



A WORD FROM

Vicki Daily, General Manager

Grundy County REC is closing the books for 2018 and preparing for our annual financial audit. In the coming weeks, your board of directors will determine the allocation of any revenue in excess of expenditures, or margins, to your electric account. This alloca-

What is patronage, or capital credits?

tion of margins is called patronage or capital credits. It is your share of the margins. The more electricity you use and the longer you are a member, the more patronage you accumulate.

We are required by our lending institutions to meet certain financial performance standards to show that we are financially stable. Each year, Grundy County REC's board of directors review margins and may set aside excess funds. These margins will be used to help keep the electric co-op financially sound and maintain a quality of service as high as possible. The funds will also be used to retire debt and build equity in the co-op's distribution system. Remaining margins will be allocated to members accounts and you

will receive notification of the amount allocated to you for 2018 margins.

These funds are held in your

patronage account until the board decides to retire (refund) patronage.

They evaluate the financials each year and based on our established financial policy decide if, when and how much to retire.

If you have any questions or need additional information please call our office.



Phone payment changes

If you are one of our members who calls into the Grundy County REC office to pay your bill over the phone, please be aware that to protect your information the process has changed.

We take the safekeeping of your personal information very seriously. Therefore, we are moving toward Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance. These are security standards that include not housing member payment information and not taking that information over the phone.

We will offer the option of calling into the office until April 1, 2019. After that date, you will need to make your payment in person or by mail, bank draft or online payment.

In this ever-changing and challenging world of cyber security, know that keeping your information safe is a top priority for us. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at 319.824.5251 or 800.390.7605.



Power cost adjustment for 2019

The cost of electric power from Corn Belt Power Cooperative, wholesale power supplier to Grundy County REC, continued with its decrease in power costs for 2019. This decrease was due primarily to the decrease in wholesale power supply costs from Basin Electric Power Cooperative enabling Grundy County REC to maintain the decrease in the "power cost adjustment" (PCA) on your electric bill for 2019.

To help possibly lower your bill even more, we offer many energy-efficiency programs, including rebates and load control installations, which help reduce peak demand lowering our bill from Corn Belt Power and in turn, lowering members' bills. In addition, if you are looking at a new heating system, by installing electric heat, you will be eligible for rebates and possibly our lower all-electric heat rate.

Give us a call or visit our website, grundycountyrecia.coop, to learn more about how to start saving today.

Farm Bill provision supports rural economic development

The 2018 Farm Bill was signed into law in late December, providing some certainty and stability for the years ahead.

One provision within the \$867 billion Farm Bill is helpful to electric cooperatives as we work to fund economic development efforts.

Iowa's electric co-ops have been working with the USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program, or REDLG. The REDLG program provides funding for rural projects through zero-interest loans to electric cooperatives that they, in turn, pass through to local businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. The businesses repay the lending co-op directly, and the co-op is responsible for repayment to USDA.

Because of the 2018 Farm Bill, electric co-ops can continue to provide financing for projects within and

beyond our service areas. After the current formula for REDLG funding expires in 2021, the \$5 million of mandatory funding that Sen. Joni Ernst helped secure will kick in. These funds will be in addition to the funds typically marked for the program.

This is great news for your cooperative and for the Iowa Area Development Group, the business and community development organization for Iowa's electric cooperatives that provides technical assistance and development services to Iowa businesses and communities. Participating in the REDLG program is a major component of our core cooperative principle to invest in the communities we serve.

In addition, we want to recognize the efforts of Sen. Ernst, who served on the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee, for her tireless work in securing key provisions. We are also thankful to the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and to the



Prairie Energy Cooperative, Clarion, partnered with the City of Woolstock, loaning \$140,000 toward an additional building for the fire department. (L to R): Sarah Olson, Prairie Energy administrative assistant/office manager; Bruce Rhol, mayor of Woolstock; Robert Hisler, Woolstock council member; Todd Foss, Prairie Energy key accounts director

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for their advocacy efforts on our behalf.

Contact us to learn more about the REDLG program.

Would your home pass an electrical inspection?

If you're getting ready to sell your home or just wondering how electrically sound it is, there are some general guidelines to assess the condition of your home's wiring and electrical bones.

Most local codes follow the National Electric Code (NEC). Check with your qualified electrician or building department (start with your city or town) for code requirements.

If your home has any of the following defects, it may not pass an electrical safety inspection:

- New lights and receptacles installed into old wiring
- Spliced wires illegally installed
- Broken or missing carbon monoxide detectors or smoke alarms
- Non-insulated/non-contact-rated recessed lights touching

insulation

- A breaker or fuse that is too large for the wire rating
- Improper grounding and bonding of electrical panels and devices
- Kitchen: Does your electric stove have a dedicated 240-volt circuit? Is the the breaker sized correctly?
- Bathroom: Do the light fixtures in the shower or tub area have a "lens" cover?
- Other rooms: Does each room have a wall switch beside the entry door? Are outlets installed no farther than 12 feet apart?

There are also hallway, staircase and garage code requirements, as well as those for the electrical service panel and wiring. For more about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Home Electrical Inspection:

Pass or Fail?

Would your home pass an electrical inspection? Local electrical codes vary, so check with your qualified electrician, but here are **five things your home should have:**

1. Wiring should be sound (not overcrowded or knob-and-tube wiring used in old homes).
2. Ceiling fixtures should be controlled by a wall switch and not just a pull chain.
3. Outlets near water should have GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters).
4. Your refrigerator, microwave and garbage disposal should each have its own circuit.
5. Your island should have its own outlet.

Energy-saving DIY projects

Make the most of your water heater. If your water heater is warm to the touch, it needs additional insulation. Purchase a pre-cut jacket or blanket. First, turn off the water heater. Wrap the blanket around the water heater and tape it to temporarily keep it in place. Use a marker to note the areas where the controls are so you can cut them out. Once the blanket is positioned correctly tape it permanently in place, then turn the water heater back on.

Seal air leaks with caulk. Applying caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing can save energy and money. Before applying new caulk, clean and remove any old caulk or paint.



The area should be dry before you apply the new caulk. Apply the caulk in one continuous stream, and make sure it sticks to both sides of the crack or seam. Use a putty knife to smooth out the caulk, then wipe the surface with a dry cloth.

Weather strip exterior doors. One of the best ways to seal air leaks is to weather strip exterior doors. Before applying the new weather stripping, clean the molding with water and soap, then let the area dry completely. Measure each side of the door, then cut the weather stripping to fit each section. Make sure the weather stripping fits snugly against both surfaces so it compresses when the door is closed.

Completing these efficiency projects can save you energy (and money!) while increasing the comfort level of your home.

To save even more, contact us for insulation and weatherization rebates.



HELP KEEP ELECTRIC LINE WORKERS SAFE



Be patient when the power goes out. Workers need to work efficiently and **safely** to restore power.



ZONE IN ON SAFETY



Respect **roadside** work crews.



Don't drive distracted.
Reduce your speed.
Change lanes.

1 work zone crash occurs every **5.4 minutes**



70 work zone crashes result in **injuries** each day



12 work zone crashes result in at least **1 fatality** each week



Never plug a generator into a wall outlet in your home or garage. The power that back feeds into the electric line **could electrocute a utility worker** or neighbor.



DON'T post signs on **utility poles**.

Foreign objects can **tear** utility workers' **protective clothing**, which is the first line of protection from an **electric shock**.



Electric line workers **RANK 15** on the list of **25 MOST DANGEROUS JOBS** in America. Help keep them safe!



Learn more at  **Safe
Electricity.org**



Legislative reception held

More than 150 directors, managers and staff members from Iowa's electric cooperatives discussed priorities with nearly 100 state legislators and policy makers at the annual Welcome Back Legislative Reception at the State Historical Building in Des Moines.

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the event in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, the Iowa Communications Alliance and the Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores of Iowa.

In the coming months, the Iowa General Assembly will be addressing issues central to Iowa's rural economy. Beginning with the reception, Iowa's electric co-ops are advocating on behalf of our mission to provide safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible power to more than 650,000 Iowans.

Cooperative directors David Schmidt, Kevin Pruisner, Larry Rohach and Nick Strohhahn and General Manager Vicki Daily met with Senator Annette Sweeney and Representatives Pat Grassley, Dean Fisher and Bob Kressig.



The Welcome Back Reception gives Iowa's cooperatives the opportunity to discuss important issues with the legislators.

New arrival for Niensens

First Class Lineman Karl Nielsen and his wife Brandi celebrated New Year's Day by welcoming their new daughter Kaylee Jo to their family. Kaylee was born on Jan. 1 at 3:35 a.m. and weighed in at 7 pounds, 10 ounces. Karl, Brandi and Kaylee make their home in Grundy Center. We welcome Kaylee to our cooperative family!



Co-op Connections card

Featured Business of the Month

Let Sweets On Main at 542 Second Street in Traer become your favorite spot! Their friendly staff is ready to serve you homemade ice cream, speciality coffee drinks and sandwiches from their 50s-themed ice cream parlor. Use your Co-op Connections card to receive a discount.

Additional area businesses offering discounts:

- 319 Décor & Design - Grun-

dy Center

- Crazy Daisies - Grundy Center
- Natural Grind - Grundy Center
- Stylish Living - Grundy Center
- Tasty House - Grundy Center
- The Landmark Bistro - Grundy Center
- Retro Rooster - Traer
- Traer Theater - Traer



**IOWA CHOICE
RENEWABLES**
your trusted energy partner

Iowa Choice Renewables can provide you with local, trusted energy options. For more information, contact Mike Geerdes, member services manager, at 319.824.5251 or 800.390.7605.

Editor's Choice prize winner

Grundy County REC had a lucky member get their name drawn for the Editor's Choice Contest in the December issue of Living with Energy in Iowa.

Heidi Biersner, Dike, was the lucky winner of a wireless pro weather station valued at \$230. Congratulations to Heidi!



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.