

MARCH 2015



# Highline Headlines

Volume 37  
Issue 3

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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

**24/7**

For after hours emergencies call  
**800.452.7819**  
or **319.385.1580**

Visit our website to learn about how Board of Directors are elected

**About**  
Annual Meeting

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

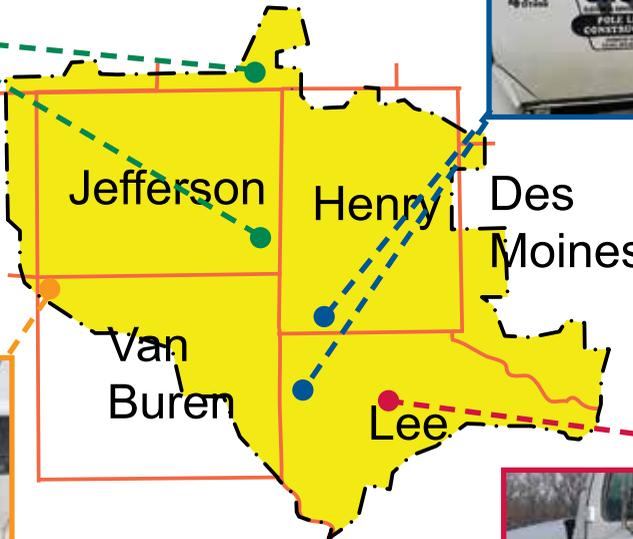
## Energy Efficiency Presentations to Students



Access Energy Cooperative Director of Marketing & Communications Kim Brumbaugh, and Energy Advisor Gary Stevens, recently conducted energy efficiency presentations to Mt. Pleasant Middle School students. Students learned about energy efficient lighting, ways to save energy around the house, and how electricity is made from coal and other renewable and nonrenewable sources.

## Contractors Working Throughout Our System

We currently have several contractors working throughout our service area on projects to upgrade our equipment. Please contact us if you have any questions about someone working in your area.



**SAVE THE DATE ~ August 4, 2015**  
Attend the 2015 Annual Meeting  
for your chance to win \$500!!  
Kids can win a bike!!

## Work Zone Awareness Week March 23-27

Orange cones, flashing lights, and warning signs all indicate a work zone on the road ahead. Within these zones are men and women doing work like road construction, working on power lines, or trimming trees. Unfortunately, hundreds of these workers are injured every year from work and road hazards.

March 23 to 27 is National Work Zone Awareness Week, which is designated to call attention to the hazards in work zones. To help prevent fatalities and injuries consider the following guidelines while driving:

- If you see a traffic barrier, keep a safe distance between your vehicle and trucks, wagons, construction equipment, and workers.
- Please slow down and pay attention in work zones while driving.
- Be patient. Traffic delays are sometimes unavoidable, so try to allow time for unexpected occurrences in your schedule.

- Obey all signs and road crew flag instructions.
- Merge early and be courteous to other drivers.
- Use your headlights at dusk and during inclement weather.
- Minimize distractions. Avoid activities such as operating a radio or eating while driving.

Be aware of the legislation in your area. Many states have hefty fines or even jail time for violating traffic laws in work zones.

Power poles and electrical equipment line streets and highways, and narrow roadways often require crews to place their equipment in traffic lanes. Their work activities are often taken for granted but benefit us all; and, like everyone, they deserve a safe workplace. Be alert to utility crews and other work zone workers for their safety as well as yours.

Don't make the jobs of road workers, electric utility linemen, and tree trimmers more dangerous. Drive safely.



## Manager's Corner



**General Manager/CEO  
Robert Swindell**

Work is mostly completed on the new substations to serve the Iowa Fertilizer Company plant (IFC), just south of Wever Iowa. We currently are waiting for IFC to complete the work on their switchgear and connection to the substation so some remaining testing can be completed. If the weather cooperates, we hope to

have the connection from the substation to the plant completed by early spring.

The current projections are for the plant to begin production this fall. Once the plant is in full production, it will be the largest load served by the cooperative and will use about two thirds the amount of energy as the rest of the cooperative combined.

Northeast Missouri Power is currently working on a new high voltage 69 kilovolt line from Sawyer to the new substation to provide an alternate feed to the fertilizer plant. The new line will also improve the reliability of the eastern part of our system. Future plans include a 69 kilovolt line to tie into the Spring Grove substation south of Burlington, which will add even more reliable service to our members in Lee, Des Moines and Henry Counties.

### NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

The second Monday in April has been declared Lineman Appreciation Day to recognize the people that ensure the lights are always on. Along with work to maintain and construct the electrical grid that we are so dependent on, they are

the ones that are out in some of Mother Nature's worst weather to restore your service when it is out. They sometimes sacrifice holidays with their families so you can enjoy time with yours. I hope you will join me in recognizing all the linemen for their dedication and hard work.

### APRIL 13TH IS NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

*Thank a  
Lineman!*

## COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

**Access Energy Cooperative**  
1800 West Washington Street  
P.O. Box 440  
Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641

**Phone:** 319.385.1577  
**Toll free:** 866.242.4232  
**Fax:** 319.385.6873

### Website:

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

### Facebook

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

### Twitter

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

### Email:

[contactus@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:contactus@accessenergycoop.com)

### Office Hours:

Monday-Friday  
(closed Saturday, Sunday,  
& Holidays)  
Office: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Billing & account information can be accessed 24/7 by calling our office or by visiting our website.

Payments can be placed in the dropbox under the flag pole.

Visa and Mastercard accepted.

### After Hours Emergencies call:

319.385.1580  
or 800.452.7819



**Representative Jerry Kearns**



**Representative Curt Hanson**

## Thank You Area Legislators

Access Energy Cooperative Board of Directors and Manager/CEO Robert Swindell, along with other cooperatives across the state, visited the Capitol, and were able to visit with our legislators about rural economic development and how our cooperative contributes to community.

*Photos: Representatives Hanson and Kearns pause for a photo with advocates from Access Energy Cooperative at the Capitol in Des Moines.*

*Thank you Representatives Heaton, Kearns, Hanson, and Senators Chelgren and Taylor for taking the time to visit with us.*



**Know what's below.  
Call 811  
before you dig.**

**General Manager/CEO:** Robert Swindell  
**Editor:** Kimberly Brumbaugh  
**Assistant Editor:** Cherity Wibben

### Officers and Directors:

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

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## SAVE THE DATE ON MAY 28TH!!



**MISSISSIPPI VALLEY  
REGIONAL BLOOD CENTER**

*How life flows through our community.®*

**Thursday, May 28  
3:00 – 6:00 p.m.  
Access Energy Cooperative  
Meeting Room  
Sign up by calling  
319.385.1577.**

## Buying Energy Efficiency

When purchasing new appliances, you probably find yourself comparing the annual energy consumption on the yellow tags, and notice that efficiency costs extra. When it comes to appliances, water heaters and HVAC systems, you are usually faced with a common dilemma: pay now or pay (more) later. The answer is simple: Make efficiency affordable.

Energy efficiency is part of Access Energy Cooperative's mission statement. As a consumer-owned, not-for-profit utility, we are constantly looking for ways to keep members' bills low, including programs to make high-efficiency appliances and equipment more accessible through our rebate and educational programs.

By arming you with the information you need to make cost-effective investments in efficiency, hopefully you

will be able to make smart choices not only about appliances but about efficiency upgrades. A good place to start is online at TogetherWeSave.com, where members can conduct an interactive energy audit and gain **access** to a library of energy-saving how-to videos. You can find a link to it on our website at [accessenergycoop.com](http://accessenergycoop.com)

What qualifies as a smart efficiency investment will differ from member to member. Many factors will determine whether you should put your money into insulation, replacing your water heater or purchasing an ENERGY STAR-qualified appliance. There just is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all efficiency solution. Our staff can help you sort out which energy efficiency investments make sense for you and your situation. Contact us at the office by calling 866-242-4232 or by e-mail at [mktg@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:mktg@accessenergycoop.com).

## Clearing for Reliability & Safety

One of the most common – and crucial – ways that Access Energy Cooperative provides you with safe, **reliable** electric service, is referred to as right-of-way (ROW) clearing or vegetation management.

A right of way (ROW) refers to a strip of **land** underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals or disruption to electrical service.

Specifications can vary, but a general guideline of maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary conductors and 20 feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole.

Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' power on. An average of 15% of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines.

If a tree encroaches on this safe distance, our vegetation management team will trim back branches and brush.

ROW can also help **keep** your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to close contact with a downed power **line**. Power lines can carry up to 34,500 volts, and an **energized** tree branch is incredibly dangerous – even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.

ROW clearing is also critical to ensuring that we provide members with affordable electricity. Staying ahead of the game keeps us from having to come out during a **storm** to restore power due to fallen trees.

Source: Meghaan Evans



## Thank You!!

*"I did want to let you know how much we appreciate the hard work of your staff on such a cold, nasty day. We were especially thrilled to get power back just 8 minutes before the Super Bowl started! Please give them our gratitude!" ~Member, Kim Crutcher~*

## Quality Surge Protection

There is little, if anything, you can buy today that does not have some electronic component. Make sure your electronics last as long as possible, not replacement plans or extended warranties, but by protecting your products from electrical surges.

What is a surge? Computer Hope (<http://www.computerhope.com/jargon/s/surge.htm>) on the 'Net' says: "Alternatively known as a line surge, a surge is an unexpected increase in voltage in an electrical current that can cause damage to electrical equipment. For example, the standard United States voltage is 120V. If an electrical current above this rating was to come through a power outlet for more than three nanoseconds, this would be considered a surge; anything less is considered a spike. A surge is usually created by lightning and can damage to unprotected computers and sometimes even protected computers."

Many people think a blink in your power is a surge, but these are generally caused by something like a tree contacting a line. In such cases, our system's protective **devices** cause an interruption to protect the wires and other components. These are not surges, but more like turning a light on and off.

True surges can enter a home through power lines, telephone lines, cable/satellite connections, water lines and any other metallic system that connects to your home. To protect **against** surges, you need to take a three-pronged approach.

- Make sure all the grounds in your home are good and that they are bonded together. Over the years, grounds can deteriorate, or new services can be added with inadequate grounding. A faulty ground can allow surges into the **home** rather than bleeding them off into the earth. Get a qualified electrician to test and correct your grounding system.
- Protect your electrical service entrance with a surge device. The easiest to install are those mounted behind the meter. They can also be mounted at the main electric panel. When a surge travels down the electric lines, these devices will act to "clamp" the surge and reduce its power. These are sacrificial devices that allow themselves to be destroyed rather than allowing the surge to pass through.
- Protect expensive devices at their point of use, like computers and entertainment equipment. Surges can enter the home via avenues other than the power lines, and computers and entertainment equipment are frequently connected to cable and phone lines. These devices need to have protection at the point of use that covers all possible avenues in the form of a power strip or wall device most of us are familiar with. Look for one with a joule rating of at least 1,000, a connected equipment warranty and compatibility with digital signals from cable and satellite, and look for a "smart" strip that turns off all but one connected device when not in use.

Source: Tom Tate



## Breaker Box Safety and AFCIs

With so much electricity funneling through our breaker boxes through the rest of your home to your outlets and switches, it is important that the home owner not only **knows** how to use a breaker box, but also how to do so safely. The breaker box houses a panel of breakers and fuses that protect the wires inside your house from electrical overload.

In a recent study, the National Fire Protection Association estimated 1,350 home fires involved the circuit breaker panel. Many could have been prevented with the installation of arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs). AFCIs are installed directly in the breaker box and are designed to protect against fires caused by arcing faults in home electrical wiring. AFCIs detect arcing in the electrical system and switch the electricity off.

It is important to note that AFCIs do not provide protection against all of the possible circuit faults that can cause fires, but they are a significant step forward in electrical fire safety. Contact a qualified electrician to have them installed.

Occasionally we come across reasons making it necessary to cut off or switch on the power at the breaker box. If you must flip a switch at the break box, always remember to step away and look away. You want to protect your eyes and body just in case an **arc** should occur.

Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you touch the breaker box while standing in water, it could cause electric shock or death. If you cannot reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.

Be sure to call a qualified electrician if blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers are a recurring problem. This means there is something wrong with your electrical system, and it needs to be inspected by an expert who can **locate** the problem.

For more information on safety around electricity, visit [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com).

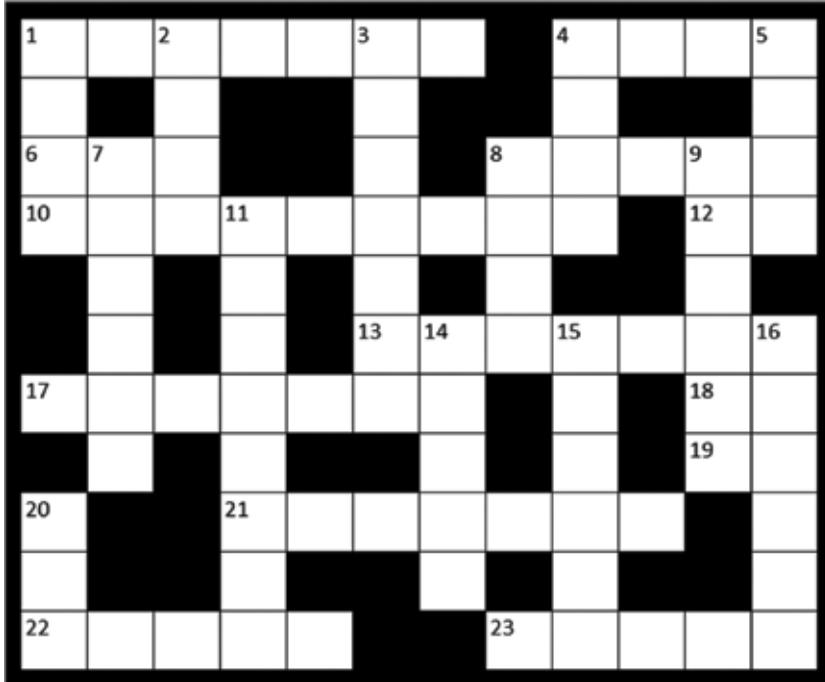


# Win A \$25 Bill Credit

Access Energy Cooperative members can win a \$25 bill credit by completing the crossword. Send your answers in by March 27, 2015, to: Access Energy Cooperative, Attn: Crossword Puzzle, P.O. Box 440, Mount Pleasant, IA 52641. Most of the answers are bold and highlighted elsewhere in this issue of the Highline Headlines. If more than one person answers all of the questions correctly by the deadline, a drawing will be held to determine the winner.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



## ACROSS

- 1 National Work Zone Safety Week is designed to draw attention to these for workers
- 4 Tree branches can become energized by coming in contact with this
- 6 These may be working in construction zones
- 8 It is important a home owner does this about breaker box safety
- 10 A tree branch in this condition can be very dangerous
- 13 Primary language spoken in Mexico
- 17 Protect your home \_\_\_\_\_surges
- 18 Opposite of yes
- 19 South Carolina abbr
- 21 If you see this on the road keep a safe distance for safety
- 22 These can indicate a work zone
- 23 Answers to most of these clues can be found in this of highline headlines

## DOWN

- 1 A faulty ground can allow surges into this
- 2 There are many warning signs to alert you that you are entering one of these for workers

**Last month's crossword winner is Lee Dentlinger of New London.**

- 3 These things on our system can cause an interruption if there is a safety hazard connected with our system
- 4 A strip of this under power lines that we have the right to access is called ROW
- 5 Opposite of west
- 7 Your coop gave a presentation to middle school students on efficiency of this
- 8 ROW clearing can do this for your family to be safe
- 9 You might find these in a construction zone, keep a safe distance
- 11 Maintaining ROW is one of our most crucial ways to provide this kind of power
- 14 By maintaining ROW it can help us from having to come out and restore power during one of these
- 15 At TogetherWeSave.com you can gain this to energy efficiency information
- 16 An expert should be able to do this to problems in your breaker box
- 20 If you need to flip your breakers, protect yourself in case this should occur

# Beware of New Scam

Co-op members should beware of a scam using an email meant to look like a Google Calendar item.

An electric cooperative in Colorado has so far heard from a couple of dozen members who received the strange email. It claims to come from "Google Calendar" and has the subject line, "Your electric bill is available."

The email did not come from the cooperative's regular email address. No one at the electric cooperative clicked on the links in the email out of concern

about viruses, and as far as they know, no members click, either. The email has all the earmarks of a phishing scam, with someone likely looking to steal members' information. Or possibly when that member makes a payment it's going to send money to the scammers.

Please always remember, if it looks funny call us first at 1-866-242-4232. We may send you a billing reminder, and you can pay your bill online to us, but WE will never ask for your personal information in an email.

# 2015 Photo Contest

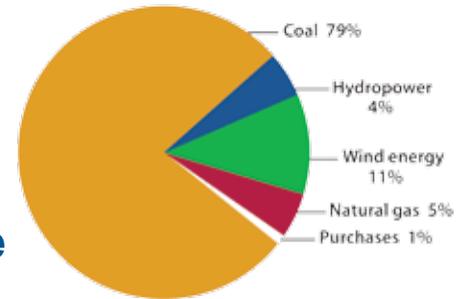
Deadline is drawing near for the 11th annual photo contest with selected entries to be used in the 2016 Access Energy Calendar. We're looking for photos of rural settings in southeast Iowa including landscapes, animals, buildings or people in any season of the year. Fifty dollars will be awarded to each photographer whose entry is selected as one of the 12 featured photos.

**Deadline is March 31, 2015**



# Where Does Your Power Come From?

## Your Power Source Mix for 2014



# Lighting Guide

Brightness	YOU USED TO BUY		YOUR CHOICES NOW		Typical Life				
	Least Efficient	Standard Incandescents	New Halogen Incandescents	CFLs		LEDs			
450 lumens	40W	\$5.34/yr	29W	\$3.87/yr	10W	\$1.34/yr	5W	\$0.67/yr	energy use energy cost per year
800 lumens	60W	\$8.02/yr	43W	\$5.74/yr	13W	\$1.74/yr	10W	\$1.34/yr	energy use energy cost per year
1100 lumens	75W	\$10.02/yr	53W	\$7.08/yr	16W	\$2.14/yr	15W	\$2.00/yr	energy use energy cost per year
1600 lumens	100W	\$13.36/yr	72W	\$9.62/yr	20W	\$2.67/yr	19W	\$2.54/yr	energy use energy cost per year
	TYPICAL LIFE = 1 year*		TYPICAL LIFE = 1.2 years		TYPICAL LIFE = 10 years		TYPICAL LIFE = 15-25+ years		

\*rated life is based on 3 hours of use per day.

Source: Natural Resources Defense Council