

● OCTOBER 2022

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

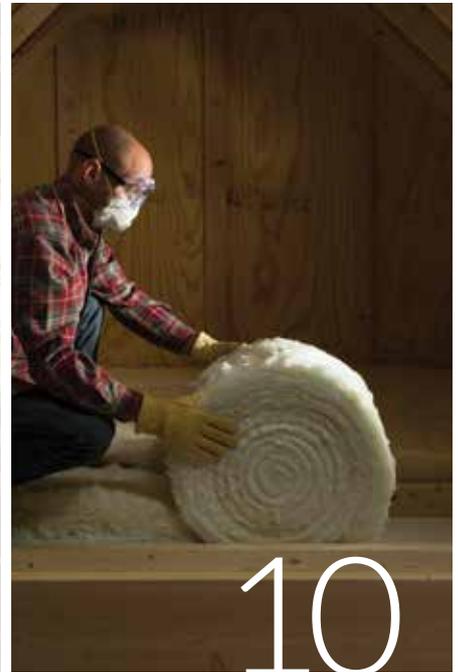
**National Co-op Month:
Celebrating membership**

**Grundy County REC
safety certification**

Game day recipes

Grundy County REC announces 2022 patronage ▶ See Page 5

CONTENTS



VOLUME 75 • ISSUE 10

3

STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE

Iowans benefit from the cooperative choice

3

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a \$100 pork prize

10

EFFICIENCY MATTERS

Insulation made easy

14

ENERGY MATTERS

Iowa home energy assistance program

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Shelley Hundling, a Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could win \$100!

IOWANS BENEFIT FROM THE COOPERATIVE CHOICE

BY DAVE HOLM, CHUCK SODERBERG AND MURRAY WILLIAMS

The concept of cooperation is nothing new. Early human societies cooperated by sharing hunting, fishing, farming and shelter practices to improve their chances of survival. By the 19th century, cooperatives took a more formal shape and expanded into several industries. While many associate cooperatives with agriculture, co-ops also include rural electric service, credit unions, rural telephone, farm credit, petroleum and more. In fact, nearly one out of every two Iowans is a member of a cooperative.

For more than 200 years, Americans have worked together in cooperatives to meet challenges that are too big for them to solve individually. Co-ops are not-for-profit organizations that are owned and democratically controlled by their members. Co-ops exist to benefit the people who use their services instead of generating profits for outside investors, and members elect their board of directors from within the cooperative membership.

As part of National Co-op Month, Gov. Kim Reynolds has declared October as Cooperative Month in Iowa. During this month, cooperatives of all types and from all industries reaffirm their member-owned mission and commitment to the communities they serve.

Co-ops play an important role in both rural and urban Iowa communities. More than 1.5 million people in Iowa are members of at least one cooperative, and many belong to more than one. Between grain and farm supply, petroleum, credit unions, telephone and electric service, cooperatives pay more than \$60 million in property taxes to Iowa communities each year. Property taxes paid, especially in rural counties, have a big impact on county budgets and help support critical infrastructure. As the demographics in Iowa continue to change, cooperatives provide stable career opportunities where other industries do not. We need co-ops in rural areas to continue to make these communities viable.



More than 12,000 Iowans are employed by co-ops, which often provide first-class benefits like healthcare, 401k plans, life insurance, paid time off, continued education

incentives and wellness plans. In fact, if these co-op employees were grouped together, cooperatives would be among the top 10 largest employers in Iowa. Visit www.IowaCooperatives.com, to learn more about how cooperatives are critical to Iowa's economy.

Our cooperative industries have been serving members through even the most difficult times, and our biggest impact comes from embracing the values and principles that make us truly unique. Whether it's the members we serve or the Iowans we employ, our cooperative movement is committed to enhancing economic opportunity and improving the quality of life in Iowa's cities, towns and rural areas. Quite simply, the cooperative difference benefits Iowans and has long been an economic engine moving our state forward.

Dave Holm is executive director of the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives; Chuck Soderberg is executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives; and Murray Williams is president & CEO of the Iowa Credit Union League.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a pork prize!

October is National Pork Month! To celebrate, Iowa's role as the No. 1 pork-producing state in the nation, we're giving away a pork prize. The contest winner will receive \$50 in pork certificates plus a soft-sided cooler, meat thermometer, cutting board, apron and recipes, courtesy of the Iowa Pork Producers Association.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than Oct. 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 pressure washer from the August issue was Arthur Keezer, Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative.



Photo credit: Iowa Pork Producers Association

ENTER ONLINE BY OCT. 31!

CELEBRATING MEMBERSHIP

BY MICHAEL GEERDES



Fall is a busy time, and October is a particularly eventful month with school, community and sports activities in full swing. It's also when all

cooperatives celebrate National Co-op Month.

When I say Grundy County REC celebrates Co-op Month, it really means we are celebrating you! After all, our co-op wouldn't exist without you, our members.

Serving you and our communities

Our core business purpose is to serve as your electricity provider, but the larger mission of the co-op is to help make our corner of the world a better place. "Concern for community" is one

of seven guiding principles that all co-ops share. Similar to how our wires run through our service territory, our concern for community flows through all of our decisions – because being a co-op means being a responsible partner and good neighbor.

Grundy County REC works to help our community thrive through initiatives led by our employees and local board that's comprised of neighbors who live right here in our community. Because we're local, we understand our community's unique needs and strive to help meet them. We're proud to support local youth through our Youth Tour, volunteering and scholarship programs. We partner with and support area schools and initiatives to educate students on cooperative careers and electrical safety.

The word "cooperative" is close to "cooperation," meaning people working together toward a common goal – mutually benefiting one another and the larger community.

That's the essence of the cooperative spirit. Our employees and member-elected board members are invested in the community in which they live and serve.

Putting members' priorities first

Above all, as a co-op we put our members' priorities first. As your trusted energy partner, we know that saving energy and money is important to you. That's why we have numerous programs in place to help, including rebates, home energy audits and more.

Grundy County REC is continuously examining ways to operate more efficiently while continuing to provide the highest level of friendly, reliable service you expect and deserve. After all, we're your local co-op. We were built by the members we serve.

Michael Geerdes is the general manager of Grundy County REC.



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

"Our mission is to provide our members safe, reliable, electric service"



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District 3: Nick Strohhenn
District 4: Larry Rohach
District 5: Matt Kopriva
District 6: David Schmidt
District 7: Jason Paper

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Focused on YOU.

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because we're a co-op, we're able to adapt to our community's unique needs. That's the power of co-op membership.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

CO-OP UNDERGOES RESAP CERTIFICATION



Members of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives safety and training department were on-site last month conducting our Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) certification.

During this certification, safety processes, equipment and documentation are reviewed and inspected to ensure we are operating as safely as possible and following the cooperative model.

We are proud to share that Grundy County REC performed very strongly!

SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES



Jeff Brophy
 Manager of Finance and Administration
 Sept. 1

2 years



Scott Kuiper
 Warehouseman
 Sept. 29

8 years

Congratulations, Jeff and Scott!
 We greatly appreciate your hard work and dedication.

CO-OP EMPLOYEE WELCOMES NEW ADDITION



The Grundy County REC family has grown by 10 little toes and 10 little fingers! Allyson Miller, executive assistant and human resources at the co-op, along with husband Eric and big brother Isaac welcomed Dillon Lawrence Miller into the world on July 11.



2022 PATRONAGE

Patronage credits will be issued on the bills members receive in November. If you have questions regarding this patronage credit, please contact Nichole Heaverlo at 319-824-5251.

ENERGY TRAIL TOURS:

DRIVING EDUCATION, ADVOCACY FOR DECADES



Energy Trail Tour

BY ANGELA CATTON

Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) and its member cooperatives have led thousands of consumer members through the Dakotas on annual Energy Trail Tours for decades. The tour connects western Iowa members with the generation resources and the people responsible for delivering electric power to their homes, farms and businesses.

A powerful history

In the early days of NIPCO, all power transmitted across its service footprint was generated by hydroelectric power produced by

water flowing through the Missouri River Dam System. Even then, NIPCO believed in educating members about the process of hydroelectric generation and how electricity generated from the dams was transmitted to western Iowa to power the lives of those living there.

In the 1960s, NIPCO hosted single-day excursions to Gavin's Point Dam near Yankton, South Dakota. The tour also brought members through NIPCO's office to understand the role a generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative played in sourcing and delivering power to end users.

By the early 1960s, the demand for electric power outgrew the supply that could be generated from water alone, and NIPCO became a member of Basin Electric Power Cooperative in 1966. Basin Electric supplied the necessary power to meet western Iowans' needs through various fuel sources, including additional hydroelectric power and coal.

With coal becoming essential to providing reliable and affordable energy, NIPCO became a part owner of the Neal 4 coal-fueled generation plant, a joint venture with investor-owned, cooperative and municipal



SPICY CORN DIP

- 2 tablespoons butter, divided
- 3½ cups corn
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup red pepper, chopped
- 1 jalapeno, chopped and seeds removed
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 4 ounces pepper jack cheese, shredded
- 4 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- Scoops tortilla chips

Melt 1 tablespoon butter and add corn, salt and pepper. Transfer to a medium-sized bowl. In a pan, melt remaining butter and sauté onion and pepper. Add chopped jalapeno. Remove from heat then add onion, pepper and jalapeno to the corn mixture. Add mayonnaise, garlic, cayenne pepper, half of the pepper jack and half sharp cheddar cheese. Mix well. Pour mixture into 8-inch square baking dish. Top with remaining cheeses. Bake at 350 degrees F for 10-12 minutes. Serve hot with Scoops tortilla chips.

Marilyn O'Brien • Geneva
Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative

SAUCY LITTLE BEEF BALLS

- 1 pound ground beef
- ½ cup dried breadcrumbs
- ⅓ cup onion, minced
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon parsley flakes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup shortening
- 1 12-ounce bottle chili sauce
- 1 10-ounce jar grape jelly

Mix ground beef, breadcrumbs, onion, milk and egg. Add parsley, salt, pepper and Worcestershire sauce. Form into small balls. Melt shortening and brown meatballs, drain fat. Mix chili sauce and grape jelly, then pour over meatballs. Simmer on low heat for 30 minutes. Serves 4-8

Shirley Lager • Clarion • Prairie Energy Cooperative

SALMON DIP

- 1 5-ounce package smoked salmon (regular or tomato basil)
- 12 ounces whipped cream cheese
- 3 green onions, chopped including the white and the green portions, splash or two Liquid Smoke
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon dried dill
- optional: Rosemary & Olive Oil Triscuits or pretzels

Break salmon into small pieces and blend into cream cheese. Fold in green onions and seasonings. Chill at least 2 hours before serving to blend flavors. Serve with flavored Triscuits, pretzels or your favorite crackers. Serves 8-10

Barb Sexton • Rockwell City
Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association

GAME TIME MEATBALLS

- 3-4 pounds prepared meatballs
- 3 10½-ounce cans cream of mushroom soup
- 1 4-ounce can mushrooms
- 1 16-ounce jar Cheese Whiz
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced

Combine all ingredients in slow cooker. Heat on low for 6-8 hours, stir to prevent burning. You can use Italian-style meatballs and add more mushrooms and onions to taste. Substitute with cream of celery soup or two cans golden mushroom soup and one can cream of mushroom for a different flavor. Reheat in a deep baking pan on the grill or Blackstone on low heat. *Serves 6-8*

Mike Brooks • Kanawha • Prairie Energy Cooperative

PIZZA BITES

- plain bagels
- butter
- Italian seasoning
- pizza sauce
- grated cheese of your choice
- Parmesan cheese

Line a baking pan with foil and set oven to low broil. Butter bagels and sprinkle with Italian seasoning. Use a scissors or pizza cutter to cut bagels into bite-sized pieces. Arrange bagel pieces on a foil-lined pan, leaving a well in the middle. Pour pizza sauce in the well and sprinkle grated cheese over the bite-sized bagels. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over all. Set under broiler approximately 8 minutes or until edges are crisp. These are quick and easy – and a favorite for the kids! *1 bagel half = 1 serving*

Joni Rus • Rock Valley
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

TACO DIP

- 1 can refried beans
- 1 pound ground hamburger, cooked
- 1 cup cheese, shredded
- 1 small jar salsa
- fresh cilantro, chopped
- optional: chopped onions, peppers, olives
- sour cream
- tortilla chips

Spread refried beans in a greased 9x12-inch casserole dish. Layer cooked hamburger over the beans. Top with cheese and place in the oven at 375 degrees F for 20 minutes, or until heated through. Cool for a few minutes, then cover with salsa. Add cilantro, and chopped onions, peppers, olives or other desired vegetables. Top with sour cream. Serve with tortilla chips. *Serves 8-10*

Courtney Burkhalter • Fairfield
Access Energy Cooperative

BEST-EVER ALMOND FLOUR BROWNIES

- 5 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1¼ cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¾ cup cocoa powder
- 3 eggs
- 1½ cups almond flour (not almond meal)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

Stir together butter, sugar, salt, vanilla, cocoa and eggs. Mix in flour and baking powder. Scoop into a greased 8-inch square pan or 9-inch pie pan, spreading to the edges. Bake at 350 degrees F for 33-38 minutes, until tester comes out clean. Remove and cool for at least 15 minutes before cutting. *Serves 12-16*

Hannah and Patrick Schnell • Westfield
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

COFFEE SLUSH

- 6 cups brewed coffee
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 pint flavored coffee creamer
- 4 cups milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- optional: whipped topping and chocolate shavings

Dissolve sugar in hot coffee. Cool, then add remaining ingredients. Freeze, stirring occasionally. Set out before serving to thaw a little. If desired, serve with whipped topping and chocolate shavings. *Serves 15-20*

Laura DeSmet • Larchwood
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

WANTED:

DIPS & SPREADS

THE REWARD:

\$25 FOR EVERY ONE
WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is Oct. 31

Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions. Also provide the number of servings per recipe.

EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com

(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

MAIL: Recipes

Iowa Electric Cooperative Living • 8525 Douglas Ave.,
Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992



INSULATION MADE EASY

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

When considering cost-effective improvements to make your home comfortable, insulation and air sealing typically provide the biggest bang for your buck. When installed together, they can save you money and make a big difference in comfort and energy use.

Understanding insulation rating

Insulation is rated in R-value. The R stands for resistance to heat transfer. The higher your R-value, the slower the heat transfer, or less wasted energy. There are several different types of insulation, including fiberglass batts, blown fiberglass, cellulose and foam. Each has its own R-value listed on the packaging. To determine the R-value of your existing insulation, multiply the number of inches by the R-value per inch for the type of insulation.

Insulation level recommendations are based on your geographic location. Generally, the colder the climate, the higher the recommended R-value.

Where to insulate

The typical locations for insulation are the attic, walls and floor. If you have a forced-air heating or cooling system, your ductwork should be insulated, too. You want a consistent thermal barrier around your home for maximum efficiency. A bonus to insulation is it can reduce noise from the outside of your home.

Attic insulation minimizes energy waste and can help maintain a more consistent temperature throughout your home. Combined with air sealing, it also can prevent ice dams from forming on your roof in colder climates.

Attics can be insulated using batts or blown-in insulation. Recommended R-values range from R30 to R60. If you use your attic for storage, you can build a raised platform with room for insulation underneath. Add insulation and weatherstripping to access doors or hatches.

Exterior walls and walls separating heated and unheated areas of the home – such as garages or enclosed porches – should be insulated to an R-value ranging from R13 to R21, based on your location and wall construction.

Wall insulation can be installed during construction or a remodel. If your home wasn't insulated when it was built, you can have the insulation blown in by a contractor. Blown-in options include cellulose, fiberglass and foam.

Your home should also be insulated between the floor and crawlspace or unheated basement. If your basement is heated, install insulation in the box sills, which are the area between the foundation floor of the home's main level.

Consider building and insulating the exterior walls in the basement or installing foam insulation on foundation walls. Check your local building code

requirements. Recommended R-values for floor insulation range from R13 to R30. Also insulate heating and cooling ductwork located in unconditioned spaces to prevent energy waste.

Importance of air sealing

Think of insulation as a cozy sweater and air sealing as a windbreaker for your home.

You know that cozy sweater is no match for winter winds, so you need an extra layer to stop wind from ripping through. The same goes for your home.

Air sealing prevents drafts and air infiltration from outside. It can improve efficiency, comfort and indoor air quality. Air sealing can be done as a do-it-yourself (DIY) project, but it is challenging to pinpoint and properly seal air leaks. Consider hiring a contractor to complete a blower door test and seal leaks.

Typically, air sealing is done around plumbing and electrical penetrations with spray foam or caulk. If using spray foam around gas appliances, temporarily turn off pilot lights. Spray foam is extremely flammable.

Sheet metal and high-temperature heat-resistant caulk should be used to seal gaps between framing, chimneys and metal flues.

DIY considerations

If you are considering a DIY approach, protect yourself when going into spaces with insulation. Wear a properly fitted mask or respirator. Wearing a Tyvek suit and gloves also is recommended. Kneepads can come in handy and make the crawling more bearable.

If you are planning a DIY approach for air sealing, do your research about best practices for the proper home ventilation. Before going the DIY route, contact two or three local contractors for a project estimate. Sometimes contractors can get cheaper bulk pricing on insulation.

Making insulation and air sealing a priority has the power to add comfort, efficiency and savings to your home.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

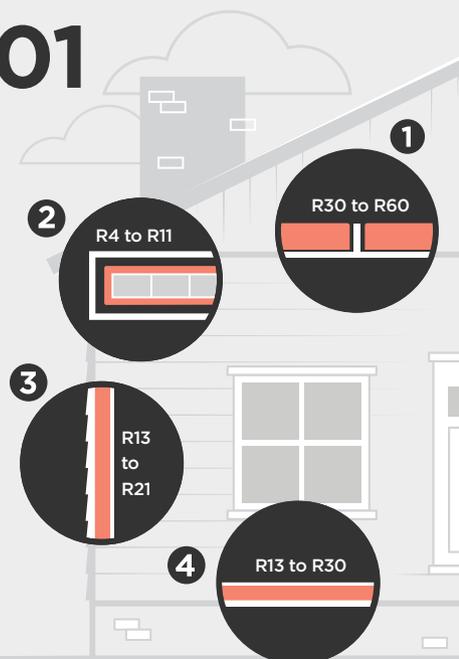


A contractor installs blown cellulose insulation in an attic to minimize energy waste.

Photos: Project Home

Insulation 101

- 1 ATTIC**
Attic insulation can improve your home's comfort and energy savings. Recommended R-value ranges from R30 in warm climates to R60 in cold climates.
- 2 DUCTWORK**
Protect the air you paid to heat or cool by insulating your ductwork from R4 to R11 where it travels through unconditioned spaces.
- 3 EXTERIOR WALLS**
Exterior walls should be insulated between R13 and R21, depending on wall construction and your location.
- 4 CRAWLSPACE**
Increase comfort and energy savings in your home by insulating the floors to the right R-value for your location, ranging from R13 to R30.



Recommended home insulation R-values in Iowa

Zone	Uninsulated attic	Attic with existing 3-4 inches of insulation	Floor
5-6	R49 to R60	R38 to R49	R25 to R30



There are different types of insulation, including fiberglass batts, blown fiberglass, cellulose and foam. Each has its own R-value, which is listed on the packaging.



Air sealing prevents drafts and air infiltration from the outside of your home. Consider air sealing before adding more insulation to areas of your home, such as the attic.

HAPPY NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH!

How well do you know your cooperative?

Answer the questions below and mail this section in with your bill. For each correct answer, your name will be entered into a drawing for one of four \$50 bill credits!



1. What is a perk of being a cooperative member?

2. Name one of the Grundy County REC board of directors or a cooperative employee.

3. Name one service or program offered by the cooperative that benefits members.

4. How many directors serve Grundy County REC?

Name

Account Number

Rules and qualifications:

- Submissions are accepted through Oct. 31; winners will be notified Nov. 1.
- Members names will be entered into the drawing for each correct answer submitted. The more correct answers submitted, the better your chances for winning one of four \$50 bill credits!

2022 ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY



We are excited to share that we hosted more than 200 members at the Grundy County REC 2022 Annual Meeting on Sept. 8!

The following directors were elected for a three-year term:

- **District 1** – Kevin Praisner
- **District 5** – Matt Kopriva
- **District 7** – Jason Paper

Stay tuned for the full summary of the 2022 Annual Meeting and board reorganization meeting in the November issue of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living*.

COOPERATIVE CYBERSECURITY

BY JUSTIN LUEBBERT

As cybersecurity threats continue to grow both at home and in the workplace, it's important to know what we can do as individuals, how we can work with others and measures we can take to reduce our risk of cyber threats. October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, but good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round.

A collective line of defense

Electric co-ops are guided by seven cooperative principles. One of these principles, "Cooperation Among Cooperatives," has never been more important as it pertains to protecting and defending our nation's electric grid from cyberattacks. As the grid evolves and new technologies emerge, this creates additional opportunities for threat actors to target our systems.

Electric cooperatives are coming together to fight back and add resiliency to the electric grid. When it comes to cybersecurity, cooperation among cooperatives happens in a multitude of ways.

Electric cooperatives are working together and with their local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives, statewide organizations and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the national trade association for electric cooperatives. Together, they're leading efforts to establish relationships, provide tools, share resources and training information to harden and improve the overall cyber landscape.



Electric cooperatives are working together to establish relationships, provide tools, share resources and training information to harden and improve the overall cyber landscape.

You can help too. Good cyber hygiene is equally important at home and in our personal lives. Just like grid technology continues to expand, so does the connected home.

Here are a few cybersecurity tips you can implement at home:

- **Enable multi-factor or two-factor authentication for your online accounts.** This extra layer of security allows websites and applications to confirm you're really who you say you are. The additional authentication may come in many forms, including a confirmation text code on your phone, an email or even a separate authenticator app. By adding this second step, you're making it a lot harder for hackers to access your accounts. A Virtual Password Network (VPN) can help you secure sensitive online connections.
- **Use secure passwords.** This means using unique passwords for all your accounts and ensuring they are at least 15 characters long. Randomly generated passwords or passphrases are typically more secure. You might also consider using some type of password manager. In addition to suggesting new, strong and unique credentials for every login, many

password managers will let you know if your existing passwords are weak, reused or have been associated with a data breach so you can take action immediately.

- **Think before you click.** Be careful when clicking links or opening attachments. This is one of the most important ways to protect yourself against scammers and hackers. If you receive a text message or email that seems too good to be true or threatens negative consequences for not taking immediate action or displays a sense of urgency, take extra precaution. If an email looks like it came from a friend or co-worker but it seems odd, pick up the phone and check with the person before opening any links or attachments. In many instances, their email account might have been hacked.

We all have a part to play in combatting cyber threats. Electric cooperatives and their local and national partners will continue working together to advance cybersecurity defenses for all co-op members and the local communities they serve.

Justin Luebbert writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



A VPN adds a layer of privacy protection to your online interactions by routing your traffic through an encrypted connection.

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DETAILS RELEASED FOR IOWA HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



The 2022-2023 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel and type of housing.

Besides meeting the income guidelines, you must furnish the Social Security numbers of all household members and a copy of recent heating and electric bills. You also must show proof of income for all household members age 18 and older. If you receive alimony or child support, it will need to be verified too.

If you're a wage earner, you should bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period before the date of application or a copy of your federal income tax return. If you're self-employed or a farmer, provide a copy of your most recent federal income tax return. And if you're on a fixed income – Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program (FIP), Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance and pensions – take copies of check stubs from the last 30 days. For FIP recipients, bring your current DHS

Notice of Decision or contact your local office for acceptable document information.

In Iowa, applications for the program will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis from Nov. 1, 2022, through April 30, 2023. The start date is Oct. 1, 2022, for elderly (60 and over) and/or disabled applicants. If you're not sure where to apply, visit humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply. To contact your local community action agency, call 211 or write: LIHEAP, Iowa Department of Human Rights, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, IA 50319.

Income Maximums

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$27,180
2	\$36,620
3	\$46,060
4	\$55,500
5	\$64,940
6	\$74,380
7	\$83,820
8	\$93,260

Note: For households with more than eight members, add \$9,440 for each additional member.

NAVIGATING THE BIG SHIFT THAT GOES UNSPOKEN

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

Have you ever noticed there are a surprising number of critical things in life that no one tells you about? One of the big ones is the transition that occurs when the older generation passes away.

You know you've entered this new phase of life when you attend more funerals than weddings. I started thinking about this during the visitation for my dear former neighbor, Bill Williams of Lake City, who died on Aug. 18. Bill was like my late father and so many other farm friends in our rural neighborhood – the kind of decent, honest, hardworking people you looked to your whole life for guidance, knowledge of the past and just about anything else you needed to know.

Heavenly wisdom

As I spoke with Bill's son Scott and daughter-in-law Kit at the funeral home, she made an interesting comment. "I bet Bill, your dad, Bob and Harold are up there in heaven having great conversations about farming," she said, referring to Harold DeLong of Yetter, who died Feb. 16, 2017; my dad, Jim Dougherty, who died Oct. 8, 2019; and Bob Poen of Lake City, who died Feb. 18, 2021.

Kit and I agreed we could practically hear them talking about how the crops are doing, how politicians keep screwing things up, and what "old so-and-so" down the road would have done in times like this. After all, Bill, Bob, Jim and Harold were old-school, common-sense farmers who valued faith, family, community and doing the right thing.

Reality that remains

Now that these guys are gone, a sobering reality hits. Are those of us who remain the ones with the answers now? Since I loved talking with the "old guys" about local history, am I the keeper of the history? Apparently so. Between you and me, some days I'm not sure I'm up to the



task. Can't I have a little more time to keep learning so I can figure things out?

As the old African proverb goes, when an old person dies, it's like a library of stories burning down. I truly miss the older generation's no-nonsense, we-survived-tough-times wit and wisdom that could put everything in perspective – and usually provide a clear answer in a matter of seconds.

Taking the reins

Going forward, we all must answer a key question: Are we ready to take the reins? I hope so. Ready or not, it's

time for me to accept the challenge of guiding the next generation – to do for them what was done for me.

I realize that what the previous generation did was simple and incredibly difficult all at once. They showed up, did their best and kept showing up. I'll try to do the same. Fortunately, I can still hear the advice from "old Bill," "old Bob," "old Harold" and my dad guiding me along this journey.

Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at www.darcymaulsby.com.

Visit our website at www.grundycountyrecia.com

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