representatives will be held at our office on March 6. You must be able to participate in an interview on that date to apply.



HELP OTHERS BY CONTRIBUTING TO RECare

RECare is a program where members help other members in need. You may make a one-time monetary contribution to the RECare program or include an amount each month with your monthly electric bill.

You can use SmartHub to have a monthly amount included on your electric bill:

1. Log in to your SmartHub account. Go to the Bill & Pay dropdown on the left. Select RECare, and follow instructions; or
2. Send the form below to:

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

Or, include the form below with your payment.



RECare Consumer Authorization Form

I would like to make a (check one):

- One-time contribution of \$ _____
- Monthly contribution of \$ _____
 (That will be added to my bill)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Phone # _____

Email _____

Account # (if known) _____

Apply now for a FREE trip to Washington, D.C. June 15-21!

Application Deadline Feb. 28
 Interviews on March 6



Sophomore or Junior Students Apply Now!



Find applications on our website at www.accessenergycoop.com/youth-tour-contest
 Submit applications
 1800 W. Washington St.
 P.O. Box 440
 Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
mktg@accessenergycoop.com

For more information call 866-242-4232



BREAD WINNERS



ORANGE BREAD

- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- juice from 1 orange
- water
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg
- 2 cups flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup raisins
- ½ cup chopped walnuts, optional

Scrape orange rind to make zest, and squeeze juice from orange adding enough water to make 1 cup of liquid. Cream shortening, sugar, vanilla and egg. Add juice and remaining ingredients. Mix thoroughly. Bake in greased and floured loaf pan at 350 degrees F for 1 hour. *Yields 12 slices*

Carol Reeves • Sheldon
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

QUICK CARAMEL ROLLS

- 2 8-ounce cans refrigerated crescent rolls
- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons water

Leaving crescent rolls in a roll, cut each can into 12 pieces. Place four across and six down in a greased 9x13-inch pan. Mix butter, brown sugar and water. Cook in microwave until it reaches a boil, stirring every minute – do not overcook! Pour mixture over crescent rolls. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown and the edges are bubbly. Invert onto a serving platter.

Steph Messner • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

QUICK YEAST BREAD

- 1¼ cups warm milk
- ½ cup butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 4 cups flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon quick yeast

Mix milk, butter, egg, sugar and honey. In a separate bowl, mix flour, salt and yeast. Mix dry ingredients together with liquid ingredients. Knead and then place in a warm place until doubled in size. Knead again for 5 minutes. Divide into two and place in greased small loaf pans to rise for 1 hour. Bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes, until brown. *Serves 4-6*

Alice Draper • Eldora
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative

PISTACHIO BREAD

- 1 yellow cake mix
- 1 3-ounce box instant pistachio pudding
- 1 cup sour cream
- ¼ cup oil
- ¼ cup water
- 4 eggs, beaten
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ cup nuts
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Mix cake mix, pudding, sour cream, oil, water and eggs until smooth. Pour half of batter into two greased bread pans. Mix sugar, nuts and cinnamon. Pour mixture on top of batter. Cover with remaining batter. Bake at 350 degrees F for 45 minutes.

Kim Swanson • Lockridge
Access Energy Cooperative

CHALLAH

- 1 cup warm water
- 2¼ teaspoons active dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon granulated white sugar
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup honey
- 6 tablespoons grapeseed oil
- 4½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon water

In a large bowl, whisk together the warm water, yeast and granulated sugar. Set aside for 5-10 minutes, or until foamy. Add the eggs, honey and oil. Whisk well. Add mixture to a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook. Add the flour ½ cup at a time and the salt while mixing on a medium-high speed. Mix for 5-7 minutes, or until a very smooth dough forms. If using a hand mixer fitted with a dough hook, combine the ingredients until a shaggy dough forms, about 2 minutes on medium-low speed, then remove from mixing bowl and knead by hand for about 10 minutes. Grease another large bowl with oil. Place the dough inside the bowl, cover with plastic wrap. Proof for about 1 hour. Lightly flour a clean surface and rolling pin. Place the dough on the surface and punch it down four times with your hands. Cut the dough into six equal dough balls. Using a rolling pin, roll out six long pieces, then roll them into strands with your hands. Use three strands to make each braided loaf. Place the loaves on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, cover with plastic wrap and proof for one hour. In a small bowl, combine the egg yolks and water with a fork. Remove the plastic wrap from the loaves and brush them with egg wash. Bake at 325 degrees F for 15 minutes. Raise oven temperature to 425 degrees F and bake for 5 minutes. Remove from oven and cool on a wire rack. *Yields 2 loaves*

Addilyne Switzer • Beaman
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative

KILLARNEY IRISH BROWN BREAD

- 3¼ cups wheat flour
- ¾ cup white flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2½ cups buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon golden syrup (or honey)
- 4 teaspoons butter, melted

Mix the flours, soda and salt into a bowl. Make a well in the center and add the buttermilk, golden syrup and butter. Use a large spoon to mix gently, just until dry ingredients are incorporated. Shape into a round on a baking sheet that has been lined with waxed paper. Cut a cross in the top with a sharp knife. Bake at 400 degrees F for 40 minutes, until the top is slightly cracked and crusty. To check if done, tip the loaf and tap the base – it should sound hollow. Cool on a wire rack. *Serves 12*

Chris Daniels • Casey
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Visit www.ieclmagazine.com and search our online archive of hundreds of recipes in various categories.



CRANBERRY BRAN BREAD

- 1½ cups bran flakes
- 2 cups flour*
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup nuts, chopped
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup plus 2 teaspoons orange juice, divided
- 1 cup cranberries, halved
- 2 cups powdered sugar

Mix bran flakes, flour, baking powder, soda, salt, sugar, nuts, egg, vegetable oil, 1 cup orange juice and cranberries. You can substitute cranberries for ½ cup cranberries and ½ cup pomegranates. Bake in a greased loaf pan at 250 degrees F for 1 hour or until done. Mix 2 teaspoons orange juice with powdered sugar and drizzle over baked loaf.

**An alternative to 2 cups white flour would be ¼ cup brown rice flour, ½ cup milled flax seed, ½ cup almond flour, ¼ cup soy flour and ½ cup Nestrum Honey and Wheat cereal.*

Betty Sorden • Webster
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

WANTED:

SPRING-INSPIRED RECIPES

THE REWARD:
\$25 FOR EVERY
ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is Jan. 31

Submit recipes that use fresh, seasonal ingredients such as asparagus, spring greens, rhubarb and more! Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.



EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com
(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

MAIL: Recipes
Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48
Des Moines, IA 50322

IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES: ENSURING AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE POWER

Editor's Note: This article in Part 2 of a two-part series showcasing the impact of Iowa's electric cooperatives throughout all the state's 99 counties.

Iowa's electric cooperatives have a rich history of local ownership and member-driven governance, playing a pivotal role in bringing electricity to rural communities.

In the 1920s, while urban areas had widespread access to electricity, approximately 90% of rural residents lived without it. This lack of electrification made farm life arduous, with no indoor plumbing, reliable refrigeration, or safe lighting and heating. Investor-owned utilities at the time deemed it unprofitable to extend power lines to sparsely populated rural areas.

Recognizing this disparity, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in 1935 through Executive Order 7037 as part of his New Deal initiatives. The following year, Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, providing federal loans to support the installation of electrical distribution systems in rural regions.

These efforts enabled rural communities to form not-for-profit electric cooperatives, facilitating access to affordable and reliable electricity. By 1950, 80% of American farms had electricity, and by 1960, this figure rose to 99%.

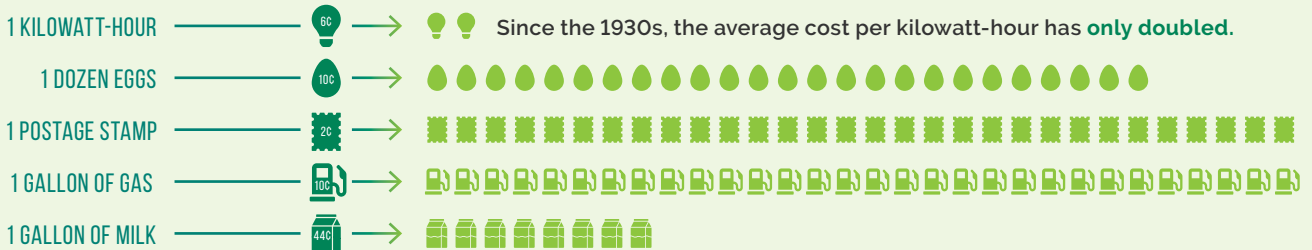
Doing more with less

Serving predominantly rural areas, Iowa's electric cooperatives manage extensive infrastructure with fewer customers per mile compared to investor-owned utilities. To address this challenge, co-ops structure rates to recover costs and collaborate with organizations like the Hawkeye Insurance Association and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives to achieve economies of scale in supplies, insurance and technology solutions. This collaborative approach helps maintain affordability for members.

COST COMPARISON:

1930s

TODAY



In Iowa, the average household served by electric cooperatives spends about

\$5.25 PER DAY FOR ELECTRICITY

THAT'S CHEAPER THAN BUYING A SANDWICH OR SPECIALTY COFFEE DRINK!

The average household served by Iowa's electric cooperatives spends about \$5.25 per day on electricity, highlighting the cost-effectiveness of their services. Co-ops also offer energy efficiency programs, audits, rebates, and incentives to help members use energy wisely and reduce expenses. As member-owned entities, co-ops prioritize cost-based rates over profits, ensuring that financial decisions align with members' best interests.

Commitment to reliability

Ensuring reliable electricity is a top priority for Iowa's electric cooperatives. They conduct regular maintenance, infrastructure inspections and adhere to proactive vegetation management plans to minimize outages.

During the past 10 years, Iowa's electric cooperatives have kept the lights on 99.96% of the time despite

blizzards, ice storms, derechos, tornadoes or other extreme weather events. The average member served by an Iowa electric co-op experiences one outage per year, lasting approximately 138 minutes.

If a co-op does experience extensive outages, they work with neighboring co-ops for mutual aid to restore power to members as quickly and safely as possible.

During the past 10 years, Iowa's electric cooperatives have kept the lights on

99.96% OF THE TIME

DESPITE BLIZZARDS, ICE STORMS, TORNADOES, DERECHOS OR OTHER EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS.



Advocating for a balanced energy approach

A recent threat to reliability comes from misguided federal energy policy, which prioritizes intermittent sources of power like solar and wind over dispatchable sources like coal and natural gas.

Iowa's electric cooperatives believe in a diverse power generation strategy to ensure reliability. Our "all-of-the-above" generation portfolios include dispatchable sources of power because we can control the output and ramp up generation when needed to match sudden increases in electric demand.

Learn more about this issue at www.IARuralpower.org.

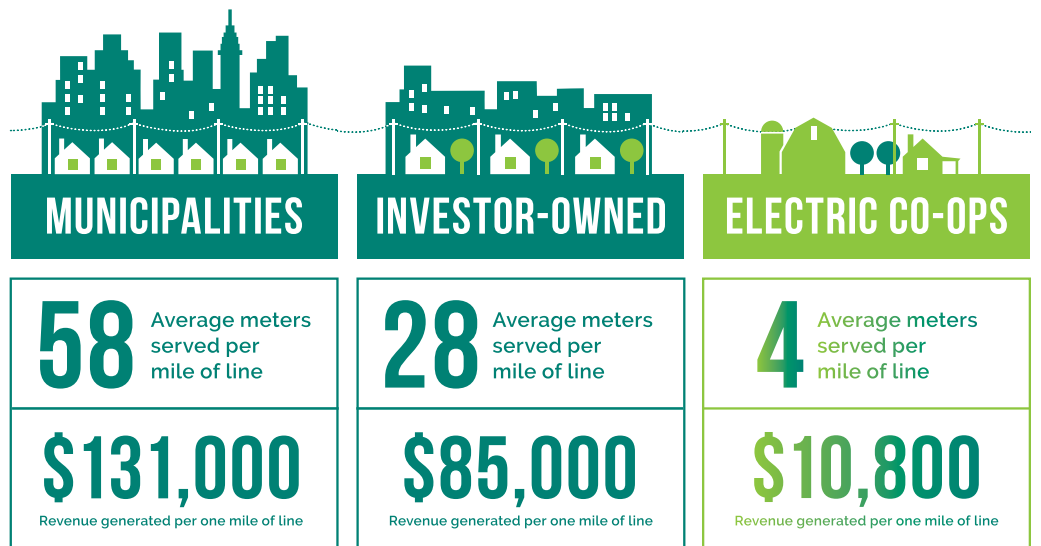
The average Iowa electric co-op member-owner experiences

1 OUTAGE

lasting an average of **138 MINUTES** PER YEAR

A legacy of service

From their inception, Iowa's electric cooperatives have been instrumental in transforming rural life by providing essential electric services. Their commitment to member-owners, focus on affordability, reliability and community collaboration continue to drive their mission, ensuring that the needs of rural Iowans are met with dedication and innovation.



WEATHERING A WINTER STORM

When ice and heavy snow bring down limbs and power lines, safety is a priority indoors and out. Make sure you know how to weather the storm. When outside, stay away from downed power lines. Here are a few important safety reminders to keep in mind this winter:

- A power line need not be sparking or arcing to be energized. Equipment near power lines can also be energized and dangerous.
- Lines that appear “dead” can become energized as crews work to restore power or sometimes from improper use of emergency generators. Assume all low and downed lines are energized and dangerous. If you see a downed or sagging line, contact your utility.
- If you are in an auto accident involving a downed power line, your vehicle is usually the safest place

(unless it is on fire). If it is safe to do so, stay in your car, call 911, and wait for electric utility personnel to arrive to deenergize the power. If you step out of the vehicle and the ground is energized, you could become the electrical current’s path to the ground, and you could be electrocuted. If your vehicle is on fire or you see smoke, make a solid, clean jump from your vehicle and hop away with your feet together as far away as possible. If you run or walk away, you could get electrocuted.

- Motorists should never drive over a downed line, as snagging a line could pull down a pole or other equipment and cause other hazards.
- Be careful approaching intersections where traffic or crossing lights may be out.
- If you plan to use a generator, know how to operate it safely.



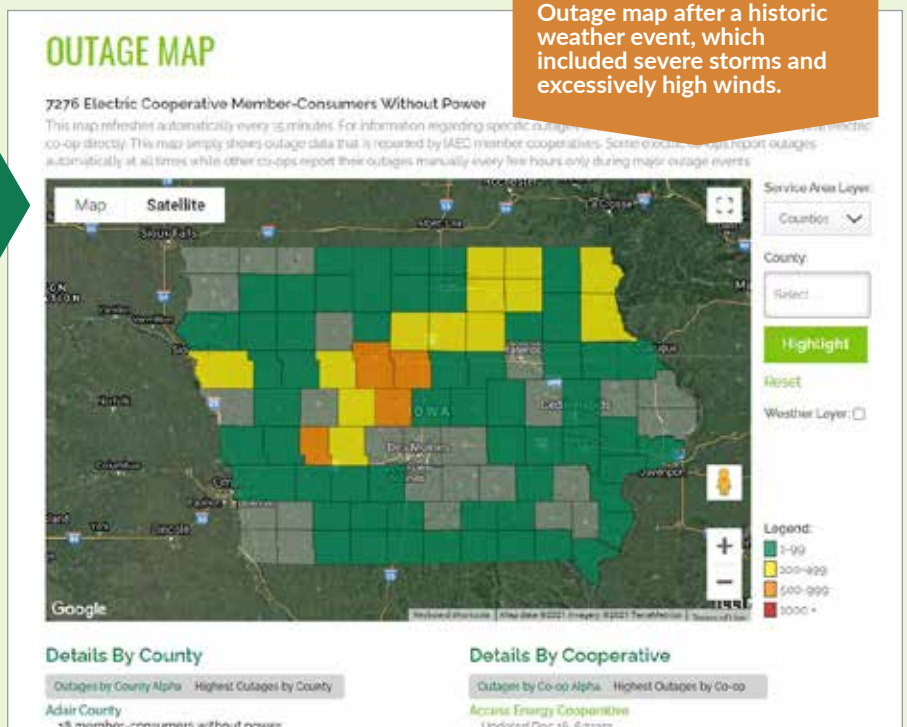
DID YOU KNOW?

STATEWIDE OUTAGE MAP

www.iowarec.org/outages

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) maintains a statewide outage map. The map refreshes automatically every 15 minutes and shows outage data that is reported by IAEC member cooperatives. Most electric co-ops report outages automatically while other co-ops report outages manually every few hours only during major outage events.

For information regarding specific outages or to report your outage, always contact your local electric co-op directly. It’s also important that your local co-op is notified if your phone number or other contact information changes.



Outage map after a historic weather event, which included severe storms and excessively high winds.

If you see downed power lines, always stay away from the lines and poles. Always assume the lines are energized and report any damage to your local electric cooperative.

6 WAYS TO UNCOVER SAVINGS WITH A DO-IT-YOURSELF ENERGY AUDIT

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

A home energy audit may sound daunting, but it can be as easy as creating a checklist of improvements based on what you see around your home.

Here's what you'll need to find opportunities to save energy and money: a flashlight, dust mask, tape measure and cooking thermometer. As you progress through these six steps of an audit, take notes on your phone or a notepad.

1 Check the heating and cooling equipment.

Determine the age and efficiency of the equipment by looking up the model number on the nameplate. The average lifespan of HVAC equipment is 10 to 30 years, depending on the type of equipment and how well it's maintained. If your equipment is older, it may be time to budget for an upgrade. Check the filter and replace it if needed.

2 Check the envelope of your home, which separates the heated or cooled areas from the exterior, for drafts and air leakage.

Feel around windows and trim for any drafts. Pay special attention to spots where different building materials come together. Check under sinks for gaps around pipes. Seal with weatherstripping, caulk or expanding foam as needed.

3 Replace incandescent or compact fluorescent bulbs with LEDs.

LEDs use significantly less energy and last longer than traditional incandescent bulbs.

4 Inspect faucets for leaks and make sure aerators and showerheads are high-efficiency models in good condition.

The gallons-per-minute (GPM) ratings should be etched onto them. To reduce wasted energy from using more hot water than



When inspecting your heating and cooling equipment, check the filter and replace it. A dirty furnace filter can cause your system to work harder than necessary, decreasing efficiency and shortening the system's life.



LEDs come in a range of color temperatures. For a warm glow similar to incandescent bulbs, buy bulbs with a color temperature around 2700 Kelvin.

needed, aerators should be 0.5 to 1.5 GPM, and showerheads should be no more than 2 GPM.

5 Look in the attic, while wearing a dust mask, to make sure it's insulated.

You may be able to see enough from the access area using a cellphone with the flash on to take pictures. Use the tape measure to check the depth of the insulation. In Iowa, you should have insulation rated at R49-R60 in your attic.

Insulation can become compacted over time. It should be evenly distributed throughout the attic. Loose fill or blown-in insulation should be fluffy and evenly dispersed. Rolled batt insulation should fit tightly together without gaps.

Also, exterior walls should be insulated. If your home is older than the 1960s, the walls are probably not insulated. Homes from the 1960s or 1970s likely need more insulation. Sometimes you can see wall insulation by removing an outlet cover or switch plate and using a flashlight to look for insulation inside the wall cavity. Turn off the power at the electrical panel to avoid the risk of electric shock. Wall insulation can be blown in from the inside or the outside of the home. This is a job for a professional.

Unfinished basements should have insulation on the rim joists, at minimum. This is the area between the top of the foundation and the underside of the home's first-story floor. Use closed-cell spray foam or a combination of rigid foam and spray foam to insulate rim joists. Crawl spaces should have insulation on the underside of the floor between the floor joists. Insulation should be properly supported in contact with the floor with no air gaps. Water pipes and ductwork should also be insulated.

6 Check the temperature of your water by running it for three minutes at the faucet closest to your water heater.

Then fill a cup and measure with a cooking thermometer. Hot water should be between 120 and 140 degrees F. You can reduce the temperature on your water heater to reduce energy waste and prevent scalding.

Once your home energy audit is finished, review your findings and start prioritizing home energy efficiency projects. For step-by-step instructions, visit www.energy.gov/save.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

CO-OP HOSTS HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2024 Holiday Gift Drive hosted by the employees of Access Energy Cooperative. Non-perishable items were collected in our office Nov. 1-Dec. 10. All items collected this year were donated to Jefferson County residents.



ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE HOSTS LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

Access Energy Cooperative hosted a breakfast with local legislators at its headquarters in Mount Pleasant. We thank those who participated and appreciate the opportunity to discuss topics and upcoming issues important to the electric industry.



FESTIVAL OF TREES

Access Energy Cooperative was proud to sponsor a tree featuring Linus the Lineworker putting the star on top of the tree in the 2024 Festival of Trees, hosted by Main Street Mount Pleasant. The trees were auctioned and proceeds given to Every Step Care & Support Services.

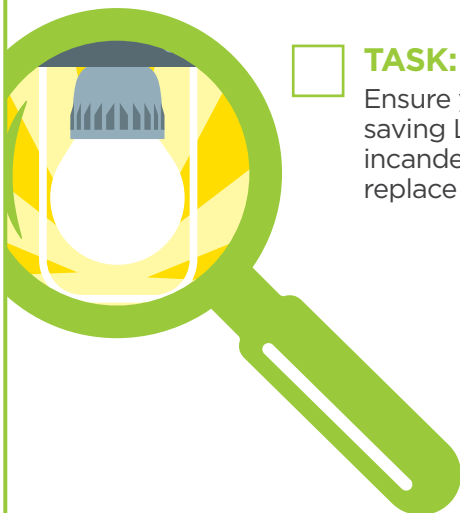
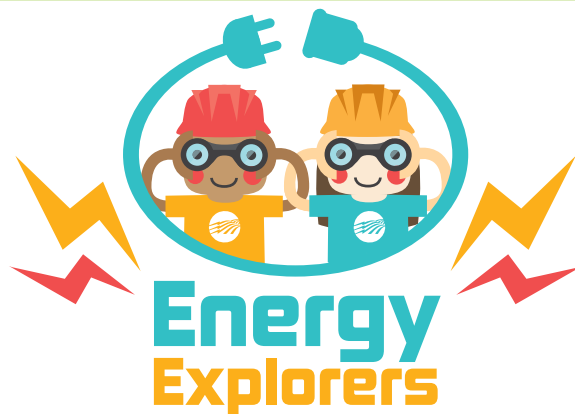


Access Energy Cooperative was proud to participate in the 2024 Mount Pleasant holiday parade on Dec. 5. The co-op received the award for Best Lighted Entry in the parade!



ENERGY SAVINGS SCAVENGER HUNT

Saving energy at home is a great way to help the environment (and save money). With the help of an adult, look for ways you can save energy around your home. Use the tips below to get started, then check off the areas where you've identified ways to save!



- TASK: Bright Ideas**
Ensure your home uses energy-saving LED bulbs. If you find incandescent or CFL bulbs, replace them with LEDs.

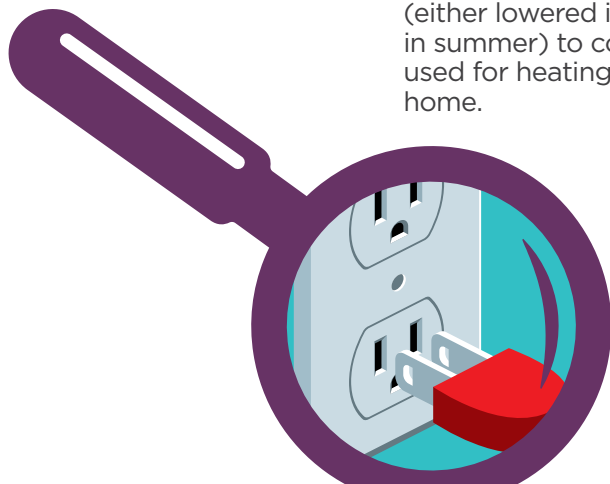


- TASK: Empty Rooms**
Turn off lights and ceiling fans in unoccupied rooms to conserve energy.



- TASK: Sealed for Savings**
Check windows to make sure they are closed and locked. Sealed windows help prevent air leaks, which saves energy.

- TASK: Set to Save**
Check the thermostat to see if it can be adjusted a few degrees (either lowered in winter or raised in summer) to conserve energy used for heating or cooling your home.



- TASK: Slay Energy Vampires**
Energy vampires are devices that consume energy even when they're not being used. Unplug these items, like phone chargers and tablets, when you're not using them.



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The magazine
for members of
Iowa's electric
cooperatives

IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

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