

● MAY 2025

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



**Energy-saving tips
for warm weather**

**What to know if you're
considering solar energy**

Spring-inspired recipes

Save the date for the 2025 Member Appreciation Event ▶ See Page 12

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Honoring Iowa's
hometown heroes

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Emerson Landas, a Consumers Energy member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

HELP US SHINE THE LIGHT ON LOCAL VOLUNTEERS AND DESERVING CHARITIES

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



We are gearing up for year five of our statewide Shine the Light program, which celebrates our cooperative commitment to community. During the month of June, member-

consumers and employees of Iowa electric cooperatives are invited to nominate local volunteers who are making a positive difference in their Iowa communities. Three winning volunteers will each receive a \$3,000 donation to their local charity and be featured in the September issue of this magazine.

Your nomination makes a difference

Starting on June 1, go to www.IowaShineTheLight.com to make a nomination. Simply enter some basic contact information for you and your nominee and answer this question in 500 words or less:

How has your nominee made a difference in the community and how might their local charity/nonprofit use the \$3,000 donation?

The success of our Shine the Light program depends on co-op member-consumers who take the time to nominate a friend, neighbor or relative who deserves to be recognized. If you have nominated a volunteer in a previous year and they weren't selected as a winner, you are welcome to nominate them again.

Additionally, I will share that the judges who read through all the volunteer nominations respond positively to essays that tell a story and draw in the reader. A little creativity can help your nomination stand out in a crowded field!

A diverse impact statewide

In the first four years of the program, our 12 winners (three winners each year) represent a diverse group of charities and nonprofits. Some of the winners have included an education



Starting on June 1, go to www.IowaShineTheLight.com to make a nomination.

foundation, an animal shelter, a community garden, a local food and furnishings closet, an agricultural pavilion and an air transportation service for medical treatments. You can see our past winners at www.IowaShineTheLight.com to learn more about these incredible groups. We are continuously impressed with the range of volunteer activities and local organizations that are nominated each year.

Many of these organizations are small operations that don't have the resources to seek major funding or media attention. Beyond the monetary

donation, the Shine the Light program has been helpful in spreading the word about the great work being done by some incredible volunteers.

Thank you for considering the nomination of someone in your community who should be celebrated for their volunteer efforts and for helping us shine the light on these deserving organizations. Make your nomination online from June 1 through June 30 at www.IowaShineTheLight.com.

Erin Campbell is the director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN \$100 IN BEEF CERTIFICATES!

May is Beef Month in Iowa! To celebrate, we're giving away \$100 in beef certificates to use at a grocery store. You can select your favorite cuts to purchase, and then make mouthwatering meals at home.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than May 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 \$100 gift card for landscaping from the March issue was **Jeanie Hall**, a **Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.** member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY MAY 31!

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU SAVE

BY BRADY CODNER



When summer heats up, electric bills tend to increase as air conditioners are working overtime, driving up home

energy consumption. Grundy County REC is your local not-for-profit electricity provider, and we are committed to helping you beat the heat without breaking the bank.

As the temperatures get warmer over the next few months, we want to make sure you know about a range of energy-saving offerings designed specifically with you in mind. By taking advantage of these programs and services, you can manage your summer energy consumption and costs.



Budget billing

With budget billing, your energy bill is calculated by averaging your previous 12 months of use, making your monthly energy costs easier to budget and manage, especially during seasonal fluctuations when bills tend to increase based on the weather. This is a great option for anyone on a fixed income or those with highly variable seasonal needs.



Home energy audit

We offer members a complimentary energy audit of your home to identify areas where energy is wasted and provide recommendations on ways to improve efficiency and lower your monthly bills.



Rebate program

When you make upgrades or purchases to reduce home energy use, those smart decisions should be rewarded. Rebates are available on energy-efficient appliances, heating and cooling equipment, and more. Visit

our website's "Energy Efficiency" section to learn about our rebate program and how you can receive a bill credit for making smart energy choices.



You have the power

Small actions can have a big impact on summer energy bills. The best way to lower energy use during summer months is to raise the thermostat to the highest setting that's comfortable. Ceiling fans can also help you feel cooler but remember to turn them off when you leave the room. On warm summer nights, fire up the grill to keep additional heat out of the kitchen. Remember to change air filters often so your cooling system doesn't have to work harder than necessary.

To learn more about practical strategies to lower your use, trim your bills and make this summer a breeze for both you and your wallet, contact a member of our staff at 319-824-5251.

Brady Codner is the member service advisor for Grundy County REC.



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



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Call Before You Dig (Iowa One Call):
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Facebook: facebook.com/GrundyCountyREC

Email: mgeerdes@grundycountyrecia.org

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Call our office 24/7: 319-824-5251

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District 2: Norbert Boyle
District 3: Nick Strohhenn
District 4: Larry Rohach
District 5: Matt Kopriva
District 6: Roger Brown
District 7: Jason Paper

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

STAY COOL. STAY EFFICIENT.

We're here to help you beat the summer heat. Take advantage of our efficiency programs and energy-saving recommendations designed to help you stay comfortable and cut costs all summer long.



GRUNDY COUNTY REC ADVOCATES FOR COOPERATIVE AND MEMBERS

Erik Freese, Grundy County REC operations manager, and Kevin Puisner, board vice president, joined co-op directors and staff from across the state in Des Moines for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative's annual REC Day on the Hill advocacy event at the State Capitol in March.

Freese and Puisner spoke with legislators about important matters impacting the cooperative and its members, including:

- Protecting defined electric service territory
- The benefits of right of first refusal (ROFR) for Iowa transmission utilities
- Concerns with HF 404 regarding third-party solar facilities



Kevin Puisner (second from the right) and Erik Freese (far right) met with Rep. Brett Barker, who serves Marshall County (second from the left), and representatives from Consumers Energy.



Kevin Puisner (left) and Erik Freese (right) met with Rep. Josh Megger, who serves Grundy and Harden counties.

49 YEARS OF SERVICE CELEBRATED THIS MONTH

We're proud to recognize four Grundy County REC employees who together are celebrating 49 years of combined service with the cooperative. Each person plays an important role in supporting our mission and serving our members with dedication and care. We're grateful for their commitment to the co-op and the communities we serve. **Congratulations, and thank you for all that you do!**



14 YEARS

MICHAEL GEERDES

General Manager
May 11



23 YEARS

TONY SIENKNECHT

Line and Staking
Foreman
May 20



11 YEARS

ERIK FREESE

Operations
Manager
May 27



1 YEAR

MELODIE WITTGREVE

Member Service
Representative
May 28

COOPERATIVE RECEIVES "CLEAN" AUDIT

Every year, Grundy County REC undergoes a thorough financial audit conducted by an independent third-party firm to ensure accuracy, transparency, and accountability. We're proud to share that, once again, we received a clean audit for 2024 – with no adjusting entries required. This outstanding result reflects the continued diligence and integrity of our financial team. Representatives from CliftonLarsonAllen, third-party auditing firm, presented the 2024 audited financials and official audit report during the March board meeting.

"We take our responsibility to our members very seriously, and a clean audit is a reflection of that commitment," says Michael Geerdes, general manager of Grundy County REC. "These results reflect the trust our members place in us and the care we take in earning it every day."



"MOVE OVER" TO PROTECT ROADSIDE CREWS

BY SCOTT FLOOD

Iowa state law requires motorists to move over or slow down when approaching ANY vehicle stopped on the side of the road with its flashing lights activated, including passenger cars with hazard lights. Those who fail to obey the law could receive a traffic ticket or even lose their driver's license.

When lineworkers are perched in a bucket truck, repairing power lines along a busy road, they have good reason to be concerned about their safety. However, most are less apprehensive about problems like working with high voltages or falling. Their biggest worry is also the most unpredictable: a distracted driver slamming into their vehicle or a nearby power pole.

The National Safety Council reported that 891 people were killed and 37,701 people were injured in work zone crashes during 2022 (the most recent statistics). Most of those crashes occur in construction sites, which are usually well-marked. Electric co-op crews are likely to face even greater danger, as they often work along remote stretches of roads, frequently in adverse weather conditions that can reduce their visibility.

Move over laws vary

The danger of work zone crashes led every state to adopt "move over" laws that require drivers to lower their speed and switch lanes when possible to protect emergency vehicles. The goal is to provide an added safety buffer and minimize the potential for accidents. Drivers caught violating the laws can face penalties such as significant fines.

Unfortunately, the Journal of Road Safety reports that just 14 states' "move over" laws protect other types of service vehicles, such as construction trucks and utility vehicles. That means drivers in those states are under no legal obligation to give lineworkers that added margin of safety.

In accordance with Iowa state law, motorists must move over or slow down when approaching ANY vehicle

stopped on the side of the road with its flashing lights activated, including passenger cars with hazard lights. Those who fail to obey the law could receive a traffic ticket or even lose their driver's license.

Distracted driving poses additional risks

Compounding this issue is the dramatic increase in distracted driving. The National Transportation Highway Safety Administration has reported that as many as 1,000 Americans are injured each day because of activities that take drivers' attention away from the road. The most common is reading and responding to text messages. If a driver traveling at 55 miles per hour glances at their phone for just five seconds, they'll have traveled the length of a football field before returning their gaze to the road.

The design of today's vehicles contributes to distraction. Many vehicles have complex controls for entertainment and climate that demand the driver take their eyes off the road to make even simple adjustments.

Geography can also be a factor. Co-ops serving rural and remote areas often have power lines along hilly roads. Locals accustomed to driving those roads at fairly high speeds may be startled and have little time to react when they encounter a work crew past a hill or around a curve.

Besides the potential for lineworker injuries, accidents can also damage or destroy expensive service vehicles, reducing a co-op's ability to respond to outages and other problems. Power poles and other infrastructure may also suffer severe damage.

Maintaining focus is essential

Additionally, many of the tasks performed by lineworkers, such as reconnecting high-voltage power lines, are inherently dangerous and require their complete focus. When their attention is distracted by speeding or noisy vehicles, they're more likely to make mistakes that can complicate the repair or cause injury.

Co-op employees are not only at risk only when their vehicles are parked and repairs are underway. Lineworkers frequently have to drive slowly along the shoulder of roads to pinpoint broken power lines or failed transformers, especially in darkness or conditions that interfere with visibility.



Many state transportation agencies, including Iowa, have work zone awareness programs. Amplifying those efforts by devoting part of a co-op's advertising, publicity and social media reminds co-op members and other drivers of the importance of giving lineworkers a wide berth.

Co-ops are considering ways they can modify bucket trucks and other service vehicles to make them even more visible. Bright colors and additional lighting, such as flashing strobe lights and lighted detour

arrows, can attract attention from a distance. Reflective "work zone ahead" signs can also alert drivers to be ready for an unusual situation.

Remember, if you see any vehicle stopped on the side of the road with flashing lights activated, you are required by law to move over or slow down, preferably both. Please give our employees room on the road; their families thank you!

Scott Flood writes on energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.





SPRING-INSPIRED RECIPES



ASPARAGUS STIR-FRY

- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 cups asparagus, cut into 1 to 1½-inch pieces
- 2 teaspoons fresh ginger root, grated
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- toasted sesame seeds, optional

Stir broth, cornstarch and soy sauce in a small bowl until the mixture is smooth. Heat oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add asparagus, ginger root and garlic and stir-fry until crisp-tender. You can substitute ginger root with ½ teaspoon ground ginger. Add broth mixture to the skillet. Cook and stir until the mixture boils and thickens. Sprinkle with sesame seeds, if desired. Asparagus can be substituted with broccoli, cauliflower or baby carrots. Serves 4

Tammy Neubauer • Ida Grove
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

FRESH CILANTRO DIP

- ½ bunch cilantro
- 1 can black beans, drained
- 1 can black olives, minced or chopped
- 1 small jar pimentos
- 5 banana peppers, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 5 green onions, chopped
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- nacho chips

Mix all ingredients together and serve with nacho chips.
Serves 12

Jenny Hall • Woodbine
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

HAM MACARONI SALAD

- 3 cups elbow macaroni, uncooked
- 1 cup cooked ham, chopped
- 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1 tomato, seeded and diced
- 1 small red pepper, diced
- 1 small green pepper, diced
- 1½ cups mayonnaise
- 1½ teaspoons Cajun seasoning
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice

Prepare macaroni according to package directions. Drain and rinse with cold water until cool. Combine remaining ingredients, then add macaroni. Mix until blended. Cover and chill for at least 2 hours. Serves 8-10

Bryce and Kelly Godbersen • Odebolt
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

RHUBARB CUSTARD PIE

- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon butter, divided
- 1½ cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3 cups rhubarb, diced
- 1 unbaked pie shell
- ½ cup flour
- ½ cup oatmeal
- ½ cup brown sugar
- cinnamon

Cream together 1 tablespoon butter, sugar and nutmeg, then mix in eggs. Fill unbaked pie shell with diced rhubarb, then add custard mixture. Bake at 450 degrees F for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, mix ½ cup butter, flour, oatmeal and brown sugar into a crunch topping. Break topping into chunks over top of pie. Bake pie at 350 degrees F for 30 more minutes then sprinkle with cinnamon. Serves 8

Raymond Robbins • Fort Madison
Access Energy Cooperative

KALE SALAD

- 8 ounces kale, finely cut
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- 1 medium apple, chopped
- ½ cup pecan halves
- ½ cup feta cheese
- ¼ cup bacon, crumbled
- poppy seed dressing, optional
- Mandarin oranges, optional

Mix all ingredients and top with poppy seed dressing, if desired. Cranberries can be substituted with Mandarin oranges. *Serves 4*

Audrey Kreykes • Rock Valley
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

ASPARAGUS AND SPRING PEA SOUP

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 stalks celery
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 5 cups water or broth
- 1 pound asparagus, trimmed and sliced
- 2 cups green peas, fresh or frozen
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ cup canned coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill, finely chopped, optional

In a large saucepan, add butter, onion, celery and garlic. Cook over medium heat until veggies soften, stirring frequently. Stir in choice of liquid (water, vegetable broth or chicken broth). Add asparagus and peas. Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer 15 minutes, until asparagus is tender. Puree using blender or an immersion blender. Strain through a sieve if needed. Add salt and lemon juice to warm soup. Ladle into soup bowl and pour a drizzle of canned coconut milk into bowl. Top with fresh dill, if desired. *Serves 6*

Anita Doughty • Ankeny
Consumers Energy

TERRI'S PASTA SALAD

- 5 ounces dried rotini noodles
- 3 cups broccoli florets, chopped
- 3 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- ½ cup red onion, chopped
- ¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted
- ¼ cup fresh basil, chopped
- 2 ounces goat cheese, crumbled
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

In a large pot, cook pasta in lightly salted boiling water for 5 minutes. Add broccoli and cook for 3 more minutes or until pasta is done. Drain and rinse with cold water. In a large bowl, whisk together vinegar, oil, honey and garlic. Add pasta mixture, pepper, onion, almonds and basil. Toss to combine. Gently stir in cheese. Season with salt and pepper to taste. You can substitute goat cheese with feta, fresh Parmesan or pearled mozzarella. *Serves 4-6*

Lori Kautzky • Perry
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative

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



STRAWBERRY RHUBARB UPSIDE DOWN CAKE

- 1 cup rhubarb, cut into ½ inch pieces
- 1 cup strawberries, hulled and halved
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1½ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup butter at room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup milk
- whipped cream or vanilla ice cream

Combine rhubarb, strawberries and melted butter. Spread evenly across the bottom of a 9-inch round cake pan that has been greased and lined with parchment paper on the bottom. Set aside while making cake mixture. Whisk together flour, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Cream room temperature butter and sugar in a large bowl. Add eggs, vanilla and milk and beat. Mix with dry ingredients then pour over the strawberry and rhubarb topping. Bake at 350 degrees F for 45-50 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Remove from the oven and let cool for 10 minutes. Run a knife around the edge of pan to loosen cake. Place serving plate over pan and invert cake onto the plate. Remove the pan and peel off the parchment paper. Serve warm or at room temperature with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream. *Serves 12*

Kristin Goddard • Charles City
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

WANTED:

FALL APPLE RECIPES

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

Deadline is May 31

Submit your favorite fall apple recipes. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.

EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com

MAIL: Recipes

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



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE CONSIDERING SOLAR

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE



Often, homeowners conflate installing solar at home with energy efficiency. But what most people don't realize is solar is not energy efficiency. Solar is generating energy. Energy efficiency is finding ways to use less energy. While these are not one in the same, both are thought of as beneficial to the environment and a way to save money.

If you are interested in installing solar, it is important to understand your motivations. It may be saving money, concern for the environment or both. Focusing first on energy efficiency can address both motivations.

Here are the five key energy efficiency considerations to evaluate when adding solar to your home.

① Energy consumption Solar systems are sized based on a home's energy needs. The larger the system, the higher the cost. Before installing solar, make sure your home is as energy efficient as possible. That means it will use less energy and allow you to install a smaller solar system – which will save money and reduce your home's environmental impact.

Verify the efficiency of your lighting, HVAC systems and insulation. A fully insulated and air-sealed home uses less energy, and those insulation measures are less expensive than solar panels. Finish these energy efficiency projects before installing solar.

② Affordability Consider your overall out-of-pocket expenses. The expected lifespan of a heating and cooling system is 15 to 25 years. Check the age and condition of your HVAC equipment and consider the expenses of replacement.

③ Roofing Consider the age, orientation and shade of your roof. It is more difficult and expensive to reroof a home with solar panels. Evaluate if the roof will need to be replaced before the solar panels need to be replaced.

The best orientation for solar panels is south facing to receive direct light throughout the day. A shaded roof helps keep your home cool in the summertime but reduces solar energy production.

④ Maintenance A solar system doesn't last forever. Lifespans range from 25 to 30 years. As systems degrade over time, they produce less energy. Maintenance and repairs may be needed.

⑤ Electric bills and storage Solar is not "off the grid." Unless you plan to disconnect from your electric co-op, you will still receive a monthly bill.

Solar panels only produce power when the sun is shining. If you want power to your home at other times, like after dark, you need to be connected to your electric co-op or invest in battery storage system, which comes at an additional cost.

During power outages, don't assume solar panels will supply you with power. Typical solar interconnection to the grid requires panels to shut down during a power outage. This protects lineworkers from injury while making repairs.

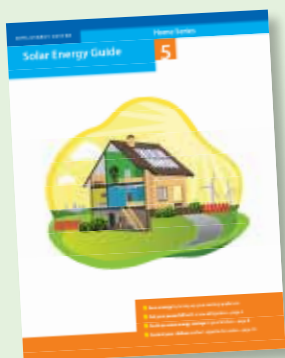
BEWARE OF SOLAR SCAMS

Before working with any vendor, Iowa's electric cooperatives encourage you to do your homework to ensure you choose a reputable provider.



If you have a complaint regarding solar installation or financing, you can complete and submit an electronic complaint at bit.ly/3usfVj7.

Consumers can also call the Iowa Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 515-281-5926 or 888-777-4590 or email consumer@ag.iowa.gov.



SOLAR ENERGY GUIDE

Iowa's electric cooperatives are committed to helping member-consumers make educated energy decisions that make sense for their home or business. Before moving ahead with a solar project, contact your local co-op first and also review the Solar Energy Guide for tips and to learn interconnection requirements.

www.iowarec.org/publications/solar-resources

Contact your electric co-op

Solar contractors often work in several utility service territories and may not be familiar with your co-op's offerings, rate structures and interconnection agreements. Before signing an agreement, check with your electric co-op for local information rather than relying on what the contractor says.

As with any other system for your home, get bids from three contractors to compare equipment and pricing. Another option may be community-owned solar. Many electric co-ops offer community solar programs. You may have an option to enjoy the benefits of solar without the responsibilities of ownership and maintenance.

Understanding these considerations before installing solar will ensure you meet your money-saving and environmental goals.

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



TOP 10 CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE INSTALLING SOLAR

- 1 Address energy efficiency.** Implementing energy efficiency measures in advance can help reduce your overall energy or water consumption, and subsequently, the size of your solar system.
- 2 Do your homework before writing a check.** Talk to your electric co-op at the outset of the process. Then speak with credible, reputable sources who are skilled professionals that will help guide you through the process.
- 3 Know your co-op's rate structure and policies.** Your co-op will help you understand the rate structure and what type of charges are likely to be incurred. They will also let you know how you will be compensated for the excess, unused energy that is generated by your solar system.
- 4 Analyze your electric load.** Understanding your electricity use and overall energy needs will help determine if solar is a good investment for you.
- 5 Determine costs upfront.** You will likely be responsible for initial upfront costs to install the system, as well as maintenance and repair costs. Doing your homework upfront will help determine if it is economical for your energy needs.
- 6 Research incentives and tax credits.** Visit with your co-op to see if there are financial incentives to offset your investment costs. These are often driven by laws and policies and can vary on the type and size of system.
- 7 Understand responsibilities.** A variety of parties are involved in making a solar project a reality, so it's important to know exactly what tasks and costs you're responsible for.
- 8 Know safety requirements.** Solar is connected to the grid, so it's important that you work with your co-op to ensure you're meeting their requirements to keep the grid reliable and safe.
- 9 Choose a reputable vendor.** It is important to find a reputable installer who will give you realistic expectations. Ask for references, check reviews and ask for third-party input.
- 10 Keep thorough records.** Establish a thorough record-keeping process to retain all data and research you gather.

POWER UP THE SAFE WAY! MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

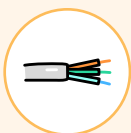
Did you know that electrical fires spark more than 51,000 blazes each year – causing nearly 500 deaths and more than 1,400 injuries? Those are more than just numbers – they're real lives impacted by hazards that are often preventable. May is National Electrical Safety Month, a perfect time to shine a light on the hidden dangers in our homes. While safety is always in season, now's a great moment to brush up on a few simple tips that could help protect your loved ones and your home.



Never overload electrical outlets.



Test smoke detectors regularly.



Inspect cords for damage.



Water and electricity never mix! Keep electrical items away from water sources.

GOT A FRIEND ON THIS LIST? TELL THEM WE OWE THEM!

Grundy County REC, located at 303 N. Park Avenue, Grundy Center, Iowa 50638, is holding unclaimed patronage dividends due to the individuals listed below. The owner may claim this property by contacting the cooperative headquarters' office at 319-824-5251.

If the cooperative does not hear from the owner within six months, we may be allowed to retain this property in accordance with the Iowa law.

Dated May 1, 2025

A

Adair, Bruce or Diane
Aswegen, Daryl or Cari

B

Bauler, John or Marlys
Berg, Paul
Brown, Dianna

C

Curren, Jeffrey

D

Dolezal, Steven

E

Elmaru Farms (Beiner, Ruth)

F

Fink, Verlyn or Betty

H

Halligan, Dennis or Eve
Hanson, Todd or Laurie
Harmon, Arlene

Hesse, Holdings

Hoffman, Michael
Horner, Jared

J

Janssen, Shirley
Johannsen, Bonita

K

Karkosh, Gary or Marlys

L

Luhring, Herman or Shirley
Luiken, Katherine

M

Manci, Mansour
McDowell, Jory
Meester, Donald
Merkle, Robert
or Nicole
Metz, Michael or Sharon
Moreno, Ludy
Mortensen, Kari or Mike
Murty, Scott

P

Petersen, Matt

R

Reicks, Gina
Rewerts, Marcella

S

Sager, Laura
Self, Christopher
or Tracie
Smith, David or Shari
Smoldt, Charles
or Darlene
Steinmeyer, Sheila
Syhlman, Chad

V

Voss, Clarence

W

Willis, Shawn
Wobeter, Curt or Karin
Wobeter, Paul or Paulette
Wrage, Jeff or Becky

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for the 2025
Grundy County REC Member
Appreciation Event!



- Wednesday, Aug. 6
- Fox Ridge Winery in Traer
- 4:30 - 7 p.m.

You won't want to miss this
year's event! Stay tuned for
more fun details.



VOLUNTEERING IN THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Volunteering plays an important role in supporting the communities we serve. It's a meaningful way for us to give back, build relationships, and stay connected to the people and places that matter most. Whether it's helping at a local event, serving on a community board or lending a hand for a great cause, volunteering is one of the many ways the employees and directors of Grundy County REC show our commitment to being more than just a local electric provider. We're proud to be active partners in the communities where we live and work.

Thanks to programs through our industry partners, employees and directors can submit their volunteer hours for a chance to win a donation to present to a nonprofit of their choice. Allyson Miller, Grundy County REC executive assistant and human resources, gives her time by serving on the board of the Grundy Center Preschool and Childcare Center (GCPCC). Earlier this year, she received a \$100 donation check – and her two sons, Isaac and Dillon, were proud and excited to help present it to GCPCC!



Isaac and Dillon Miller present Ronda Kruger, Grundy Center Preschool and Childcare Center, with a \$100 donation.

2025 NOMINATING COMMITTEE APPOINTED

At the April 2025 board meeting, in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, the board of directors appointed the 2025 Nominating Committee.

If you are interested in running in the 2025 director elections and reside in Districts 1, 5 or 7, please reach out to Allyson Miller at amiller@grundycountyrecia.org, and she can connect you with the appropriate nominator.

Nominating Committee guidelines

The Nominating Committee shall prepare a list of nominees identifying each candidate by name, address and the director district in which they reside. The Nominating Committee shall make a good faith effort to nominate two (2) candidates for each director position to be filled at the annual meeting, Sept. 4, 2025. In the event the Committee is unable to identify two (2) candidates for each position who consent to be nominated, the Committee may nominate only one (1) candidate for the position.

The written list of nominations by the Nominating Committee shall be posted at the office of the cooperative not less than thirty (30) days prior to mailing the notice of the annual meeting to the members. For ten (10) days after posting the list of nominations, additional nominations of members residing in the district of the vacancy may be made by written petition on forms provided on request by any member and signed by not less than fifteen (15) members of the Cooperative. Any member nominated shall give prior consent to such nominations whether by committee or by petition.

A list of nominations as selected by the Nominating Committee will be posted by June 2, 2025, and nominations by petition will be accepted through 3:30 p.m. on June 12, 2025.

OFFICE CLOSURE

Grundy County REC will be closed on Monday, May 26, in observance of Memorial Day. Call 319-824-5251 to report an outage; as always, our phones are answered 24/7, year-round.



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

From our family to yours, we wish all mothers, and mother figures, a wonderful and special day!

Happy Mother's Day from Grundy County REC!



5 ESSENTIAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR HOME

BY ABBY BERRY

Every May, National Electrical Safety Month serves as a vital reminder of the importance of preventing electrical hazards at home. Electricity powers nearly every aspect of modern life, but if handled improperly, it can pose serious risks, including injuries and property damage.

Your local electric cooperative understands the risks associated with improper electricity use, which is why we're committed to reminding you to stay vigilant and practice electrical safety not only in May but also year-round.

By following key safety practices, you can reduce the risk of electrical hazards and ensure your family stays protected. Here are five essential tips for powering up safely at home.

1 Be vigilant. Regularly inspect your home's electrical system for any signs of damage or outdated components and replace any frayed electrical wires or cords. The Electrical Safety Foundation International estimates roughly 3,300 home fires originate from extension cords every year, either from overloading, overheating or fraying. If you're relying on extension cords as permanent power solutions, consider contacting a qualified electrician to install additional outlets where you need them.

2 Use surge protectors. Safeguard your sensitive electronics and appliances from surges with surge protectors. These handy devices help divert excess voltage away from your electronics, reducing the risk of damage or electrical fires. Not all power strips include surge protection, so read the product label carefully. Additionally, surge protectors can lose effectiveness



National Electrical Safety Month serves as a vital reminder of the importance of preventing electrical hazards at home.



Avoid overloading electrical outlets with power strips that exceed the outlet's capacity.

over time and should be replaced when damaged or outdated.

3 Practice safe power strip use. Avoid overloading electrical outlets with power strips that exceed the outlet's capacity. High-energy devices, like heaters, microwaves and hairdryers should be distributed across multiple outlets. Overloading an outlet with a "busy" power strip can lead to overheating and create a fire hazard, so be sure to check the power strip's wattage rating before plugging in items.

4 Avoid contact with water. It may seem obvious, but accidents involving water contact with electrical items happen. Always keep electrical appliances and devices away from water sources, like sinks, bathtubs or swimming pools. Make sure your hands are dry before touching any electrical switches or appliances – never handle electrical devices with wet hands. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)



The Electrical Safety Foundation International estimates roughly 3,300 home fires originate from extension cords every year, either from overloading, overheating or fraying.

should be installed in areas where water and electricity are typically in close proximity, including kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor outlets.

5 Educate family members. One of the best ways to ensure the safety of everyone in your household is to talk about electrical safety. Teach children not to play with electrical outlets or appliances and ensure they understand the potential dangers of electricity. Create and practice a home fire escape plan that includes electrical safety precautions in case of emergencies.

Practicing electrical safety at home is essential for protecting your family, property and peace of mind. Remember, electrical safety isn't just a one-time effort – it's a year-round responsibility. Taking these steps can help ensure a safer, more secure home for you and your loved ones.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

HONORING IOWA'S HOMETOWN HEROES

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

Faces capture attention. That's something I learned early in my journalism career when I was trained to take pictures of the people I featured.

I think about this each time I drive through Auburn. As I roll along Highway 71 through the heart of this Sac County town, I see patriotic banners featuring pictures of local men and women who served in the U.S. military. The black-and-white images – some with smiling faces, some with sober expressions – grace the streetlight poles.

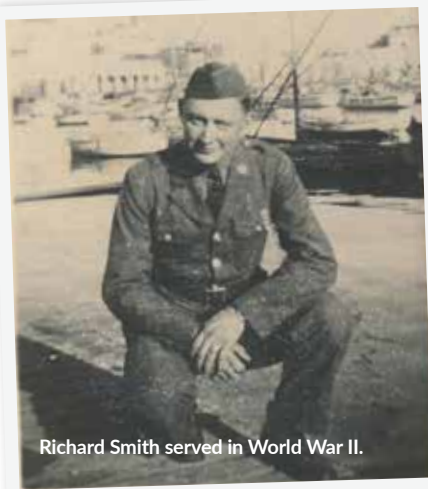
I've always wondered about the stories behind these captivating banners, so I contacted my friend Donetta (Smith) Stewart. For the past 17 years, she has been the librarian at the Auburn Public Library. She's also one of the keepers of knowledge in this small town of roughly 300 residents.

Donetta's uncle, Richard Smith, is featured on a banner southeast of the library. "Dad didn't talk much about Richard when I was growing up," says Donetta, referring to Don Smith, Richard's younger brother. "It was only later in life when I started asking more questions that he started telling me more."

Remembering a life cut short

Richard was born to Frank and Janet Smith on Dec. 23, 1919. He attended country school and graduated from Auburn High School in 1936. The likeable, easygoing young man was farming with his father when the U.S. entered World War II.

As his buddies began enlisting, Richard wanted to join the service, too. When Janet pleaded with him to stay home, he honored his mother's wishes. Uncle Sam came calling, however, in 1941. Richard was drafted into the U.S. Army and completed basic training at Camp Claiborne in Louisiana.



While his Auburn buddies served stateside, training other soldiers, Richard was sent to England and then Africa, along with the Red Bull Infantry Division. Richard was on the front lines when Erwin Rommel (a German field marshal known as the "Desert Fox") launched the Battle of Kasserine Pass on Feb. 14, 1943.

The next day, Feb. 15, Richard was killed in action. He was just 24 years old. "Dad always said that after Richard died, the laughter went out of the house," Donetta says.

After the war, one of Richard's commanding officers traveled to the Smith farm to pay his respects and fill in some gaps. "He told Frank that one minute Richard was there, and the next minute he was gone," Donetta explains.

Honorable legacies live on

Richard was buried near Carthage, Tunisia, in the North Africa American Cemetery, which contains the remains of more than 2,800 war dead. Thanks to dedicated volunteers, including Jane Barto, coordinator for the Auburn Historical Society (AHS), he now has a banner along Pine Street in his hometown.



It's one of 23 banners that the AHS and the City of Auburn installed in November 2024, in time for Veterans Day. "It's important to honor this heritage," says Jane, who was inspired by similar banners she'd seen in Arlington, Nebraska. "There's something very personal about putting faces with the names."

The Auburn banners feature local men and women who served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm. They include Jane's father, Floyd Barto, an Army veteran, and her uncle, Frank Lee, who helped the Allied forces liberate the Auschwitz concentration camp in early 1945. "My uncle said the human suffering was beyond description and wouldn't talk about his war experiences," Jane says.

That's why the banners are so important, she adds. They draw people in and start the conversation about these veterans' stories.


"We get so many positive comments," Donetta says. "Richard and the other local heroes are not forgotten."

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

SAFETY

IS THE BACKBONE OF RELIABILITY



Safety is **#1** at your **Touchstone Energy® cooperative**. This commitment to provide electrical safety has always been our priority so we can deliver reliable energy and peace of mind. That's why safety runs through everything we do.



Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
The power of human connections