

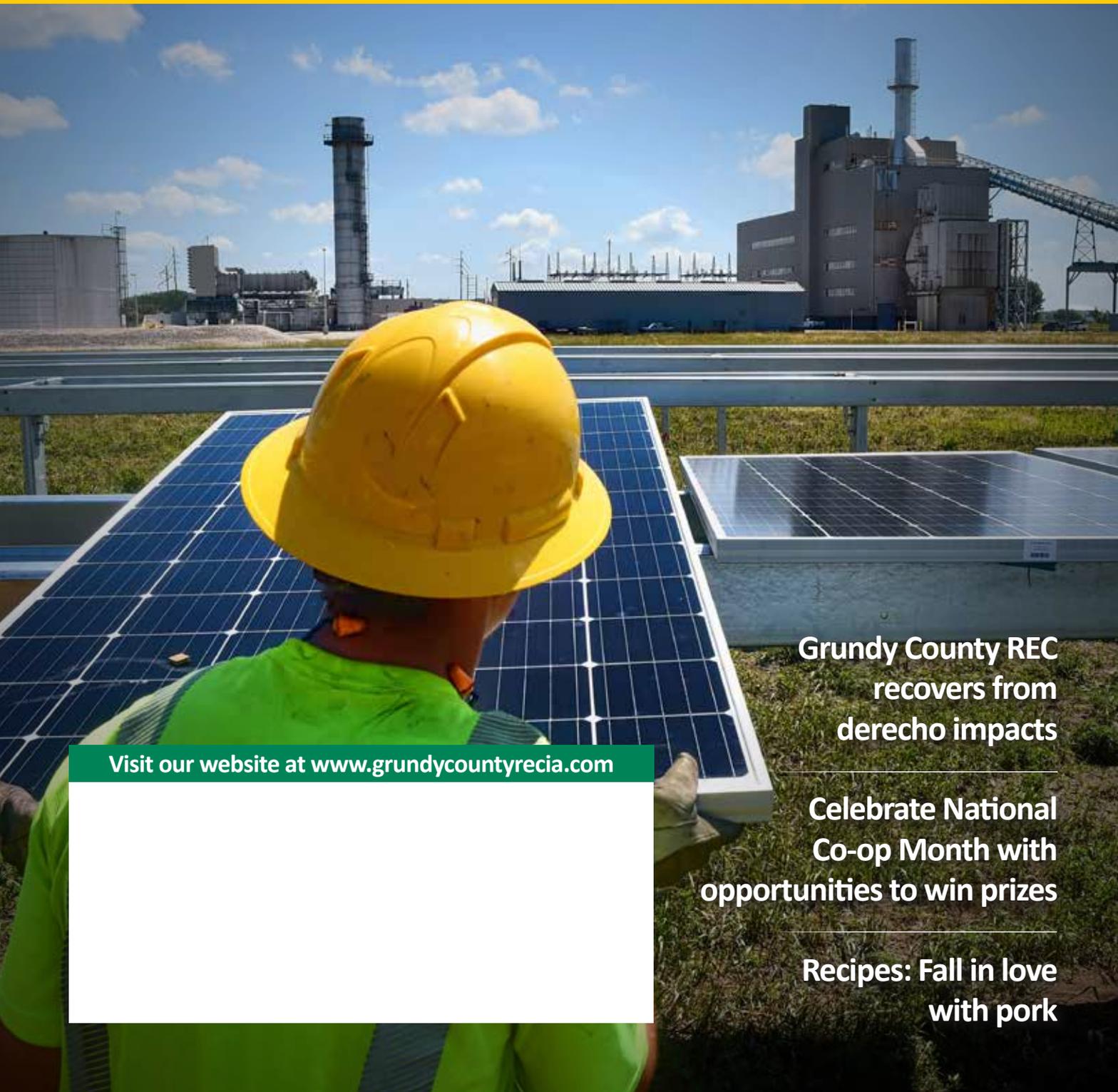
# living with energy

IN IOWA

**Grundy County REC**  
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

OCTOBER 2020

Grundy County REC's annual meeting recap ▶ See Page 12



Visit our website at [www.grundycountyrecia.com](http://www.grundycountyrecia.com)

**Grundy County REC  
recovers from  
derecho impacts**

**Celebrate National  
Co-op Month with  
opportunities to win prizes**

**Recipes: Fall in love  
with pork**

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Our lines are shaped by you, the members we serve.

**October is National Co-op Month.**

**#PowerOn**

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### ON THE COVER



A new single-axis tracking panel is installed at Corn Belt Power Cooperative's new 150-kilowatt solar project at Wisdom Station, Spencer, Iowa. This 600-panel project replaces the space once occupied by the plant's coal pile. Photo taken by Marena Fritzler, marketing director, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. ⚡

# Electric co-op advocates continue working hard for Iowa's communities

BY HALEY MOON

Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives have a long and successful history of working with elected officials and policymakers to advocate for their member-consumers. Iowa Rural Power advocates – made up of co-op directors, employees and member-consumers – are known for wearing the iconic green shirts while attending events in their communities, in Des Moines and in Washington, D.C., to talk about issues impacting rural Iowans. Rural Power advocates work hard to educate elected officials on public policy that promotes rural economic development and supports safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible energy.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the opportunities Rural Power advocates typically attend to engage with candidates for office and elected officials were canceled. Events such as the annual REC Day on the Hill at the State Capitol in Des Moines, the NRECA Legislative Conference in Washington, the Iowa State Fair and countless campaign events were canceled, postponed or shifted to a virtual platform. And like all of us getting through this pandemic, Rural Power had to adjust.

## Advocates adapt to pandemic changes

Even though the methods aren't the same as we're used to, Iowa's electric cooperatives have successfully kept communication lines open with elected officials. Through phone calls and video conferencing, and small socially distanced events at the co-op, advocates have continued to speak up for their communities. Because even though the pandemic has changed plenty, one thing that

hasn't changed is the importance of ensuring electric co-op member-consumers have a consistent voice and a credible message.



## You can be a voice for rural Iowa

One of the most important ways to ensure co-op member-consumers have a voice is by voting. Member-consumers like you know best what is important in your community, and you can help send a message to elected officials that rural Iowa deserves their support. Iowa Rural Power, in conjunction with the national organization Co-ops Vote, is working to encourage voter registration and participation in the election on Nov. 3. *We don't care who you vote for, we just care that you vote!*

In Iowa, you can vote early in-person, on election day or by absentee ballot. Remember these dates as you get ready to vote:

- Oct. 5 – First day of absentee voting

- Oct. 24 at 5 p.m. – Pre-registration deadline; Deadline to request absentee ballot to be mailed
- Oct. 31 – Auditor's Office open for absentee voting
- Nov. 2 – Absentee ballot in-person deadline; Postmark deadline for absentee ballots
- Nov. 3 – Election Day

To learn more about voting in this year's election, visit [www.voterready.iowa.gov](http://www.voterready.iowa.gov) or contact your county auditor.

If this year has taught us anything, it is the importance of community. Our core cooperative principle of concern for community has always driven the work of Iowa Rural Power. Now more than ever we are proud to advocate on behalf of our communities, the people served and the lives powered by electric cooperatives. Follow @iaruralpower on Facebook and Twitter or visit [www.iaruralpower.org](http://www.iaruralpower.org) to learn more. ⚡

Haley Moon is the advocacy and political action manager for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

### Win a \$100 gift card to a local business!



Being a member of an electric cooperative is being part of something local. From the board of directors who guide the strategic direction of your co-op to the office headquarters, everything revolves around serving the local community. To celebrate National Co-op Month, we want to help you show your support for a local business! We're giving away a \$100 gift card to your choice of a hometown business. It will be good for a restaurant, hardware store, gift shop, grocery store, beauty salon or other family-oriented business that's vital to your community. ⚡

### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) no later than Oct. 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 dehydrator and cookbook from the August issue was Ashley Verheyen, Access Energy Cooperative.

# Power On: October is National Co-op Month

BY VICKI DAILY

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide reliable, affordable energy to you, the consumer-members we serve. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich our members' lives and serve the long-term interests of our local community – and this mission has never been more critical than in recent months. One of the seven principles that guides all co-ops is “concern for community.” To me, this principle is the essential DNA of Grundy County REC, and it sets us apart from other electric utilities.

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.” Keeping this



theme in mind, I recognize the essential role we play in serving our consumer-members.

Who would have fathomed in March that the COVID-19 virus would amount to a test of our communities and our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities. Over the past several months, we've all been challenged to operate differently, and Grundy County REC has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

As an essential service, and to ensure the reliability of your electric service, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. Our line crew maintained separation in the office and their vehicles. In the office, we limited and modified meetings and gatherings to allow for safe separation. We closed the headquarters to walk-in availability and curtailed in-person service calls to ensure the health and safety of our employees and our valued members. In addition, we canceled our in-person annual meeting for the health and safety of everyone. We think these measures were the prudent course of action for the times.

For our members impacted by

COVID-19 who needed help with their electric bills, we waived late fees and worked with those hardest hit to make special payment arrangements.

Additionally, the board of directors approved an early retirement of patronage capital to help members that might be experiencing financial hardships from these challenging times. Members received a bill credit in July instead of the usual month of December.

And while we certainly missed visiting with you in person, one of the ways we found to stay connected was by increasing our social media engagement efforts.

I tell you about all these efforts not to boast about Grundy County REC but to explain how much we care – because we live in the communities we serve too.

We've seen other local businesses rising to meet similar challenges during this time because that's what communities do. While the challenges caused by COVID-19 have been daunting, I'm heartened to see how everyone is pulling together.

In 1936, Grundy County REC was built by the community to serve the community, and that's what we'll continue to do – Power On. ⚡

Vicki Daily is the executive vice president/general manager of Grundy County REC.



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# Celebrate National Co-op Month with Grundy County REC

October is National Co-op Month! Grundy County REC began locally in 1936 and continues to be led by local members of our community today – not outside investors, and we are proud to provide energy for all the things you love.

In honor of National Co-op Month, we are celebrating with some fun activities for our members. Throughout October, we will host two drawings, one for our adult members and one for our mini members. Entries will be accepted from Oct. 1-31, 2020, and the lucky winners will be drawn Monday, Nov. 2.

### Member drawing

Want a chance to win a \$50 Visa® Rewards Gift Card? Four lucky, qualified members will be randomly selected to each receive a Visa gift card! You must be a current Grundy County REC member to be eligible.



### How to enter:

1. Stop into 303 Park Ave. in Grundy Center to fill out an entry card; **OR**
2. Visit Grundy County REC on Facebook and participate in the drawing post

*One entry per service address will be accepted.*

### Mini-member fun

Mini-members, ages 3-12, can participate in our National Co-op Month Coloring Contest! One lucky winner will be drawn to receive an Amazon Fire HD 10 Kids Edition Tablet and case and a special meet-and-greet with our linemen! Participants must be the child of a current Grundy County REC member to be eligible. Stop into the office for a coloring sheet or visit <https://www.grundycountyrecia.com/files/coopmonth.pdf> to download a copy.

### Three ways to enter:

1. Email a picture of the participant holding their coloring sheet to [amiller@grundycountyrecia.org](mailto:amiller@grundycountyrecia.org);



2. Drop off completed coloring sheets to our office at 303 N Park Ave. in Grundy Center; **OR**
3. Mail completed coloring sheets to Grundy County REC, PO Box 39, Grundy Center, IA 50638-0039

**To qualify:** All entries must include the name and age of the child, parent name and Grundy County REC account number. Photos submitted via email will be posted to social media; submitting your photo(s) signifies your approval for Grundy County REC to use the photos for social media and marketing purposes. *One entry per qualified child will be accepted.* ⚡

## EMPLOYEE NEWS

# Co-op hires executive assistant



Allyson Miller recently joined Grundy County REC as the executive assistant, where she will serve as the payroll and benefits administrator, human resource contact and communicator.

For the past seven years, Allyson has worked throughout Cedar Rapids and Muscatine in various human resources, customer relations and marketing roles.

Originally from Dike, Allyson received her bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Northern Iowa and an MBA in organizational development from Upper Iowa University. Most recently,

Allyson managed social media and marketing for a local staffing company.

Her husband Eric works for Ferguson, a plumbing distribution center, in Waterloo, and they are the parents of Isaac, a very fun-loving, spunky, curly-haired, 18-month-old. Allyson, Eric, Isaac, Zeus (cat), and Finn (dog) currently reside in Hudson but will be moving to Grundy Center later this month.

In her free time, Allyson enjoys spending time with her friends and family, reading and playing outside with Isaac. The Miller family is excited to return to the area where they grew up and look forward to raising their family surrounded by loved ones, in a great, small-town community. ⚡

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The average household owns 24 electronic products, which account for 12% of home energy use. When shopping for electronics, consider ENERGY STAR®-certified products, which can be 70% more efficient than conventional models.

Source: [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)



# Celebrating co-ops and local communities

IT'S NATIONAL  
**CO-OP**  
MONTH!

BY PAUL WESSLUND

We like the word local.

We like it because it's the nearby hardware store where we can get what we need. It's where we meet friends for coffee. It's the shop where they look us in the eye and smile. It's a word of warmth that makes us feel known.

Local also means your electric co-op. It's as local as you and your neighbors because you own it. It's grown and changed with you, possibly starting before you were even born. Because it's made up of you and your neighbors, it's as unique to each part of the country as you are. And it changes to help out with what's going on in your community, whether that means bringing electricity to farmsteads

80 years ago, providing the community with access to high-speed internet or powering your community through the pandemic today.

October is National Co-op Month, and this year, it makes sense to use this time to recognize and celebrate the variety that is the essence of being local.

That local heritage for electric co-ops started in the 1930s with neighborly visits, often on horseback from one farm to the next, talking about the lights they could see in the city but didn't have themselves. They weren't likely to get those modern conveniences because no company saw a profit in stringing wires to power a few light bulbs in a remote farmhouse.

So, the local farmers took matters into their own hands. They pooled \$5 startup fees; organized member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives; and convinced local politicians to create a federal loan program to help with the rest of the cost. They created what others didn't see: one of the most efficient agricultural economies in the world and communities based around a variety of business and industry, from manufacturing to tourism.

## No such thing as a typical co-op

Today, 900 electric co-ops provide electricity to more than 20 million businesses, homes, schools and farms. They cover more than half the land in the U.S. They employ



From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric cooperatives are proud to serve 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.





more than 68,000 people and invest \$12 billion a year in local economies, contributing \$88.4 billion to the nation's Gross Domestic Product.

They're big and small. The largest electric co-op serves nearly 350,000 members; the smallest, 113.

They're in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. While electric co-ops come from a rural heritage, many of their communities have grown over the decades. About 40% serve counties classified as rural and 60% classified as metropolitan. Another way to look at that variety is by the average number of members served by each mile of its power lines. The co-op with the densest population serves 78 members for each mile of line. The most remote co-op averages less than one person per mile of line.

While those numbers reflect the variety and uniqueness of who co-ops serve, what they do also matters.

### Fewer emissions, more renewable energy

As co-op members became more aware of environmental priorities, co-ops focused on reducing power plant emissions. From 2009 to 2016, co-ops reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 8%, nitrogen oxide emissions by 24% and sulphur dioxide emissions by 66%. Co-ops also launched energy efficiency programs, many offering home and business 'energy checkups' to make sure members got the best value for their energy dollar.

Electric co-ops are helping power the growth in alternative energy. They pioneered the development of community solar, which allows co-op members to participate in renewable energy without the expense and effort of installing solar panels on their own property. Nationwide, co-op solar capacity has more than quadrupled in



the past five years. Seventeen percent of co-op electricity in the U.S. now comes from hydroelectric power, solar, wind and other renewable sources.

Over the next several years, we will see electric vehicle technology transform transportation. Some electric co-ops are making electric cars available to members to try out. Others are working to set up charging stations that will be required for a viable electric vehicle industry.

And now that we're all adapting to the effects of COVID-19, electric co-ops are again on the job as the virus changes everything from the national economy to how we say hello to our neighbors.

Electric co-ops are developing payment plans for people out of work. They're socially distancing line crews. They're setting up drive-in or virtual membership meetings and many are offering virtual energy audits.

The world keeps changing, and electric co-ops will continue to adapt. Each co-op's approach may differ, but they'll do whatever it takes to adapt in ways that make the most sense for the people in their community. *That's what it means to be a local electric co-op.* ⚡

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

## IOWA FACTS

The not-for-profit electric co-ops of Iowa provide reliable, safe, affordable and sustainable electricity to over

**650,000 PEOPLE**

throughout all **99** counties every day.

Iowa's electric co-ops maintain enough power lines to wrap around the equator **2.5 times!**

Iowa's electric co-ops provide power to about 15% of the state's population, yet cover approximately **80%** of the state's land mass.

Iowa's electric cooperatives have helped create or retain more than

**50,000 JOBS**

in rural Iowa.

Each year, Iowa's not-for-profit electric co-ops pay

**\$14 MILLION**

in property taxes.

The electric co-ops of Iowa directly employ more than

**1,200 PEOPLE**

# Fall in Love WITH Pork



## Cranberry Pork Festive

- ¾ pound pork tenderloin, trimmed**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil or vegetable oil**
- ½ cup beef broth, divided**
- 2 tablespoons dried cranberries**
- 1½ teaspoons Dijon mustard**
- 1 tablespoon orange juice concentrate**
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch**

Cut tenderloin into 12 slices; flatten to ¼-inch thickness. Add oil to skillet and brown pork over medium heat. Add ¼ cup beef broth, cover and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes or until meat is no longer pink. Remove meat to a serving dish and keep warm. Add cranberries, mustard and remaining broth to skillet. Combine orange juice concentrate and cornstarch until smooth. Gradually add to broth mixture to skillet, stirring constantly. Bring to boil, cook and stir 1 to 2 minutes. Pour over pork.

**Sharon Cline • Kent**  
**Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative**

## Garlic Apple Pork Roast

- 3-4 pound boneless pork loin roast, thawed**
- 6 ounces apple jelly**
- ½ cup water**
- 2 teaspoons garlic, minced**
- 1 tablespoon parsley**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**

Cut roast in half and place in slow cooker. In a bowl, combine jelly, water and garlic; pour over roast. Sprinkle with parsley, salt and pepper. Cover and cook on low for 8 to 8½ hours. Remove from juice and let stand 5 minutes before slicing. Serve with cooking juices.

**Judy Jackson • Hedrick • Access Energy Cooperative**

## Slow Cooker Ranch Pork Chops

- 4 boneless pork chops**
- 1 can cream of chicken soup**
- 1 package dry ranch dressing mix**

Layer pork chops in slow cooker. Add soup over pork chops and sprinkle with ranch dressing. Cook on high for 4 to 5 hours or on low for 6 to 7 hours. Thicker pork chops will take longer.

**Patty Schurk • Burlington • Access Energy Cooperative**

## Kate's Breakfast Casserole

- 1 to 1½ pounds ground pork sausage**
- ½ teaspoon ground mustard**
- ½ teaspoon basil**
- ½ teaspoon oregano**
- ½ teaspoon thyme**
- 8 eggs**
- ½ cup milk**
- 2 cups shredded cheese of your choice, divided**
- 4 ounces mushrooms, sliced**
- 1½ pound package frozen tater tots (mini or regular)**
- ½ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese**

Brown sausage and incorporate seasonings. Pour off grease. Beat eggs, and then beat in milk. Stir in sausage and 1 cup shredded cheese. Pour into greased or sprayed casserole pan. Sprinkle with 1 cup shredded cheese and cover in mushrooms. Top with tater tots. Cover loosely and bake at 350 degrees F for 40 minutes. Remove cover and sprinkle with Monterey Jack cheese. Return to oven to melt cheese. After removing from oven, let rest a few minutes before serving. Meat and seasonings may be prepared on one day and quickly put together the next morning for brunch.

**Mabel L. Fisher • Sigourney**  
**T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative**

Source for pork facts: Iowa Pork Producers Association

### SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURE

The USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service says pork can be safely cooked to medium rare at a final internal cooked temperature of 145 degrees F as measured by a food thermometer, followed by a three-minute rest time.

Ground pork, like all ground meats, should still be cooked to 160 degrees F.

## Ground Pork Casserole

- 1 pound ground pork
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1½ cups milk
- ½ cup uncooked rice
- ½ teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 1 cup soft breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

Brown pork and drain fat, then add onion. Stir in soup, milk, rice and seasoning. Put in casserole dish and bake uncovered at 350 degrees F for 60 minutes. Mix breadcrumbs and melted butter. Sprinkle crumb topping over casserole and bake until golden brown.

Linda J. McCarville • New Hampton  
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

## Sausage Pilaf

- 1 pound bulk sausage
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- ½ cup green pepper, chopped
- 1¼ cups milk
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup uncooked rice (not instant)
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- ½ teaspoon poultry seasoning
- ½ cup soft breadcrumbs
- 3 tablespoons margarine, softened

Brown sausage and drain excess fat. Add celery, onion and green pepper. Cook until tender but not brown. Stir in milk, salt, rice, soup and seasoning. Bake in 1½-quart covered casserole dish at 350 degrees F for 50 minutes, stirring occasionally. Mix breadcrumbs and margarine. Sprinkle breadcrumb mixture on top and continue baking uncovered for 20 minutes.

Lisa Harris • Akron  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## Hickory Chops

- 3 tablespoons molasses
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 3 teaspoons liquid smoke
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ cup Dijon mustard
- 6 boneless pork chops

In bowl, mix first 8 ingredients into a marinade. Put pork chops into freezer bag and pour marinade over. Seal and refrigerate overnight. Grill until pork chops are desired temperature.

Marci Domnick • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## Sweet and Sour Pork Chops

- 4-6 boneless pork chops
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup vinegar
- ⅔ cup brown sugar
- ⅓ cup yellow mustard
- ⅔ cup ketchup
- rice

In a large skillet, place oil and cook pork chops until meat is no longer pink. In a separate pan, sauté onion and butter until onion is transparent. Add vinegar, sugar, mustard and ketchup. Simmer to blend flavors. Pour sauce over the pork chops, cover and continue cooking about 20 minutes. Serve with rice.

Lori Miller • Alvard  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

### COOK IT LIGHT

Use low-fat cooking methods, like grilling, broiling, stir-frying and pan-broiling to maximize flavor while keeping added fat to a minimum. Marinate for flavor and juiciness, with juice, wine-flavored vinegar or fat-free dressing instead of oil-based marinades.

PORK FACTS

### SIZE OF A DECK OF CARDS

A 3-ounce serving of trimmed, cooked meat is about the size of a deck of cards.

PORK FACTS

### LEANEST CUTS

Use cuts with the words "loin" or "round" in their name for the leanest meats, such as pork tenderloin or loin chop.

PORK FACTS

### SPICE FOR LIFE

Season meats with herbs and spices (other than salt) to boost flavor and cut back on fat and salt at the same time. Rub herbs and spices onto pork before grilling, broiling or roasting.

PORK FACTS

## Wanted: Recipes for Valentine's Day! The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

From roses to hearts, red is the color of Valentine's Day! We're looking for foods our co-op cooks love that include something red as a primary ingredient. Whether the recipe contains a red fruit or vegetable, is a dessert or main dish, the contest is open to your creativity! 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](http://www.livingwithenergyiowa.com).

The deadline is Oct. 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](mailto: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

# Wire-Rama anniversary marks co-ops' longstanding commitment to “Power On”

BY ANGELA CATTON



Right: George Hoffman, Sr. stands beside the main switch box. Pipes leading into the ground carry a plastic cable buried about 30 inches deep. This served as the heart of the entire electrical system.



Above: Dan Hoffman, George Sr.'s grandson, points to the same panel as it was recently rebuilt. The pipes still provide a conduit to the underground cabling that has been updated.



October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways they “Power On.” For more than 80 years, rural electric cooperatives (RECs) have been defined by their mission to enrich the lives of members and serve the long-term interests of the communities they serve.

This month, when we honor a long history devoted to cooperatives and their relationships with those they serve, Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) celebrates the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an initiative to “Power On” a farm in Ida County. The event – the first of its kind in Iowa – was called Wire-Rama and held on Sept. 28, 1955, on the George Hoffman, Sr. farm north of Ida Grove. Today, the farm remains in the family and is owned by Dan

Hoffman, one of George’s grandsons. Dan, who currently serves as an Ida County director representative on the North West REC board of directors, was just three years old at the time of the event. His older brother George Hoffman III was 12 years old. The farm is served by North West REC.

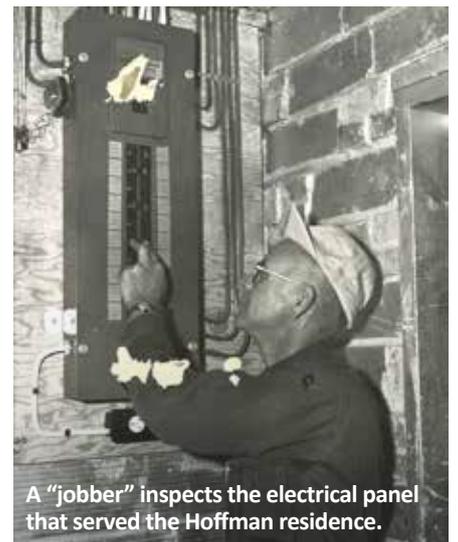
“I remember the promotional marketing,” recalls Hoffman III. “There were brochures and posters that featured Willie Wiredhand. That was really neat!”

According to the November 1955 issue of *Iowa Rural Electric News*, “Wire-Rama translated into language everyone can understand, could be described as souping up an entire electrical system on a farm, including a complete rewiring job, and the addition of new electrical equipment, appliances and a fan, etc.”

## Wire-Rama promotes “modern electricity”

Wire-Rama was the brainchild of NIPCO’s Public Relations/Power Use Advisor Kinney S. Reiser. In his role at NIPCO, Reiser was responsible for promoting the benefits of electric power. Construction on the NIPCO 69,000-volt transmission system had already begun three years earlier but member-consumers in the region were slow to understand the advantages that improved wiring and electrical systems could provide. With farms and homes already incorporating modest and primitive wiring and equipment, Reiser recognized an opportunity to educate and promote how “modern electricity” could further revolutionize mid-century life on the farm, relying on the expertise of their local electric cooperative.

The Hoffman Farm was identified as the ideal setting for the 1955 Wire-Rama. George Hoffman, Sr. was already a heavy user of electricity (about 10,000 kilowatt-hours each month). Hoffman raised and showed cattle and Berkshire hogs. He was interested in improving his operation





The Hoffman farm takes on a slightly different view than it did 65 years ago.

Present day photos by Rachel Rogers, communications specialist, NIPCO

by adding more electric equipment but his outdated existing wiring, installed in 1917, could not handle the increased electric load.

NIPCO's Reiser worked with power use advisors from each of NIPCO's member distribution cooperatives, which included 10 co-ops at the time. Power use advisors (or "P.U. men," as they were often called), were the predecessor to today's REC energy advisors and member service professionals. The group met regularly with Hoffman to plan a system that would meet his needs. Once the layout was finalized and materials list set, they worked with local vendors, manufacturers and "jobbers" (local electricians and tradesmen) to solicit donations of materials and labor. According to the *Iowa Rural Electric News* article, "A favorable reply from the jobbers, as well as offers from manufacturers contacted by them, saw the first phase of Wire-Rama well on the way to completion."

By donating materials and labor to the project, partners hoped to perpetuate the notion of modernizing antiquated electric

systems and electric appliances. Wire-Rama served as a working trade show exhibit for local electricians and vendors to market their services and products.

### Underground wiring stands the test of time

It took approximately one week to rewire the Hoffman Farm. Work began on Sept. 20, with the digging of trenches that would accommodate the underground wiring. Hoffman III remembers that the underground wiring was "really something special" at the time and that many, including his grandfather, wondered how long it would last. Sixty-five years later, Dan Hoffman confirms that much of the underground wiring remains operational today.

A 400-amp capacity service was installed on the yard pole, followed by 100-amp services to several outbuildings, including the family home.

Thanks to these improvements, George Hoffman, Sr. was able to install a 42-inch fan with a two-horsepower motor to keep flies away from his cattle, something he could

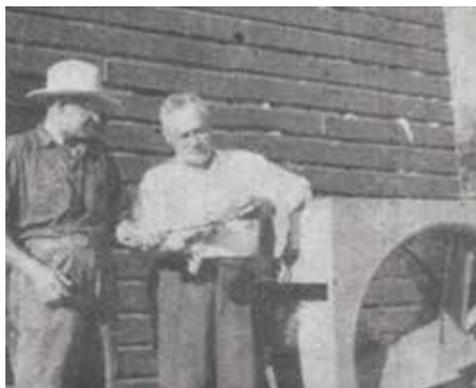


Digging trenches for underground wiring was the first step in an eight-day electrical overhaul of the Hoffman Farm.

not do with his older system. George III distinctly remembers the giant fan. "It was about 5-foot square, and I remember it was red."

In addition, the Hoffman home was upgraded to include new wiring throughout, including a 100-amp circuit breaker panel, all new light fixtures, outlets and electric appliances. Mrs. Hoffman received a modern electric range but, according to her grandsons, insisted that her trusted propane stove be moved to the basement as her backup. ⚡

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



George Hoffman, Sr. (left) and Ida County REC Manager Charles Pullen (right) inspect old wiring next to the fan that was installed to cool Hoffman's cattle barn.



Dan says this fan still works and is in regular use today!

## STORM RECOVERY EFFORTS

# Derecho 2020 – A storm to remember

Derecho – a term many people had not heard of until Aug. 10. Is it a tornado, a hurricane, a thunderstorm, all the above?

As many of our members know, Grundy County REC provides services in rural Black Hawk, Butler, Grundy, Hardin, Marshall and Tama counties. The Midwest experienced widespread devastation and heartbreak in the aftermath of the derecho, with Grundy, Hardin, Marshall and Tama counties being hardest hit in our service territory. The storm has passed, power has been restored, repairs continue, and now the Grundy County REC staff is diligently working with government and organizational officials to complete federal aid funding requirements.

At its peak, Grundy County REC reported 888 outages immediately following the storm. With the quick response from staff, neighboring cooperatives and Corn Belt Power Cooperative, we were able to restore power to all our members by Friday, Aug. 14, requiring more than 1,500 work hours that week to complete

this task! Over 60% of our members in Marshall County and nearly 40% in Tama County experienced power outages due to this storm.

With so much chaos and destruction, we don't want to forget about the kindness and support displayed by the communities we serve, our consumer-members and fellow cooperatives. Without skipping a beat, mutual aid crews were on their way. Along with equipment and trucks, Butler County REC sent six linemen, Prairie Energy Cooperative sent four linemen, and Osceola Electric Cooperative sent two linemen to aid us in power restoration and damage repairs. Our Facebook account was inundated with gratitude and support, thank you cards were

received by mail, and local businesses reached out for ways they could show their support and appreciation.

While it can be difficult to truly prepare for a storm of this magnitude, members are encouraged to prepare an emergency kit that includes:

- A three-day supply of water. It is recommended to have one gallon of water per day per person
- Tools: Flashlight, batteries, manual can opener, hand radio
- First-aid kit with necessary medications
- Non-perishable food items

As always, please call Grundy County REC at 319-824-5251 to report outages and damage to lines and poles. ⚡



### Damage as of Aug. 31:

Poles	37
Transformers	26
Crossarms	12

## HOW YOUR CO-OP WORKS

## Grundy County REC 2020 annual meeting recap

Board President Norb Boyle called the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative to order. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's annual meeting was held differently. For health and safety reasons, it was in the best interest of our consumer-members and employees to cancel our in-person meeting.

In accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the business meeting was conducted to complete director elections. The needed quorum of 50 was established through the return of 453 mail-in ballots.

Parliamentarian Dennis Puckett, attorney with Sullivan & Ward, conducted the director election process. The following directors were re-elected

to three-year terms:

- Incumbent Larry Rohach, District 4
- Incumbent David Schmidt, District 6

A drawing for \$50 energy credits was held, and the following 20 members won:

- Asher Valley Farms
- Donna Banes
- William Bertram
- Fred Burmester
- Paul Cooley
- Barry Ehrig
- Gary Hillmer
- Jason Hemann
- Denise Isaacson
- Sandra Krenz
- Douglas Lutes

- Terry Matney
- Samuel McAllister
- Austin McCalley
- James Miller
- Melinda Sharff-Eggers
- Leonard Raum
- Tim Tyler
- Dan Vesely
- Arlene Wrage

Following the business meeting, the board reorganizational meeting was held with the following slate of officers elected:

- Larry Rohach, president
- Jason Paper, vice president
- Nick Strohbehn, secretary
- Kevin Pruisner, treasurer
- Matt Kopriva, assistant secretary & treasurer ⚡



Butler County REC lineworkers, pictured from left to right – Tyler Retterath, Tyler Aukes, Clint Deutsch, Tanner Wangsness, Joel Noelting and Craig Ohloff.



Grundy County REC employee – Scott Kuiper.



Grundy County REC lineworkers, pictured from left to right – Tony Sienknecht and Erik Freese.



Grundy County REC lineworkers, pictured from left to right – Aaron Bird, Derek Snakenberg, Karl Nielsen, Rhett Lammers.



Osceola Electric Cooperative lineworkers, pictured from left to right – Max Eddy and Judd Rosenboom.



Prairie Energy Cooperative lineworkers, pictured from left to right – Matt McDermott, Scott Muhlenbruch and Kevin Rotschafer. Not pictured: Austin Codner.

*“There was extensive damage in parts of our service territory from the derecho. With mutual aid assistance from three Iowa cooperatives and our hardworking, dedicated employees, we quickly and safely restored power to our consumer-members.”*  
 – Vicki Daily, general manager/EVP, Grundy County REC

*“We saw the power and significance behind ‘cooperation among cooperatives’ in this storm’s aftermath. Having mutual aid crews arrive as quickly as they did was a huge help in getting our members’ power back on. As line foreman, I am so proud of the Grundy REC crews who worked quickly and safely to restore power and repair damage.”*  
 – Tony Sienknecht, line foreman, Grundy County REC

EMPLOYEE NEWS

# Brophy joins co-op team



**Jeff Brophy** recently joined Grundy County REC as the manager of finance and administration, where he will manage and direct

the daily financial and administrative duties.

Jeff earned his bachelor’s degree in accounting from Buena Vista University. He also completed the Management Internship Program

(MIP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. MIP is a comprehensive and intensive university-based leadership development program to equip cooperative leaders with the skills, concepts and ideas to help their organizations achieve sustained success.

For the past 20 years, Jeff has been involved with the electric industry in the capacity of auditing rural electric cooperatives in Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota as well as holding the positions of office manager and

vice president of finance at two cooperatives in Iowa.

His wife Tammy is a middle school reading and language arts teacher in the Jefferson school district. They have four children ranging in age from 28 to 19, and four grandchildren. They are currently looking for housing in our service territory.

In his free time, Jeff enjoys spending time with family and friends. The Brophy family is excited to become a part of the community. ⚡

# Electrifying end-use appliances

Many of the everyday appliances in your home have the potential to be powered by electricity instead of gas, propane or any other type of fossil fuel. Switching over to electric appliances and technologies can help you save money over time in power and maintenance costs.

Four major electric technologies around the home are changing the way we use energy:



## Electric induction stove tops

New induction stove tops can now warm up more quickly than gas stoves, can heat pans more evenly than before and are much more efficient than older versions of electric resistance stoves. Induction stove tops require specific pots and pans to be compatible with the stove top. The prices for electric stove tops have also declined in recent years, making most of them on par with the cost of gas stove tops.

## Electric water heaters

A hybrid heat pump water heater is another option to electrify an appliance in your home and is much more efficient than a traditional electric water heater. Hybrid heat pump water heaters generally save money since they use energy more efficiently than gas-powered water heaters. Households can potentially save hundreds of dollars per year, while also not having to worry about



Photo Credit: A.O. Smith

any combustion safety issues.

Another key feature of the electric water heater is that it can serve as a battery by storing thermal energy. Water heaters can retain their heat for hours, which means owners can power water heaters at night when electricity may be cheaper.



## Electric lawn mower

Instead of using gasoline to power your lawn mower, consider a battery-powered mower, which doesn't expel exhaust fumes or require engine maintenance. Battery-powered mowers start instantly and are quieter to operate. Although most battery-powered mowers cost more upfront, the savings can be recouped over time by not needing to pay for engine maintenance or fuel.

Photo Credit: Ford Motor Company



## Electric vehicles

Electric vehicle technology is changing quickly, with prices now becoming on par with gasoline-fueled vehicles over the long term. While there are luxury options like Tesla, there are many other manufacturers coming out with more affordable hybrids, especially for used cars. Electric vehicles also reduce exhaust emissions, which can improve air quality on a larger scale. ⚡

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# Driving us over the edge

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

Being quarantined with those nearest and dearest to us has brought out the best and the worst characteristics in everyone. The joys and sweetness were amplified; the most grating and obnoxious characteristics were magnified. It was those everyday annoyances that drove us to the edge. And what made it more vexing is that my family acted as if they had never heard these things ... as if I were giving them newspaper headlines in announcing them:

- **Hear Ye! Hear Ye!** You can use a bath towel more than once if you're clean! I know this is a revelation to many in my family, but if you get out of a shower and you've just scrubbed yourself, that towel is not going to be dirty. If you hang it up, you can re-use it! But once you fling it on the floor, it will turn into a moofy, mildewy-smelling lump.
- **This Just In!** It helps no one if you eat the last snack cake, the last cup of cereal, the last couple chips, and then put the box back! Just as bad: leaving 1/8-inch of orange juice so that you don't look like a pig who just drank the rest of the carton. Face it: You did drink the rest of the carton. Own it.
- **Breaking News!** Those items placed on the stairs aren't there for decoration or for you to trip over. They are meant to go up and be put away. Reverse the process for items at the top of the steps. Isn't that a novel idea?
- **I Know This is Hard to Believe!** Mom doesn't know where your boots/book/car keys/screwdriver/measuring tape is! And you know why she doesn't know? Because she hasn't worn/pocketed/used them!
- **Take Note!** There is no laundry category for "placing the item on



top of the clothes hamper!" It can be in the hamper (preferable state) or on the floor, but no one knows what to do with something on top of the hamper. Give it the sniff test and make a decision.

- **Be Warned!** When a responsible adult-type person is on the phone or a Zoom meeting, do not ask them stupid questions about where the aforementioned keys are. Unless there is blood or smoke, do not disturb said Person.
- **You Heard It Here First!** Moms really don't like to be "mooed" at. What do I mean? That long, mooing "Moooooooom" thing kids do (incessantly) when they want your attention wears on the nerves and frays the temper. I know, it sounds incredible, but moms and grandmas really don't like it.

- **It Confounds Science!** Studies say people can go weeks without food, but grandchildren seem to need snacks 10 minutes after a meal. And 20 minutes. And an hour.
- **Who Knew?** Once the toilet paper gets down to the cardboard roll, it needs to be replaced. Amazing, no?

In a world where we were scared of a pandemic, what annoyed many of us the most was not being required to wear a mask or having to sanitize everything we touched. It was the habits of those we were ready to take a letter opener to, even though we loved them more than anything. Except when they leave an empty egg carton in the fridge. 🚩

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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