

living with energy

IN IOWA

Grundy County REC
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

AUGUST 2020

Grundy County REC announces Annual Meeting changes ▶ See Pages 4-5



Iowa students take top honors for electric co-op documentary

Grundy County REC recaps a successful year

Recipes to use fresh herbs

Visit our website at www.grundycountyrecia.com

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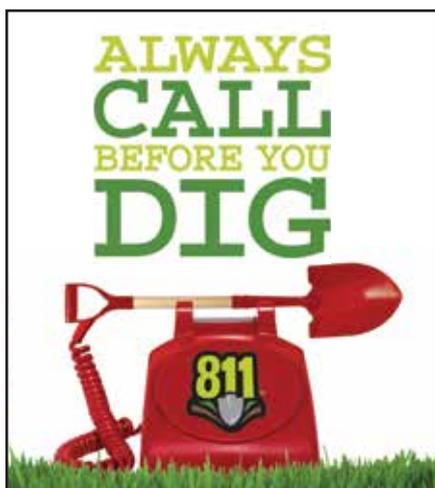
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Features

6 Iowa students break through barriers; take top honors

Five northwest Iowa middle school students are celebrating after winning top honors for their documentary on rural electrification at the 2020 National History Day® national finals.



8 Herbalicious recipes

Fresh herbs can elevate any dish! Co-op cooks share their favorite recipes to use the flavor-packed accents. **PLUS:** Find out how you can receive a \$25 credit on your power bill!



10 Electric cooperatives' commitment to democratic values

In August, the nation marks the centennial of women's right to vote. Iowa's electric cooperatives have served as incubators for the leadership skills that guide co-op-served communities today.



Favorites

3 Statewide Perspective

Adapting to new circumstances

14 Financial Matters

Utility bill assistance for small businesses

3 Editor's Choice Contest

Win a food dehydrator and cookbook

15 Out Back

Memories of baling hay

ON THE COVER



Shining Examples

Five Akron-Westfield students earn top honors retelling the rural electric cooperative story. From left to right: Ben Philips, Hayden Wahlberg, Lainey Schuknecht, Addison Naslund and Josie Jacobs. On Pages 6-7, read more about the students' achievement. Photo by Rachel Rogers, Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative. ⚡

Adapting to new circumstances as we educate and train

BY KATRINA DAVIS

As a new school year is about to begin, parents and school staff have been learning a lot about the complex challenges of providing quality education and ensuring safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), the statewide trade association for your local electric co-op, we are experiencing similar hurdles. In my role as the director of education and training, I manage and coordinate dozens of conferences, trainings and workshops in a typical calendar year, but this year has been anything BUT typical.



One of our top priorities at IAEC is to provide valuable and relevant training and educational opportunities for the employees and directors of our member cooperatives. As we adapt to physical distancing restrictions to ensure safety, meeting face-to-face has become impractical for most of our usual events. But where some may see obstacles, we are working to identify opportunities to deliver necessary information through virtual formats.

For example, our statewide safety department usually conducts on-site inspections and safety visits with our member co-ops throughout the year. During the pandemic, they have modified their usual face-to-face approach and pivoted to virtual check-ins to provide needed safety communication. It's not a perfect substitution, but the virtual technology allows our job training and safety instructors to keep close contact with operational staff at our member cooperatives without the health risks during the pandemic.

At IAEC, we also manage several in-person conferences for various co-op employee groups like accountants, managers, information technology

professionals, human resources professionals, line superintendents and foremen, and communicators during a typical year. Like many other events across the country, these conferences were canceled in the spring and summer of 2020 due to pandemic-related health concerns. As the dates for our fall conferences come into focus, we're evaluating our options to deliver the training and educational

resources in a virtual format as we adapt to our new reality. Maintaining a safe distance between attendees at a conference center is difficult when you consider how to safely serve meals, coordinate breaks and ensure proper distancing in elevators and restrooms. Even something simple like providing coffee becomes a health concern during the pandemic. Managing large groups of people has suddenly become a challenging effort,

as school administrators are well aware.

So, while our circumstances have been limiting for the time being, we are moving forward in exploring other ways to deliver educational resources to Iowa's electric cooperatives. Advancements in technology make it possible for us to bridge geographical and physical limitations so our association members can continue learning and networking as they serve rural Iowans with safe, affordable, reliable and sustainable power.

As you work to overcome challenges brought on by the pandemic, I hope you embrace new and creative ways to connect and learn. I am confident that we can adapt to our circumstances and thrive if we look out for one another and stay optimistic. ⚡

Katrina Davis is the director of education and training for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a food dehydrator and cookbook!



Win a six-tray food dehydrator, perfect for food storage like beef jerky, fruits, vegetables and making fruit rolls for the kiddos. Plus, win an essential cookbook to put your food dehydrator to work with instructions and techniques for drying all the most popular fruits and vegetables, along with meat and herbs. ⚡

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.livingwithenergyiowa.com no later than Aug. 31, 2020. 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 home improvement gift card from the June issue was Christi Eckhoff, Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative.

General manager's and board president's report

As we sat down to write this report, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our world. The ramifications led to Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative's decision to restrict office access to our members and the public on March 17. The need to make modifications to keep our employees and co-op members' health and safety at the forefront became very apparent in the first few days of the virus hitting Iowa. During those unprecedented early days and weeks, we had to change the way we interacted in the workplace and enhanced hygiene protocols, disinfectants and social distancing became the norm.

Unfortunately, the pandemic compelled Grundy County REC's board of directors to make the tough decision to cancel the member portion of our 84th Annual

Meeting scheduled for Sept. 10. With the Annual Meeting canceled, for the first time in the cooperative's



history, members will be able to participate in the director elections via mail ballot. Consistent with our bylaws, mail ballots will be counted toward a member quorum. There will be no other business conducted for the

Annual Meeting.

Safety is always on the radar at Grundy County REC, and every day, our employees commit themselves to the needs of members by building and maintaining our entire electrical distribution system. Our priority is ensuring electricity is safe, reliable and as cost-effective as possible.



In 2019, Grundy County REC maintained strong reliability for our members, achieving an "Average Service Availability Index" score of **99.988%**. We were recognized for an accident-free record of 1,087 employee-hours since Aug. 9, 2018, and received the **No Lost-Time Accident Award for 2019** from Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange.

Grundy County REC and our employees and directors are connected to the community. We teach safety classes in the schools and serve on committees, boards, volunteer fire departments and more. We do these things because we care about our communities and because it

builds stronger communities.

It's an unprecedented time for the energy industry. While we work to simplify operations and administrative activity, we also have our eye on new and emerging technologies – including battery storage and electric vehicles. As these technologies become more popular and readily available, remember that we are your trusted energy partner. We want to help lead this process to best benefit the most members.

The most important connection Grundy County REC has is the one with our members. Our interaction with you is invaluable to our employees, management and elected directors. We will continue to reach out to you, to learn from you and adapt to your needs.

While we cannot gather in person this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please know that we look forward to gathering with you again soon. We encourage you to stay engaged with us through our newsletter, our website and social media. Consider participating in one or more of the innovative energy programs or services we provide.

We will keep the strong connections that allow us to continue to safely serve you with reliable, affordable and responsible energy today and in the future. ⚡

Vicki Daily is the executive vice president/general manager and Norbert Boyle is the board president for Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative.



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Website: www.grundycountyrecia.com

Facebook: facebook.com/GrundyCountyREC

E-mail: vdaily@grundycountyrecia.org

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Call our office 24/7: 319-824-5251

General Manager/CEO: Vicki Daily

Officers and Directors:

District 1: Kevin Pruisner
District 2: Norbert Boyle
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.

NEW HIRE

Snakenberg joins co-op team

Derek Snakenberg recently joined Grundy County REC as an apprentice lineworker.

For the past four years, Derek worked in the electric distribution engineering department for MidAmerican Energy.

He is originally from Sigourney and is a graduate of Wartburg College and the Northwest Iowa Community College Powerline Program. He previously worked as a 1,000-hour intern for Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative in Storm Lake.

His wife Megan works as a registered

nurse for Unity Point, and they are the parents of Laina 4, Logan 2, and are expecting a third child in September. The family and their dog Apollo are making their home in Parkersburg.

Derek enjoys spending time with family and being outdoors. He's also an Iowa Hawkeye and Denver Broncos fan.

Join us in welcoming Derek to our cooperative family! ⚡



Grundy County REC cancels in-person Sept. 10 Annual Meeting



The board of directors of Grundy County REC has changed how it will hold the 2020 Annual Meeting. To protect the employees, members, communities and special guests, and to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the in-person meeting of the membership has been canceled.

Grundy County REC's bylaws require a meeting of the membership be held between Aug. 1 and Sept. 15 each year and an election of the board of directors. For purposes of the election, Grundy County REC will hold a limited meeting on Sept. 10 at 6 p.m. Board elections will take place by mail ballot only. Ballots will be sent to co-op members after Aug. 11, and

ballots returned by 4:30 p.m., Sept. 9, will be counted.

Each year, two or three of Grundy County REC's seven board seats are up for election. In 2020, there are elections in Districts 4 and 6. In District 4, Larry Rohach is running unopposed, and in District 6, David Schmidt is also running unopposed.

In lieu of the traditional in-person gathering of the membership, a business meeting of limited scope will be held. The order of business will be limited to the election of directors.

“Unfortunately, this pandemic compelled the board of directors to make a tough decision to cancel the Sept. 10 in-person member portion of our 84th Annual Meeting,” says Executive Vice President/General Manager Vicki Daily. “There were several factors that went into this decision, including current restrictions, the foreseeable unknowns and challenges to holding a public meeting. Along with considering the health and safety of our employees, members and general public, it was a responsible decision to make.” ⚡

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Official notice of Annual Meeting of Members; mail voting only for 2020

The 84th Annual Meeting of the members of Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative will be held in a modified manner at the Grundy County REC headquarters in Grundy Center, Iowa, at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, September 10, 2020, to take action upon the following matter: The election of two (2) directors of the Cooperative for a term of three years each.

Three-year term (two to be elected)

- **District 4:** Larry Rohach
- **District 6:** David Schmidt

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, and in an effort to protect the health and safety of the members and employees, the Board has decided not to hold an in-person meeting; but rather will complete the election of Directors by mail voting as permitted by the Bylaws and will provide the reports to the members through alternative means.

Members will participate in the director election by mail ballot. The mail ballots will count toward the quorum requirement to complete the Director election. There will be no other business conducted at the

Annual Meeting. We encourage you to exercise your rights as a member and vote. Complete the ballot and return it in accordance with instructions that accompany the ballot. Please contact the Cooperative if you have any questions.

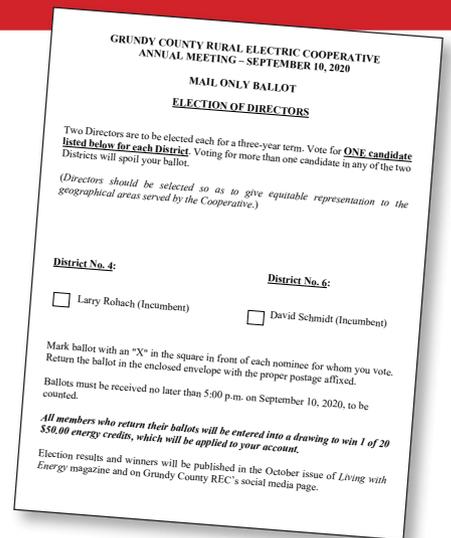
Director biographies

District 4

Larry Rohach – incumbent – and his wife Connie have a grain and cow-calf operation in Black Hawk Township of Grundy County. The Rohachs have four children and six grandchildren. Larry is a member of St. Gabriel Catholic Church in rural Reinbeck, Masons and Farm Bureau. Larry has been on the REC board for 27 years as president, secretary and treasurer, and is currently serving as vice president. He is in his 10th year on the Corn Belt Power Cooperative Board of Directors, and previously served nine years on the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' Board of Directors.

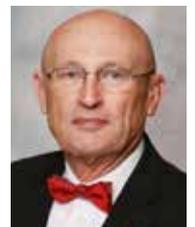


Larry Rohach



District 6

David Schmidt – incumbent – retired 11 years ago from his manager's position at Heart of Iowa Communications Cooperative after 27 years. Before joining Heart of Iowa, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps for 20 years. David and his wife Kay have three sons and 11 grandchildren. He is currently serving as treasurer of the REC Board. David is a member of the Union American Legion and St. John's Lutheran Church in State Center. ⚡



David Schmidt

Iowa students break through

BY ANGELA CATTON

Five northwest Iowa middle school students are celebrating after winning top honors for their documentary on rural electrification at the 2020 National History Day® (NHD) national finals. The NHD awards ceremony was held online in June due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each year, more than 500,000 middle and high school students around the world participate in the NHD program. Iowa sent 69 students to this year's national finals where they competed for top honors against nearly 3,000 other students. "We are proud of our student participants who represented Iowa well on the national level and congratulate them on their achievements," says State Historical Society of Iowa Administrator Susan Kloewer.

Josie Jacobs, Addison Naslund, Ben Philips, Lainey Schuknecht and Hayden Wahlberg, students at Akron-Westfield Middle School in Plymouth County, Iowa, won first place in the junior group division for their 10-minute documentary, "Rural Electrification: Breaking Barriers with the Flip of a Switch." Valorie Philips, Akron-Westfield Middle



This past winter, the Akron-Westfield students met with Ben Philips' great-aunt Wanda Philips. Learning about her experiences was a key element in their research about the history of rural electrification.

School instructor and NHD coach along with parent mentors LeAnne Philips and Arica Schuknecht, provided ongoing guidance to her students during project development.

"What is exceptional about this group's success is that these students have not been together in the same room since the district contest in mid-March," Philips says.

The National History Day in Iowa program has been coordinated by the State Historical Society of Iowa, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, since 1994. Students progress through achievement levels during the competition; however, this year's pandemic restrictions kept the students from showcasing their work in Des Moines and Washington, D.C.

National History Day is a non-profit education organization, which provides a yearlong academic enrichment program that challenges students to research, develop and present papers, exhibits, documentaries, websites and performances about historical topics related to a designated annual theme. This year's theme was "Breaking Barriers in History."

Why rural electrification?

The five students from Akron-Westfield Middle School chose to tell the story of rural electric cooperatives because they live in the heart of rural America and many of them have relatives who remember the day electricity came to the farm.

Lainey Schuknecht, a seventh grader involved in the project, says that the easiest part of the project was selecting rural electrification as the subject because, "We all liked it and agreed it fit the theme well. It is also an important part of history that doesn't get talked about much."

Student Ben Philips, who lives on Iowa's electric cooperative lines, shares, "My family's farm was one of the last ones in Plymouth County to get electricity through the local REC (rural electric cooperative) before World War II started. In our research, we learned that if farms didn't get connected before the war, they had to wait several more years for electricity until the war was over and electrification work started again."

Ben's family farm was originally served by Plymouth Electric



The students were invited to spend time at North West REC's Orange City office. CEO Lyle Korver provided a tour and talked with them about how cooperatives have evolved in their service to members over the past eight decades. Two students of the group are served by North West REC.

barriers; take top honors



Cooperative Association, which merged with two other area RECs in 1998 to form North West REC.

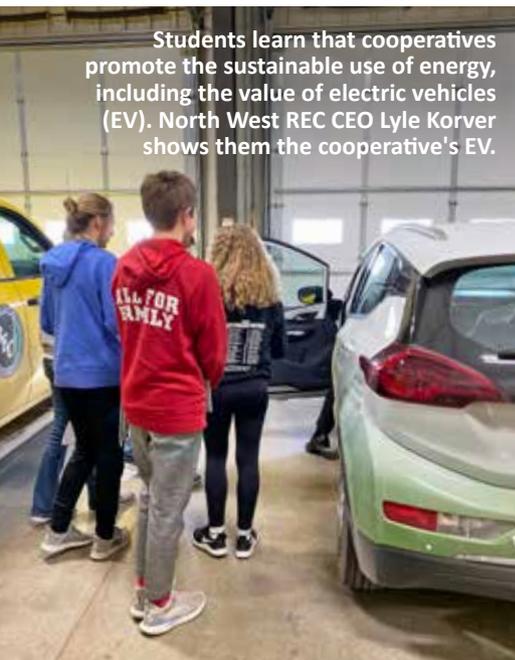
Ben's great aunts contributed to the retelling of the rural electrification story, adding a personal perspective to the work. In the students' documentary, Margaret Talbott and Wanda Philips speak of the physical and emotional impacts they felt when their lives – as young women responsible for carrying out many chores on the farm and in their homes – were made better through the introduction of electricity. The students' documentary opens with a quote from Wanda Philips, "A miracle is something that is resoundingly unusual and wonderful, and all of electricity was a miracle to me."

Seventh-grader Addison Naslund, was impressed that, "Electric co-ops are still working to serve many farms across the country today."

Shining light on the story

In October, the national organization communicates the chosen theme and students must select a related historical subject

Students learn that cooperatives promote the sustainable use of energy, including the value of electric vehicles (EV). North West REC CEO Lyle Korver shows them the cooperative's EV.



IOWA SENT 69 STUDENTS TO THE NATIONAL FINALS

WINNING

TOP HONORS OUT OF 3,000 OTHER STUDENTS

matter. Students must prepare a process paper, which frames the scope of the project in 500 words or less and include an annotated bibliography. For "Rural Electrification: Breaking Barriers with the Flip of a Switch," the group tapped 148 different sources.

North West REC and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (the primary power provider for North West REC) supplied historical photos and resources, such as the book, "The Next Greatest Thing: 50 Years of Rural Electrification In America" (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, 1984). The Iowa students were afforded a special opportunity when American Broadcaster Orion Samuelson agreed to a phone interview. Samuelson, inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame in 2003, is best known for his agricultural reporting. He talked with the students, providing extra commentary to support his videos that the students had already obtained while conducting their research. Samuelson is an enthusiastic proponent of rural

electrification and the value that it brought to rural America.

Wired to succeed

Students compiled their research and assets and worked as a group during school days in the winter. Then, in mid-March, everything changed. Josie Jacobs, a seventh grader, says, "I thought that sourcing the group's research was the easiest part of the project but the most challenging was finishing the documentary. We had virtual meetings once a week and did sources at home."

Hayden Wahlberg, a seventh grader, has prior experience with NHD projects and won first place at nationals with a previous entry. He says, "This year proved much more difficult because we were not able to meet up and work on the documentary together before nationals."

The story of these five young students' success has much in common with the story of rural electrification and the dedicated work of many individuals to bring electricity to America's farms and rural communities. Success can only be achieved when people work together for a common goal. Addison, Ben, Hayden, Josie and Lainey displayed a high degree of dedication that was also evident more than 80 years ago when hard work and commitment broke through barriers to bring electricity to rural Americans. ⚡



Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/DJKHAX34TfY>

Angela Catton is the manager of member relations and development for Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative.

Herbalicious

RECIPES



Summer Herb Meatballs

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 8 fresh sage leaves
- 8 large fresh basil leaves
- thyme leaves from 4 sprigs
- rosemary leaves from 1 sprig
- ¼ cup Italian parsley
- 1 large handful of arugula, chopped
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1 teaspoon coarse sea salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 cups tomato or marinara sauce (choose your favorite)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

Combine onion, garlic, herbs and arugula in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Transfer the mixture to a large mixing bowl along with turkey, salt and pepper. Combine, then roll into golf-ball sized meatballs. Begin warming the tomato sauce. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook the meatballs in batches until they're browned, 2-3 minutes each side. Transfer the meatballs to the tomato sauce and let the meatballs cook for 30 minutes. Serve with pasta, rice or summer veggies.

Kelly Pieper • Wever • Access Energy Cooperative

Bruschetta

- 12 slices of baguette, ¼-inch thick
- 3 roma tomatoes, diced small
- 9 large basil leaves, sliced very thin
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- 6 kalamata olives, pitted and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper

Bake bread on baking sheet at 350 degrees F for 5-6 minutes, turning once. Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl. Spread each toast slice with about 1 tablespoon of topping and enjoy.

Mary Thatcher • Breda
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

Herbed Tomatoes

- ⅔ cup canola oil
- ¼ cup vinegar
- ¼ cup parsley, snipped
- ¼ cup green onion, sliced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme or marjoram
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- cherry tomatoes, halved

Combine all ingredients except for tomatoes in a bowl. Stir well and pour over desired amount of cherry tomatoes (or peeled tomatoes). Cover and chill several hours, occasionally spooning the dressing over the tomatoes. Keeps well in refrigerator.

Doris Redding • Parnell
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

Chive Parmesan Potato Chips

- 1 large red potato, may leave unpeeled
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 tablespoons fresh chives, minced
- ¾ teaspoon salt

Using a mandolin slicer, make long, thin slices of potato. Place potato slices and oil in a bowl. Add cheese, chives and salt, tossing to coat. Using an air fryer set at 375 degrees F, place a single layer of potato slices in the basket. Cook until edges are golden brown, about 20 minutes.

Twyla Godbersen • Arthur
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

IDENTIFYING HERBS

If the stems are tender and green, they're likely to fall into the soft or tender herbs category. Some common varieties include basil, parsley, mint, dill, tarragon and cilantro. Herbs with a harder wooden stem, one you wouldn't really want to eat, such as rosemary, thyme and sage, are generally called hardy (or hard) herbs.

Thai Quinoa Salad

- 1/2 cup quinoa or rice
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 2 celery stalks, finely diced
- 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and diced
- 2 scallions, white and green parts, finely snipped
- 1/4 cup packed, fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 tablespoons stacked, fresh basil, chopped
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 1/2 teaspoons fish sauce or salt to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes, or more to taste
- sunflower or pumpkin seeds

Soak rice 4 hours or overnight, rinse well. Cook according to package directions to create 1 cup cooked. Add to rice bowl the carrots, celery, cucumbers, scallions, cilantro and basil. Combine carefully. In a small bowl, whisk together lime juice, oil, honey, fish sauce or salt, and pepper flakes. Pour dressing over veggie bowl. To serve: sprinkle with sunflower or pumpkin seeds.

Anita Doughty • Ankeny • Consumers Energy

Delish Veggie Dip

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup Miracle Whip
- 1 tablespoon dill
- 1 tablespoon chives, chopped
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon onion, minced
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Combine all ingredients together and whisk until blended. Chill 1-2 hours, enjoy!

Mary Gropper • Chelsea
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

Grilled Rosemary Chicken

- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons balsamic or red wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 frying chickens

Combine all above ingredients except for chicken to make a marinade. Place chicken pieces in large plastic bag and pour marinade over. Seal bag and refrigerate 2-3 hours. Grill or broil chicken until juices run clear, about 15 minutes per side.

Janet Winter • Panora • Guthrie County REC

Sliced Tomatoes with Fresh Herb Dressing

- 4 large ripe tomatoes, sliced
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh chives, chopped
- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- salt and ground pepper, to taste

Arrange tomato slices in a shallow dish. Mix olive oil, herbs, garlic and vinegar. Pour mixture over tomatoes, covering evenly. Top with Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper. Cover and let set for 1 hour before serving.

Laura DeSmet • Larchwood
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

Wanted: Holiday appetizers and snacks The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

Delicious appetizers and snacks are often a favorite part of enjoying the holidays. Share your festive favorites! If we run your recipe in the magazine, we'll send a \$25 credit for your electric co-op to apply to your power bill. Recipes submitted also may be archived on our website at www.livingwithenergyiowa.com.

The deadline is Aug. 31, 2020. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions.

NEW: Please also provide the number of servings per recipe.

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

MAIL:
Recipes
Living with Energy in Iowa
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48
Des Moines, IA 50322-2992

WASHING METHOD

Submerge herbs in a large bowl of cold water and gently agitate with your hands. Transfer damp herbs to a salad spinner and spin dry or spread damp herbs out on a towel or paper towel to dry.

HERB TIPS

USING LATER

Many clean, fresh and roughly chopped herbs can be frozen in ice cube trays, filled with olive oil or water. These individual herb cubes can be preserved for later use.

HERB TIPS

STORING METHODS

Tender or harder herbs require different storing methods to best ensure the levels of light, temperature, oxygen and moisture are balanced to avoid spoilage.

HERB TIPS

Electric cooperatives: A long and lasting commitment to democratic values

BY DERRILL HOLLY AND ANN THELEN



Congress approved the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on June 4, 1919, but it took more than a year for the measure granting women the right to vote to gain ratification by 36 states. On Aug. 18, 2020, the nation marks the centennial of this human rights milestone.

Rural America was built by and owes much of its success to family-run farms and businesses. While fathers and husbands are often celebrated throughout history and heritage, wives and mothers have been full partners in creating thousands of communities. In fact,

electric cooperatives have served as incubators for the leadership skills that guide co-op-served communities today. In Iowa, many female leaders serve as directors, helping to guide their local electric co-op.

Power and partnership

“Historically, rural wives were always isolated and only had interaction with their husbands and children, but they helped run farms and their homes,” says Betsy Huber, president and CEO of the National Grange.

Founded in 1867, the Grange chapters took root as fraternal

community organizations committed to promoting sound agricultural concepts in the North, South and the expanding West.

By the early 1900s, organizations like the Grange were providing rural women with meaningful leadership opportunities and fueling passions for full engagement in public life that included political participation.

Among the farm women embracing the suffragist cause was Febb Ensminger Burn, a widow from Tennessee, who ultimately played a decisive role in earning women the right to vote and forever changing U.S. history.

Between running her farm and caring for her family, she followed



Erected in 2018, the Burn Memorial depicts Rep. Harry Burn of Niota and his mother, Febb, and honors each of their roles in the ratification of the 19th Amendment.



Marchelle Brown
Centerville
Chariton Valley
Electric Cooperative

Director, 2.5 years

“When I first learned of the open director’s seat, I had recently retired from my full-time job and was intrigued by the opportunity. Being a director involves a lot more than attending monthly meetings. I strive to learn as much as possible through educational opportunities to help continue moving the co-op forward. It’s important to me to help bring new opportunities to our members. As a female board member, I can often bring a different perspective on how the services we provide can positively impact our members’ daily lives.”

Sue Shelton White, of Jackson, Tennessee, was state chairperson of the National Woman's Party and one of the editors of *The Suffragist* weekly newspaper.



news accounts from Nashville and was turned off by harsh opposition speeches against ratification in the summer of 1920. In August, she penned a seven-page letter to her son, Henry T. Burn, a freshman representative in the House of the Tennessee General Assembly.

“Vote for suffrage and don’t keep them in doubt,” Burn wrote to her 24-year-old son. “Don’t forget to be a good boy and help.”

With the letter from his mom in his pocket, Rep. Burn broke a 48-48 deadlock by changing his vote to pass the measure, and women nationwide were guaranteed the right to participate in all national elections.

“Voting is so much more than just a right, it is a privilege,” says Amanda Wolfe, an NRECA senior political advisor, who lives in Nashville. “The Suffragettes fought for generations to finally win that privilege 100 years ago, and every time we cast a ballot, we honor their memories.”

Fueling cooperative change

When electric cooperatives were organized years later, many of the same principles honored by rural organizations, including recognition of property rights, were among the fundamental tenets included in co-op charters. Family memberships were vested in heads of households, regardless of gender, and women were among the founding members of



Crystal Pluth
Estherville
Iowa Lakes Electric
Cooperative

Director, 8 years

“I work at a credit union full-time and understand that the cooperative business model is a positive differentiator when it comes to service. I was eager to run for the Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative board of directors when the opportunity came up. As a director, safety for our employees and members is always the number one priority. The seven cooperative principles guide our focus for every aspect of setting the strategic direction of the co-op. I truly appreciate the diverse perspectives between males and females, which add value to discussions and decision-making processes.”

many electric cooperatives.

When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, farm magazines quickly published stories about the news. Maye Shaw of Quitman, Texas, was a former teacher and regular reader who knew life on the farm would be easier with electric power.

She wrote Rep. Morgan G. Sanders for information and persuaded her husband Virgil Shaw to look into

it. By 1937, they both were riding through the surrounding countryside recruiting members and collecting \$5 sign-up fees. Shaw eventually became the founding general manager of Wood County Electric Cooperative, which now serves nearly 36,000 meters and is still headquartered in Quitman.

“Though it was men who signed their names to charter Taylor EMC [in 1937], women have played a vital role in the cooperative’s development and success,” wrote authors of a 75th anniversary book on the history of Flint Energies. The Reynolds, Georgia-based co-op, originally founded as Taylor Electric Membership Corp., has enjoyed an active female membership since its early days.

Beulah Taylor and Ruby McKenzie became the cooperative’s first female board members in 1938 and helped lead the co-op through some of its formative years. Similar stories took place across the county.

Fast forward to 2020, and female directors continue to be advocates for the cooperative business model, which is just as relevant today as it was in the 1930s. Embracing the dynamic and ever-changing industry, these leaders help to guide co-ops across Iowa. ⚡

Ann Thelen is the editor of *Living with Energy in Iowa*. Derrill Holly writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



Rebecca DeTar
Albia
Chariton Valley
Electric Cooperative

Director, 15 years

“I’ve been a member of an electric cooperative all of my life and understood the cooperative business model. I ran for election to see if I could put my experience to work. As a farm wife, I have always been involved in decision-making alongside my husband, and it’s given me a lot of business understanding. As electric co-op members, it’s important to remember that we all have a voice and that co-ops are different from for-profit utilities.”

Minutes from the 2019 Annual Meeting

The 83rd Annual Meeting of the Members of Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative was held at the Grundy Center Community Center, 705 F Avenue, Grundy Center, Iowa at 7:00 p.m. on the 5th day of September, 2019.

The meeting was called to order by Kevin Pruisner, President of the Cooperative, who presided, and Larry Rohach, Secretary of the Cooperative, acted as secretary of the meeting and kept the minutes thereof. The Chairman declared that Attorney Dennis L. Puckett would serve as parliamentarian.

The Secretary reported that the members present in person had been checked, and that the members identified on the attached list were present in person. The members on the list constituted at least fifty (50) members of the Cooperative, and therefore constituted a quorum of the members of the Cooperative.

Introductory remarks were offered by the Chairman, and he introduced the members of the Board of Directors.

The Secretary then presented a copy of the Notice of the Annual Meeting of the Members, together with the proof of the due mailing of said notice to all members of the Cooperative, and such notice and proof were ordered to be annexed to the minutes of the meeting.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the reading of the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Members held September 6, 2018 was waived, and the minutes were thereupon declared to be approved and were ordered to be filed in the records of the Cooperative.

Copies of the Annual Report of the Treasurer had been distributed to each of the members. On motion duly made, seconded and carried, the report was approved and ordered to be filed in the records of the Cooperative.

The Chairman introduced Attorney Dennis L. Puckett of Sullivan & Ward, P.C. who stated that the next order of business would be voting on the election of three (3) directors for a term of three (3) years each. He further

stated that in accordance with the Bylaws, the Board of Directors had appointed from the members of the Cooperative a Nominating Committee consisting of Larry Bakker, Kevin Herink, Paul Selken, Larry Rohach, and David Schmidt.

The Report of the Nominating Committee was read by Attorney Dennis L. Puckett, which stated that the following members of the Cooperative had been nominated for the office of director for a term of three years:

Three Year Term

- **District No. 1:** Kevin Pruisner
Jerry Schipper
- **District No. 5:** Matt Kopriva
- **District No. 7:** Jason Paper
James Gienger

The Report of the Nominating Committee was ordered to be identified by the Secretary and annexed to the minutes of the meeting.

Attorney Puckett next explained that the Board of Directors had recommended a change in the Cooperative's Articles of Incorporation. The full text of the Amendment was provided to the members with the notice of the meeting. Attorney Puckett explained the process for voting on the Amendment. Members were afforded an opportunity to ask questions and Attorney Puckett responded to the same.

The Chairman introduced the Candidates for Directors and offered an opportunity to address the members.

The Chairman then appointed Noel Rewerts, Roy Hassman, Lareen Steppe, and Richard Ruzicka as Inspectors of balloting. The ballots were collected and the tellers proceeded to count them.

The President's and General Manager's Report was presented by President Kevin Pruisner and General Manager Vicki Daily.

Peyton Gingery presented her report on her participation in the NRECA Youth Tour.

The Certificate of the Inspectors of Election was then presented and read, certifying that the following members, having received the higher number of votes cast, had been duly elected directors of the Cooperative to hold office for the terms indicated, and until their successors shall have been elected and qualified.

Three Year Term

- **District No. 1:** Kevin Pruisner
- **District No. 5:** Matt Kopriva
- **District No. 7:** Jason Paper

The Chairman directed the Secretary to annex the Certificate of the Inspectors of Election to the minutes of the meeting, and thereupon declared the above members duly elected directors of the Cooperative to hold office for the term specified, and until their successors shall have been elected and qualified.

The Certificate of Inspectors of Balloting concerning the Amendment was presented and read, indicating that 78% of the members voting had voted in favor of the Amendment. It was declared that the Amendment had received the requisite support for adoption and the Cooperative Articles of Incorporation would therefore be amended as proposed.

Drawings were then held for cash prizes.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned. 🌩️

OFFICE CLOSING



Grundy County REC
will be closed on

Monday, Sept. 7

in celebration of
Labor Day.

Our phones are
answered 24/7.

Grundy County REC 2019 Financial Statements

The board of directors of Grundy County REC is elected by you, the membership, to make sure the cooperative remains financially stable. Every month, the directors review the current financial statements and compare them with the annual budget and financial position of the prior year.

Our Independent Financial Audit, performed by CliftonLarsonAllen, CPAs, was presented to the board of directors on April 23, 2020. The board approved the year-end audit report to officially close the 2019 books. The 2019 Financial Statements to the right provide an overview of the financial performance of your cooperative, demonstrating that 2019 was another successful year for your cooperative.

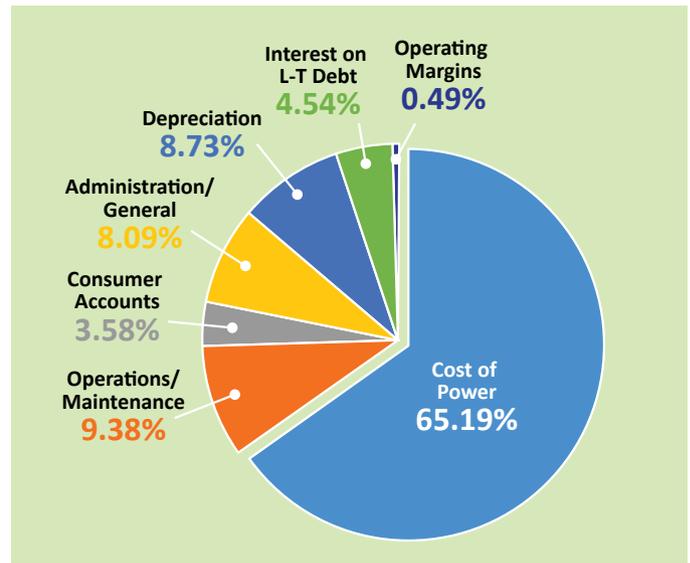
Looking at the bottom line of this report, you'll see that net margins totaled \$550,003 and is an indication of how we are doing financially. Of that amount, GCREC's operating margins were \$38,113 and the remainder \$511,890 are allocations from our power suppliers and other credits and dividends from organization we do business with. It may be up to 30 years before we receive a payment of these allocations which may then be retired to our membership. After we have determined what is required by the Iowa Code, our Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, the directors then allocate a portion to the membership. This type of allocation is a promise to pay in the future, usually around 15 years.

For 2019, equity as

a percentage of assets was strong at 46.56%, continuing to support the cooperative's commitment to make improvements in our service territory that will enhance service to our members. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we deliver energy to our members, and at the end of the year, any over collected margins that remain after year-end are returned to our member-owners. In 2019, \$269,447 in patronage dividends were refunded to you, which included the remainder of the year 2002 and 12% of 2018. Grundy County REC is proud to report that since 1961, your cooperative has refunded \$4,990,981. This is not a claim that an investor-owned or municipal utility can make!

One of the main components of our budget is power costs. Around 65 cents of each dollar collected from our members for their energy bill is used to pay our power bill to Corn Belt Power Cooperative. This means that we operate the cooperative on 35 cents of each dollar we collect. You can see on the chart that these 35 cents per dollar cover the cooperative's operations and maintenance expense, administrative and general expense, consumer accounts expense, interest expense, depreciation expense, as well as an operating margin.

The board of directors and staff work diligently to ensure all auditing standards are followed and all requirements are met. We have a high level of dedication and commitment to YOU, our members, and we look forward to serving you in 2020 and beyond! ⚡



2019-2018 Audited Financials

2019-2018 Balance Sheet

Assets	2019	2018
Total Utility Plant	\$22,162,324	\$21,225,032
Less Depreciation	(5,950,570)	(5,711,117)
Net Utility Plant	16,211,754	15,513,915
Investments & Receivables	4,673,323	4,435,810
Cash & Equivalents	893,004	938,935
Accounts & Notes Receivable	911,445	800,173
Other	255,299	296,257
Total	\$22,944,825	\$21,985,090
Liabilities		
Memberships	\$0	\$16,128
Patronage & Other Equities	10,682,484	10,425,038
Long-Term Debt	11,120,132	10,412,236
Accounts Payable	516,408	697,918
Other Liabilities	625,801	433,770
Total	\$22,944,825	\$21,985,090

2019-2018 Statement of Operations

Revenue & Expenses	2019	2018
Total Revenue	\$7,830,142	\$7,873,219
Cost of Power	5,104,699	4,931,997
Operations/Maintenance	734,602	703,864
Consumer Accounts	280,049	260,870
Administration/General	633,180	608,810
Depreciation	683,749	577,785
Interest on L-T Debt	355,750	339,771
Total Expenses	\$7,792,029	\$7,423,097
Margins		
Operating Margins	\$38,113	\$450,122
Non Operating Margins	61,173	102,286
G&T Capital Credits	429,314	868,039
Other Capital Credits	21,403	21,586
Net Margins	\$550,003	\$1,442,033

Utility bill assistance available for Iowa small businesses impacted by COVID-19

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) recently announced a new program to assist small businesses and nonprofits struggling to pay their electric and natural gas bills due to economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Small Business Utility Disruption Prevention Program will distribute \$14.5 million to provide short-term relief to eligible small businesses. Gov. Reynolds allocated funding for this program from Iowa's share of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump in March.

Applications will be accepted at www.iowabusinessrecovery.com until Aug. 21, 2020, or until funding is depleted, whichever comes first. An eligible business can apply for a grant up to \$7,500 to cover utility bill debt incurred for electric or natural gas service provided between March 17, 2020, and June 30, 2020. The applicant's utility service provider(s) will receive a credit, which will be applied to the applicant's utility debt. ⚡



Eligibility guidelines:

- For-profit and nonprofit businesses with 50 or fewer employees
 - Must have a physical location (non-residential location) in Iowa
 - Have not received any IEDA Small Business Relief Grant funding or any assistance from the State of Iowa Nonprofit Recovery Fund
 - Must be registered with the Iowa Secretary of State to do business in the state
 - Must have experienced a COVID-19 loss of revenue on or after March 17, 2020, that resulted in unpaid bills for electric or natural gas service provided between March 17, 2020, and June 30, 2020
 - A business's average monthly energy use must not exceed 25,000 kWh for electricity or 2,500 therms for natural gas
 - A business must not have incurred more than two late charges in 2019 for not paying their utility bills prior to March 17, 2020
 - Businesses must be open or planning to reopen
- For more information on this program, please go to www.iowabusinessrecovery.com. Contact your local electric co-op for details on your business's average monthly electric use and payment history. ⚡

Memories of baling hay

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

It was late on a June afternoon, with the sun dropping just below the horizon in the West. A farmer with a couple of hired kids was picking up small, square bales from a field near our house. Silhouetted against the radiance of what was left of the sun, he pulled a hayrack, piled high with bales; perched on top, on her hands and knees, was his teenage daughter, holding everything together in a tenuous formation.

Because I never have my camera when I need it, I missed the photo. But I didn't need a picture to ricochet me back into the days when I baled hay.

From the time I was 5 and drove a little AC back and forth along the rows of "The 90" (which, in case you haven't figured out, was given that label because it was 90 acres), to the high school years when the work became more strenuous, baling hay was a part of the summer I actually looked forward to.

The summer of 1968 found me inching down the rows, barely creeping along, as my dad and a hired man picked up round straw bales and loaded them onto the hayrack. Covered by a huge gold umbrella, I knew how to pull back the brake when a snake slithered out from under its straw nest or when a burrow of baby bunnies was exposed. At the end of each row, Dad would hop on behind me and turn the whole contraption around. I doubt using a 5-year-old to drive tractor would fly these days, but I was proud of my contribution to the farming world.

At the end of each day, we'd head to Van Zee Implement in Pella, where they had a marvelous machine that allowed you to drop in your dime, and then thread the glass bottle through a maze before pulling it up and out. Icy cold grape pop was the best when the temperature and humidity were about the same.

As I got older, the baling work became more hands-on. My sister



Amber and I were in charge of unloading each hay bale into the elevator that chugged it up into the barn, where a hapless neighbor boy would stack them. His was a miserable job – a barn interior over 100 degrees. Dust and particles clogging the nose. Hay stuck to a sweat-soaked body. Every once in a while, an angry red head would stick itself out the barn hatch and bellow: "Slow down! You're going to kill me!" and for a little while, at least, we would space our bales a little farther apart, depending on our opinion of said neighbor boy.

I'll never forget the heft of the bale, holding it by its pair of twine bindings, having to rest the bale on one leg, where it thumped

against your thigh with each step. Part of the fabric of my childhood is remembering when the twine bindings were pulled off, how the bale would separate into what I started calling "paragraphs," and still do – my love of reading and writing evident at an early age.

Most bales these days have become the giant round ones that need hay forks to lift them. That's more efficient, I suppose. But there's something to be said for a little girl who was Queen of the Tractor ... for a couple of summers, anyway. ⚡

Valerie Van Kooten is a writer from Pella who loves living in the country and telling its stories. She and her husband Kent have three married sons and two incredibly adorable grandsons.



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