

● JULY 2024

Iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



2024 scholarship winners announced

Federal energy policy threatens reliability

Summer dessert recipes

Special Insert: 2024 Annual Meeting of Members information and annual report

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Jacob Holck, whose family are North West REC member-consumers, for supplying this month's cover image of tornado damage in Greenfield. He is also a former Iowa Youth Tour participant. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100! Holck donated his prize to relief efforts in Greenfield.

REFLECTING ON A COOPERATIVE CAREER

BY CHUCK SODERBERG



Do you remember what you were doing in July of 1979? That's when my electric cooperative career began 45 years ago. When I

started working for Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) in the summer of '79, I had just graduated from college and was so excited to start my first job. I didn't know much about the electric industry, but I soon learned how complicated it is to provide reliable, affordable power to the member-owners of Iowa's electric cooperatives.

Over the years, many have asked what keeps me up at night. My answer is simple: This is not the time to restrict the use of any generation source to produce electricity. The electric industry must be allowed to use all resources to produce reliable, affordable electricity. This must include the use of coal, natural gas, nuclear and weather-dependent renewable resources such as wind and solar. An "all-of-the-above" strategy is the only way to meet the growing electricity needs of this country. Read more on Pages 6-7 of this issue.

Leading the statewide association

In my role as executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) for the past nine years, I have been blessed to help bring electricity to those less fortunate. Through IAEC's participation in National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International projects in 2019 and just last month, Iowa's electric cooperatives have helped two rural Guatemalan villages receive electricity for the very first time. This transformation will improve their lives in fundamental ways for generations.

At IAEC, I have also worked to bolster our member co-ops' cybersecurity



Photos courtesy of Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative

defenses, as cyberattacks are now an ever-present threat in the electric industry. Iowa's electric cooperatives have made great strides over the last four years, and the electric industry must remain vigilant in this area.

An honor serving co-op members

On July 31, I will retire after serving for 36 years at NIPCO and nine years at IAEC. It has been an honor to serve you in these roles. IAEC is in great hands as the board of directors' leadership is second to none. The staff at IAEC work

tirelessly to serve you, the electric cooperative member-owners.

I always tell my family to enjoy the journey of life. God has blessed me greatly, and I am excited for what lies ahead. Now, it's time for me to shift gears and enjoy the rest of my journey. During my retirement, I will always have one eye on the electric industry while the other eye will be focused on my faith, family and friends.

Chuck Soderberg is the retiring executive vice president and general manager for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN AN ELECTRIC PRESSURE WASHER!

The Craftsman 1,900 MAX PSI Electric Cold Water Pressure Washer is durable, mobile and powerful enough for outdoor cleaning tasks. With three nozzles, including a turbo nozzle, you have the accessories you need to wash your car or clean your back patio. The pressure washer gun has an integrated soap tank for cleaning with soap.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than July 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of \$100 in beef certificates from the May issue was David Tallon, a Harrison County REC member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY JULY 31!

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 2	Access Energy Cooperative 86th Anniversary
JULY 4	Office closed for Independence Day
JULY 9	Annual Meeting voting materials mailed
JULY 9	Director election online voting available
JULY 18	Board meeting
AUG. 5	4:30 p.m. online voting closes
AUG. 6	5 p.m. Annual Meeting of Members
AUG. 15	Board meeting
SEPT. 2	Office closed for Labor Day

You can access your account information at any time using SmartHub on our website at www.accessenergycoop.com or through the SmartHub app for mobile devices. Use SmartHub to report outages to save time and ensure that it goes directly into our system to notify us. You can also call our office at 866-242-4232 for account information or to report service-related concerns.



Access Energy Cooperative is dedicated to exceeding members' expectations for safe, reliable and efficient service, while being a good citizen in our communities.

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BASICS OF POWER RESTORATION

BY KEVIN WHEELER



Every one of us wishes power outages did not happen, and when they do happen, power would come back on immediately. We all rely so heavily

on electricity, there is simply never a good time to be without it. We appreciate hearing members' questions about power outages. So, I would like to shed light on the restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes.

1 We need you. When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or a small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out.

Call us at 866-242-4232, report it on our website at www.accessenergycoop.com or use our SmartHub app on your mobile device.

2 Our employees might be affected, too. Because Access Energy Cooperative is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve, our employees are also local. They are your neighbors, friends and community volunteers. When you're without power, our people might be, too.

3 It's a team effort. When the power goes out, our employees work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.

4 We assess the situation first. Every outage is different. We don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced until we get to the outage location. We first need to see what happened, then figure out what materials are needed and put together a plan for how to fix the problem.

5 Restoration generally follows a prioritization schedule.

Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues. The next step is

generally to concentrate on work that impacts the largest number of people.

6 Our employees face many dangers. In addition to working around high-voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for wild animals, weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving cars. If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please do so slowly.

7 Flickering lights are a good thing. Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages. In fact, "blinks" are a positive thing. They indicate that our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs in lines. Do call our office for ongoing blink issues.

8 Be prepared with a backup plan. We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a backup plan. We don't generally know how long restoration efforts will take.

9 Our employees are human. If you see our trucks in a restaurant parking lot while your power is out, know that sometimes our employees work long, hard hours during outages and, for their safety, may need to take time out for a break and to eat and refuel their bodies.

10 Sometimes it's a waiting game. Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power.

Kevin Wheeler is the general manager/CEO of Access Energy Cooperative.

ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE 2024 SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED

Congratulations to area high school students recently named recipients of the 2024 Access Energy Cooperative scholarship program! Each received a \$1,500 award.

Access Energy Cooperative awards six \$1,500 scholarships each year, two in each of its three districts. The applicants' parents or guardians must be members of Access Energy Cooperative. Winners are chosen based on their academics, achievements, community involvement and a submitted application with a few electric industry-related questions.



Caden Allison, son of Joshua and Carisa Allison, plans to attend Iowa Lakes Community College and focus on construction management.



Addison McGehearty, daughter of Tom and Angie McGehearty, plans to attend Wartburg College to pursue a business degree.



Grace Van De Berg, daughter of Travis and Christine Van De Berg, will begin her degree in elementary education at Southeastern Community College and continue her education at Mount Mercy.



Chloe Frescoln, daughter of Richard and Kathy Frescoln, plans to attend Northeast Iowa Community College to pursue a career in nursing.



Drake Landau, son of Brent and Chelsea Landau, plans to attend Kirkwood College to study CNC machining technology.



Taryn Havener, daughter of Todd and Danielle Havener, plans to attend Southeastern Community College.

STUDENTS GAIN HANDS-ON LEARNING IN "BUILD MY FUTURE" EVENT

Access Energy Cooperative, assisted by employees from Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative (Northeast Power), interacted with seventh grade students from southeast Iowa in the 2024 Build My Future event in Burlington.

The 2023 community impact award-winning event was brought back by the Southeast Iowa Builders Association (SEIBA) to offer hands-on construction-related activities for students interested in careers in the trade industry. More than 1,200 students participated in a variety of activities throughout the day, including those available at the Access Energy Cooperative/Northeast Power station, where students tried on safety equipment, experienced tools and equipment used by a lineworker, and opened and closed breakers in a simulated electrical environment.



Laramie River Station. Photo Source: Basin Electric Cooperative

SOUNDING THE ALARM: FEDERAL ENERGY POLICY THREATENS ELECTRIC RELIABILITY

BY CHUCK SODERBERG

Those of us who work in the electric utility sector are deeply concerned how federal energy policy is threatening electric reliability for the families, businesses and communities we serve. It's time to sound the alarm and raise awareness of how these misguided mandates will negatively impact our country.

In April, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its final Power Plant Rule, which includes four major environmental regulations. One regulation under Section 111 of the Clean Air Act (also known as the Greenhouse Gas Rule) will limit emissions from existing coal and new natural gas power plants. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) stands with the Iowa Attorney General, the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) and the Iowa Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) in opposing these regulations on

the grounds that they are unlawful, unrealistic and unachievable.

The EPA's Power Plant Rule requires existing coal and natural gas generation facilities to deploy carbon capture and sequestration at a level that is not yet achievable or commercially viable. The other three regulations in the rule tighten already stringent standards for mercury and air toxins and wastewater and impose additional burdensome requirements on legacy coal ash sites.

Policy targets always-available generation

Specifically, the Power Plant Rule will force the early closure of "always-available" electric generation sources and limit the construction of new natural gas plants as our nation's economy will require more electric generation in the years ahead. Existing coal-fueled units that plan to operate past 2032 and until 2039

must co-fuel with natural gas at a 40% rate starting in 2030.

To operate past 2039, existing coal-fueled plants must capture or avoid 90% of their carbon emissions by 2032. The Power Plant Rule also requires the same 90% carbon capture or avoidance for new natural gas plants operating at baseload (above a 40% capacity factor). These new standards will impact electric utilities' abilities to economically and reliably replace lost coal generation.

These reckless regulations are not based in reality and pose an immediate threat to the electric grid and will negatively impact electric reliability here in Iowa. We are sounding the alarm that these EPA mandates will drastically diminish electric cooperatives' ability to provide dependable power when our member-consumers need it most.



Leland Olds Station. Photo Source: Basin Electric Power Cooperative



Walter Scott, Jr. Energy Center. Photo Source: Central Iowa Power Cooperative



Earl F. Wisdom Generating Station. Photo Source: Corn Belt Power Cooperative

Jeopardizing affordable and reliable electricity

With the Power Plant Rule, the EPA is overreaching its legal boundaries, disregarding practicality and endangering national energy security. These new mandates jeopardize affordable and reliable electricity by forcing the premature closure of “always-available” power plants while also making it harder to permit, site and build critical new generation facilities. As electric demand increases each year, replacing dispatchable electric generation sources like coal and natural gas with intermittent power sources like solar and wind is a recipe for disaster.

We support an “all-of-the-above” electric generation strategy that prioritizes reliability.

Iowa’s electric utilities are not alone in our concern. In filing joint comments on the proposed EPA Power Plant Rules back in 2023, Iowa’s OCA and the IUB expressed the following opposition to the mandates:

“The proposed rules treat reliability as merely one of many considerations and do a poor job in making that consideration.” ... “The proposed rules are rushed, the record does not meaningfully consider the impact of this truly essential service, and

EPA myopically pursues a narrow goal at the expense of larger societal benefits like life, heat, and jobs.”

National utility trade associations – including the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Edison Electric Institute and the American Public Power Association – and a coalition of 27 attorneys general, including Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird, have filed separate lawsuits in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, petitioning for review of the EPA’s Power Plant Rule and to stay the rule while the Court decides the motion.

Risk of insufficient power resources

Additionally, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) has noted this growing capacity shortfall, which has resulted from the reduction in reliable electric generation and the increase in electric demand. In its 2024 Summer Reliability Assessment, NERC warns that there is an elevated seasonal risk for several regions of the country, including parts of the Midwest. This means there is potential for insufficient operating reserves – which can translate into rolling power outages – in above-normal peak conditions. And in 2023, NERC

listed energy policy as the highest significant risk to grid reliability.

Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a regional transmission operator that covers parts of western Iowa, warns that the EPA’s rule poses reliability risks.

“SPP is concerned that limited technological and infrastructure availability and the compliance time frame will have deleterious impacts including the retirement of, or the decision not to build, thousands of megawatts of baseload thermal generation.”

Iowa’s economy can’t succeed without reliable electricity, and the EPA cannot ignore growing reliability challenges at this critical time for our nation’s energy future. The EPA must follow the law and set realistic standards based on technology that has been adequately demonstrated and is achievable. With the Power Plant Rule, the EPA has set an unworkable timeframe in violation of the Clean Air Act and Supreme Court decisions.

Federal energy policy has now become a major threat to electric reliability and it’s time to take a stand and sound the alarm to protect the Iowans we serve.

Chuck Soderberg is the executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.



Summer DESSERTS

KIWI PIE

- 1½ cups vanilla wafers, finely crushed (36 wafers)
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ cup butter, melted
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- ½ cup cold water
- 8 ounces plain yogurt
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 16-ounce carton whipped topping
- 3 kiwis, peeled and sliced

In a mixing bowl, combine crushed wafers, cinnamon and butter. Press onto bottom and sides of 9-inch pie plate. Chill for 1 hour. In a small pan, soften gelatin in cold water. Cook and stir over medium heat until gelatin is dissolved. Cool this mixture. Beat together yogurt, sugar and lemon juice, then stir in the cooled gelatin. Chill until partially set, stirring occasionally. Fold whipped topping into gelatin mixture. Line the bottom and sides of the chilled crust with two sliced kiwis and place whipped topping/gelatin mixture on top. Cover and chill several hours, or until set. Garnish with sliced kiwi before serving.

Mary Thatcher • Breda
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

RHUBARB PUDDING

- 1 heaping cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups sugar, divided
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon butter, softened
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 3 cups fresh or frozen rhubarb
- a few pieces butter
- 1 cup boiling water

Mix flour, baking powder, salt, ½ cup sugar and baking soda. Cut in softened butter, then add buttermilk and stir. Pour mixture into greased 9x13-inch pan and top with rhubarb. Sprinkle 1 cup sugar, dot with butter and pour boiling water over top. Bake at 350 degrees F for 35-45 minutes, until the top is golden brown. Any fruit can be used in place of rhubarb, or use 2 cups rhubarb and 1 cup blueberries. Serves 6-8

This recipe is more than 100 years old and was originally called Pie Plant Pudding.

Dawn Fry • Moravia
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative

RHUBARB DUMPLINGS

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1½ cups plus ⅓ cup sugar, divided
- 2 cups rhubarb, diced
- dash salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1½ cups boiling water
- 1¼ cups flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 2 tablespoons shortening or butter
- ⅓ cup milk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

Combine butter, 1½ cups sugar, rhubarb, salt, cinnamon and boiling water in heavy skillet. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Sift flour, baking powder and ⅓ cup sugar. Cut in shortening, then mix in milk and vanilla. Drop by teaspoons in boiling sauce. Cover and simmer 20 minutes.

Mary Eggebraaten • Forest City
Prairie Energy Cooperative

TOFFEE CRUNCH ICE CREAM CAKE

- 2½ cups chocolate graham crackers, crushed
- ½ cup butter, melted
- ½ gallon vanilla ice cream, thawed slightly
- 4 Heath candy bars, crushed (or more, to taste)
- ½ gallon chocolate ice cream, thawed slightly

Mix 1½ cups graham crackers and butter. Pat into bottom of a greased 9x13-inch pan. Freeze 10-15 minutes. Spread vanilla ice cream onto crumb crust, then sprinkle with half of crushed candy bars and ½ cup cracker crumbs. Spread chocolate ice cream on top, then sprinkle with remaining crushed candy bars and cracker crumbs. Freeze until ready to serve. Butterfinger candy bars also work well.

David Warner • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

SUMMER STRAWBERRY DESSERT

- 1 large angel food cake
- 2 3-ounce packages instant vanilla pudding
- 2 cups milk
- 3 cups vanilla ice cream
- 1 3-ounce package strawberry Jell-O
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 10-ounce package frozen strawberries

Break cake into pieces and put in bottom of 9x13-inch pan. Mix pudding with milk, then add ice cream and beat together. Pour over cake pieces. In another bowl, dissolve strawberry Jell-O in hot water. Add strawberries, and once thawed, pour over pudding mixture. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Betty Meeves • Dunlap
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI CAKE

- ½ cup margarine
- ½ cup oil
- 1¾ cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup sour milk
- 2½ cups flour
- 4 tablespoons cocoa
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 cups zucchini, chopped
- 1 cup nuts, chopped
- ½ cup chocolate chips

Cream margarine, oil and sugar. Add eggs, vanilla and sour milk, blend well. Add flour, cocoa, salt, baking powder and cinnamon to creamed mixture and mix well. Add zucchini and nuts. Pour into greased and floured 13x9x2-inch pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top. Bake at 325 degrees F for 40-45 minutes. Serves 15

Debra Bartholomew • Ollie
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

WANTED:

THANKSGIVING SIDE DISHES

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

Deadline is July 31.

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



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

MAIL: Recipes

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AFTER THE STORM: COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

The Midwest experienced several powerful storms this spring, with the worst of the storms hitting Iowa on May 21.

The National Weather Service issued an EF-4 rating to the devastating tornado that struck Greenfield; five people died, and dozens were injured. Several employees of Farmers Electric Cooperative, headquartered east of Greenfield, and Greenfield Municipal Utilities (served by Central Iowa Power Cooperative) suffered extensive damage to their homes and properties. In addition, Farmers Electric linemen were some of the first to assist with search

and rescue efforts in Greenfield immediately after the tornado hit.

As the storm system moved across Iowa on May 21, many of Iowa's electric cooperatives experienced power outages. The peak of outages occurred around 8:30 p.m. as the storm left Iowa's eastern border, with just over 12,000 electric cooperative outages systemwide. As of 6 a.m. the next day, about two-thirds of those outages had been restored, with electric co-op linemen closing in on the remaining 4,000 outages. After surveying the extent of the damage, Iowa's electric cooperatives supported each other with several

co-ops providing mutual aid for the restoration efforts.

Later in May, northern Arkansas experienced widespread outages following severe storms over Memorial Day weekend. The National Weather Service confirmed tornadoes in six counties and at least eight deaths. In the aftermath, three Iowa cooperatives – Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative and Western Iowa Power Cooperative – sent crews to Arkansas to assist with restoring service to co-op member-consumers.

Photos courtesy of the respective electric cooperatives pictured.



◀ **Corn Belt Power Cooperative** transmission crews cleared downed structures, phases and equipment on May 22 before rebuilding this stretch of line northeast of Farnhamville.



◀ Loyd Hise, Jay Spack, Jordan Terwilliger and Jeff Eagle of **Guthrie County REC** worked with **Consumers Energy** in Marshalltown to provide mutual aid after severe weather hit their service territory leaving broken poles, downed lines and more than 1,000 members without power.



▶ The mid-May storms damaged 109 poles across **Central Iowa Power Cooperative's (CIPCO)** territory.



▶ **Grundy County REC** provided mutual aid support to **Consumers Energy**.





▶ Tornado damage near Harlan in Nishnabotna Valley REC's service territory.

▶ Crews worked to lift a broken transmission pole in CIPCO's service territory.



▶ Pella Cooperative Electric Lineman Matt Ainsworth and Apprentice Lineman Spencer Nagel assisted in the recovery and restoration of Consumers Energy member-consumers in Story and Polk counties.



▶ A road is closed due to downed power lines in the area.



▶ As a result of the storm, Southwest Iowa REC faced the task of replacing 140 broken poles and restringing roughly 142,000 feet of wire. Nishnabotna Valley REC and Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative supported the restoration efforts. The dedicated line crews worked long hours to safely and efficiently restore power in just four days.



▶ Clarke Electric Cooperative linemen spent time working at Farmers Electric Cooperative in Greenfield after the EF-4 tornado.

▶ At the peak of the outages following the storm, Maquoketa Valley REC had nearly 3,500 members without power.



▶ A domino of downed poles line a gravel road.



▶ Cooperation Among Cooperatives is one of the most important cooperative principles. NIPCO (pictured) and Corn Belt Power Cooperative assisted CIPCO with storm recovery efforts across Iowa.

2024 ANNUAL MEETING – PEOPLE MAKE THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE

BY KIM DAVIS



Not every company invites its customers to an annual meeting to elect the board of directors and help set policy. But your Access Energy Cooperative

does just that. Only you are our members – not customers.

When you signed up to receive power from Access Energy Cooperative, you automatically became a member and a part owner of the business.

Cooperatives use a business model that is different from other companies. We don't sell stock on Wall Street, so there are no out-of-town investors. Control of your cooperative is local.

- You may run for a seat on the board of directors.
- You may vote for the candidates who do run – and know that every candidate is also a member of Access Energy Cooperative.
- Your cooperative has been paying dividends back to you – the members – on an annual basis.

It's important to attend your cooperative's Annual Meeting of Members on Aug. 6, 2024.

- It is a place to meet other members and catch up on what has been happening at the cooperative.
- There will be a free meal with homemade ice cream.

- There are prizes, a free giveaway at registration and fun activities for the kids.
- You can pick up your dividend check if you haven't signed up to receive it as a bill credit.
- It's also a place where you can meet the employees and directors.
- You can vote for the board of directors and learn about the business issues your cooperative is facing.

Mark your calendar today. Plan to vote for directors in July and then attend the 2024 Annual Meeting of Members on Aug. 6. We look forward to seeing you there!

ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Access Energy Cooperative will be held at McMillan Park in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, at 5:00 p.m., on August 6, 2024, to take action upon the following matters:

1. The reports of officers, directors, and committees;
2. The election of four (4) directors of the Cooperative, three for a term of three years each and one for a term of two years;
3. All other business which may legally come before the meeting or any adjournment or adjournments thereof.

In connection with the election of directors scheduled for this meeting, the following members have been nominated for director by the Committee on Nominations appointed by the Board of Directors of the cooperative pursuant to the Bylaws.

2024 Director Nominees

Three-year Term (three to be elected)
One from each Board District

Board District One	Board District Two	Board District Three
Harold Cubbage Marvin Larson	Mark Hotchkiss Larry White	William (Bill) Benjamin Robert (Bob) Chesnut III

Two-year Term
one to be elected from Board District Two

Board District Two
Jerry Barker Duane Graber

You are urged to attend the meeting, hear the reports of the officers, vote for directors, and transact such other business as may come before the meeting.

MEET THE 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATES

The following members have committed to dedicating their time and talents to serving on Access Energy Cooperative's board of directors if elected by the membership. The ballots being mailed on July 9 provide more information on each candidate. Members can vote for directors online, through the SmartHub app, by mailing their ballot or bringing it to the annual meeting on Aug. 6. Online voting ends at 4:30 p.m. on Aug. 5. **In the 2024 election, members in District 2 will have two ballots. One ballot will be to fill a two-year term on the board of directors, and the second ballot will be to fill a three-year term.**

DISTRICT 1 (THREE-YEAR TERM)



Harold Cabbage, Libertyville

How could you make a positive impact on the cooperative?

I am open-minded about what would improve the cooperative to satisfy the members' needs.

What are the prominent issues facing rural electric cooperatives?

Issues with solar panels and wind turbines.



Marvin Larson, Fairfield

How could you make a positive impact on the cooperative?

The knowledge I received from training and conferences while on the Access Energy Cooperative board plus the experiences I have had serving on other boards and councils gives me a strong background for serving.

What are the prominent issues facing rural electric cooperatives?

Cost containment during rising power costs and high inflation. Keeping coal and gas generation from being shut down prematurely. Training for potential cybersecurity threats.

DISTRICT 2 (TWO-YEAR TERM)



Jerry Barker, Mount Pleasant

How could you make a positive impact on the cooperative?

By participating in ongoing training and education about prominent issues facing rural electric cooperatives and placing a constant emphasis on safety for the Access Energy Cooperative employees and our co-op members.

What are the prominent issues facing rural electric cooperatives?

Issues regarding electric vehicles, alternative energy resources and increasing demand for electricity. Providing safe, reliable and affordable service for members.



Duane Graber, Mount Pleasant

How could you make a positive impact on the cooperative?

I listen to other ideas and try to make the best decision.

What are the prominent issues facing rural electric cooperatives?

Solar and wind power.

DISTRICT 2 (THREE-YEAR TERM)



Mark Hotchkiss, Wayland

How could you make a positive impact on the cooperative?

I listen to different ideas and interject my thoughts to come up with a reasonable solution. I am not afraid to ask questions or have different perspectives explained to get a clear understanding of different ideas.

What are the prominent issues facing rural electric cooperatives?

Inflation and the cost of doing business, affordable electricity, making good business decisions for the future, and seeing the possible changes in the future that come from the worries of climate change.



Larry White, Mount Pleasant

How could you make a positive impact on the cooperative?

I know and understand the cooperative electric system; how and why it works well.

What are the prominent issues facing rural electric cooperatives?

Making costs to the members as comfortable as possible. How to preserve and promote the cooperative way of doing business.

DISTRICT 3 (THREE-YEAR TERM)



William (Bill) Benjamin, Donnellson

How could you make a positive impact on the cooperative?

I think that my past work experience and attending Rathbun Regional Water Association board meetings for a number of years gives me knowledge of how board members assist in leading a company.

What are the prominent issues facing rural electric cooperatives?

Inflation and regulations are a couple of issues facing electric cooperatives that will be difficult to address. Access Energy Cooperative strives to keep rates affordable for its members, but we have little control over these factors. Navigating these issues is something facing all electric cooperatives.



Robert (Bob) Chesnut III, Wever

How could you make a positive impact on the cooperative?

The knowledge gained during the last six years has given me a better understanding of operations and expenses involved in the daily process. My input is better supported by my education and experience gained over the past six years.

What are the prominent issues facing rural electric cooperatives?

Controlling expenses while trying to incorporate cost increases from our power supplier is top of the list. Followed close by continued focus on reliability.

ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

*People make the
co-op difference*



2024
*Annual Meeting
of Members*

Aug. 6 at 5 p.m.
McMillan Park, Mt Pleasant

5-7 p.m.

- Music by Jennifer Handling & Revolution Band
- Free Meal Tickets Available at Registration
- Homemade Ice Cream by Hinterland Dairy
- Register for Door Prizes
- Pick Up Registration Gift
- Pick Up Dividend Check
- Pony Rides by Windy Acres
- Drive-A-Tractor by Joel Proennecke
- Inflatable Activities by Fields of Fun
- Giant Lawn Games
- Information Booths

Business Meeting 7 p.m.

- Call to Order, Invocation
- Reading of the 2024 Notice of Meeting
- Reading of the 2023 Minutes
- Nominating Committee Report
- Call For Ballots From the Floor
- Treasurer Report
- President Report
- Power Supplier Report
- General Manager/CEO Report
- Election Results
- Door Prizes (must be present to win)



Grand Prize \$250 BILL CREDIT - MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN

COOPERATIVE SUPPORTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF DANVILLE

Access Energy Cooperative teamed up with Danville Telecom to donate a combined \$10,000 to the City of Danville. The funding, which was matched by an additional \$5,000 from Aureon through the Ripple Effect program, will be used to develop a comprehensive plan in partnership with the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC). This plan will guide future development and address key challenges related to community growth.

The comprehensive plan will focus on multiple areas of development, including housing and business development. With limited housing options, the plan will explore strategies to create housing opportunities for families who choose Danville. The city also needs additional business and commercial sites. The plan will

present potential land-use options in and around Danville that could lead to opportunities for business attraction, local job creation and economic growth.

“The success of many communities starts with an updated comprehensive plan, which will be essential for guiding future development and increasing the quality of life of current and future Danville residents,” says Ethan Pitt, Ripple Effect director. “We are confident it will provide a roadmap for the next several years, addressing infrastructure needs and community priorities.”

The plan, estimated to cost \$18,000, will be funded through contributions from Access Energy Cooperative, Danville Telecom, Aureon and the city. It will take several months to complete and will serve as a



Access Energy Cooperative General Manager/CEO Kevin Wheeler presents a check for the comprehensive plan to Jon Billups, mayor of Danville.

blueprint for future development, ensuring Danville remains a vibrant and welcoming community.

2025 PHOTO CONTEST BEGINS

We are accepting photos for the 2026 Access Energy Cooperative calendar. Color and horizontal photos work best for calendar entries. Submissions can be sent to mktg@accessenergycoop.com before March 31, 2025.

Thirteen photos will be chosen as featured photos and winners will be awarded \$75, plus an additional \$25 bill credit if they are a member of the cooperative. [Visit www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com) for complete rules.

WIN UP TO \$100!



WELCOME JORDAN BORMANN

Jordan Bormann has been hired to fill a new position as data analyst/plant accountant at the cooperative and will work in the engineering department as well as the finance department.

Welcome, Jordan!



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine
for members of
Iowa's electric
cooperatives.

July 2024

Visit our website at www.accessenergycoop.com



SAFETY

IS THE BACKBONE OF RELIABILITY

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



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives

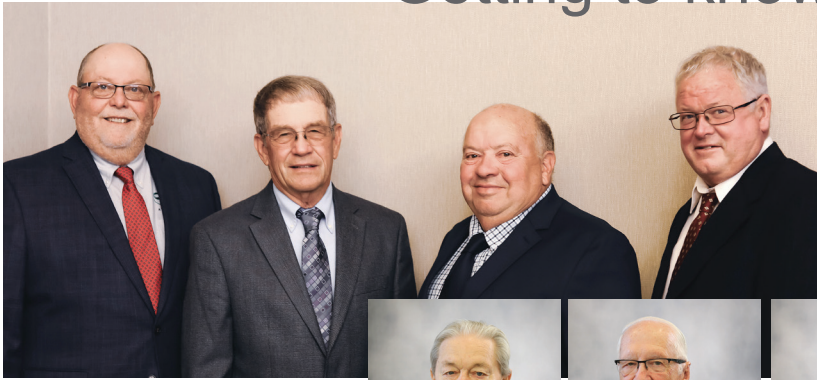


A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

*People
make the co-op
difference*

Access Energy Cooperative 2023 Annual Report
A not-for-profit electric distribution cooperative
owned by the members we serve.

Getting to know *your board of directors*



Executive Committee

Michael Holtkamp, Secretary, District 3

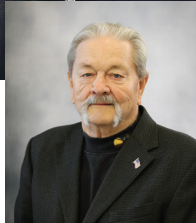
Marvin Larson, President, District 1

Robert Chesnut III, Vice President, District 3

Robert P. Smith, Treasurer, District 2

Directors are elected by the members and serve a three-year term. They govern services in 10 counties:

Davis, Des Moines, Henry, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Louisa, Van Buren, Wapello, and Washington.



Jerry Barker
District 2



Fred Hickenbottom
District 1



David Hollingsworth
District 1



Marvin Newton
District 3



Larry White
District 2

38 Employees
9,414 Meters
2,248 Miles of line

Total assets
\$108,807,145
Operating revenue
\$36,913,640

Your cooperative *at a Glance*

As stewards of your electric cooperative, your board of directors ensures the cooperative's commitment to safe, reliable, and efficient service, while being a good citizen in our communities. As we reflect on the past year, we are reminded that it is the people who make the cooperative difference.

People are the heart that embodies the cooperative spirit every day. From line workers who brave the elements to ensure reliable power delivery, to customer service representatives who provide personalized support, to the board of directors and management who strategically steer our cooperative in safety and efficiency.

In 2023, we continued to invest in advanced technologies and improve infrastructure to enhance efficiencies that ensure members receive safe and reliable power.

Community initiatives continued to make a meaningful impact, touching the lives of those we serve. Through charitable donations, educational programs, and environmental stewardship efforts, your cooperative remains deeply rooted in the well-being and prosperity of our communities.

As we look ahead, we embrace the collective power of our members, the principles of cooperation, and look forward to the relationships our cooperative is built upon. We extend our sincere gratitude to each and every member of the Access Energy Cooperative family. Your support and active participation are the driving forces behind the existence of the cooperative. We are honored to serve you.

Memories of the 2023 annual meeting of members. Members are the heart of our cooperative.



Below: Thank you to the members of the member advisory committee for dedicating your time to work with the board of directors and management for the betterment of your cooperative.

General Manager/CEO

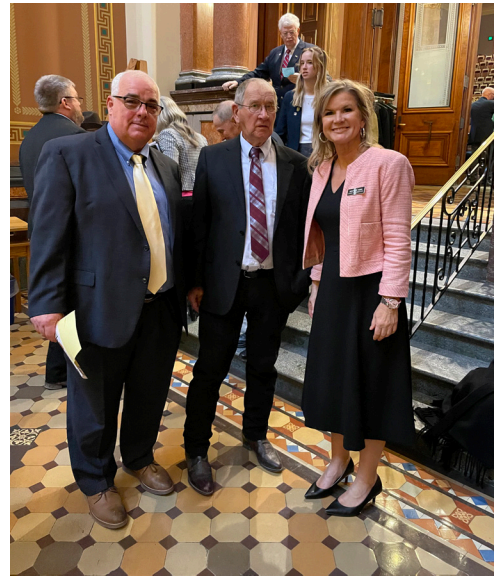
Year in review



Kevin Wheeler



*Above: annual key account visit with Mt. Pleasant City Administrator Brent Schleisman (center of photo)
Right: visiting with State Representative Heather Hora (right of photo) at the Capitol in Des Moines*



Central to our cooperative's philosophy are the seven guiding principles of cooperatives. In 2023, it was the people who showed our cooperation among cooperatives when neighboring cooperatives faced severe storms. Access Energy Cooperative promptly extended assistance, displaying the commonality and strength inherent in the cooperative model. The people and the cooperative spirit of mutual support among electric cooperatives remain the cornerstone of our resilience.

Every year presents a unique set of challenges, and despite meticulous planning, unexpected obstacles often arise. In 2023, Access Energy Cooperative faced its first rate increase since 2016. While raising rates is never the desired course of action, escalating costs compelled the board to take this action. Three primary factors drove the rate increase: the rising cost of power, increased material expenses, and heightened overhead costs.

In addition, the board approved to restructure the single phase and small commercial rates (effective in 2024) to incorporate a demand charge. This change was made to bring member billing in line with the way the cooperative is billed for power.

The cost of power, which is 68% of our overall expenses, rose

significantly due to increases from our power supplier. Similarly, the cost of materials surged by approximately 30% over the past two years, accompanied by prolonged lead times. To mitigate these challenges, Access Energy Cooperative bolstered its inventory levels to ensure uninterrupted service for our members. Additionally, general overhead expenses including fuel, equipment, utilities, and employee-related costs witnessed an upward trend, further impacting our operating expenses.

As a primary piece of the Access Energy Cooperative mission statement, safety is part of every facet of our operations and ensures the well-being of our employees and the integrity of our infrastructure. Our workforce is highly trained, fostering a culture of safety that is unparalleled in our industry.

Our dedicated team of employees, directors, and members remains the driving force behind our success. Whether assisting members over the phone or working diligently on-site, our employees are unwavering in their commitment to serving the community.

We extend an invitation to our members to reach out with any questions or concerns. Your feedback is valuable as we continue to strive for excellence in serving you, our valued members.



Left: safety training at State Patrol office.

Right: providing safety demonstrations at the Capitol, visiting with State Representative Helena Hayes.



People make the co-op difference



Brian Baylor
Mechanic



Tony Brown
District Foreman



Kassie Bulen
Electrical Engineer



Rick Clark
Journeyman Lineman



Kimberly Davis
Dir. Member Services
and Public Relations



Tammy Davis
Engineering Assistant



Trevor Durst
Apprentice Lineman



Mark Fulton
Staking/Engineering
Technician



Jennifer Helling
Customer Service
Manager



Cole Hetzler
Line Foreman



Korbin Johnson
Line Foreman



Cameron Kirchner
Apprentice Lineman



Steven Klein
Storekeeper



Parker LaFoe
Apprentice Lineman



Kurt Lowenberg
Safety Director/Asst.
Operations Manager



Garrett Maddy
Apprentice Lineman



Diane Magnani
Executive Assistant



Trey Metz
Apprentice Lineman



Levon Mullen
Serviceman Technician



Ricardo Ortiz
IT Administrator



Daniel Philips
Director of Operations



Jackson Powell
Apprentice Lineman



Jay Prichard
Meter Technician



Alan Raymer
Member Services
Representative



Jordan Ross
Staking/Engineering
Technician



Shelby Ruby
Customer Service
Representative



Aimee Sanderson
Customer Service
Representative



Bill Simon
Serviceman Technician



Ben Smith
Journeyman Lineman



Gina Smith
Operations Assistant/
Radio Operator



Tammy Snaveley
Chief Financial Officer/
Asst. General Manager



Colton Stephens
Line Foreman



Tyler Thein
Director of Engineering



Gavin Thompson
Apprentice Lineman



Kevin Wheeler
General Manager/CEO



Kaley White
Customer Service
Representative



Cherity Wibben
Member Services
Assistant/IT Coordinator



Courtney Williamson
Accounting Assistant



Tammy Snavelly
Chief Financial Officer/
Assistant General Manager

Getting to know *dividends and financials*

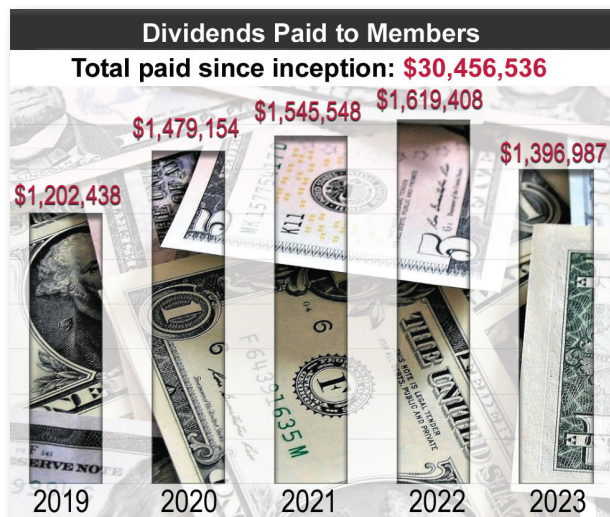
Receiving a dividend payment is one of the primary benefits of being a member of Access Energy Cooperative.

Organized as a cooperative, we are owned and operated by our members and do not exist to earn profits.

Any revenue generated above the cost of doing business is allocated to members as dividends. The

dividends are then paid to the members when the board determines it is in the best interest of the cooperative.

In 2023, the board allocated dividends in the amount of \$1,834,841 to member accounts. They retired \$1,396,987 in dividends that were paid to the members. The 2023 retirement brought the total dividends paid to members since 1938 to \$30,456,536.



Balance Sheets

December 31, 2023 and 2022

	2023	2022
<u>ASSETS</u>		
UTILITY PLANT IN SERVICE, NET	\$ 70,031,901	\$ 67,133,987
INVESTMENTS	\$ 24,631,393	\$ 22,962,938
RESTRICTED CASH	\$ 1,770,000	\$ 1,770,000
DEFERRED CHARGES, less current portion	\$ 315,921	\$ 364,889
NOTES RECEIVABLE	\$ 2,101,012	\$ 2,467,972
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,764,069	\$ 3,783,740
Accounts receivable, customer, net of allowance for uncollectible accounts of \$40,000 for 2023 and \$40,882 for 2022	\$ 5,417,262	\$ 4,104,586
Materials and supplies	\$ 1,647,915	\$ 1,759,224
Deferred charges - current portion	\$ 48,968	\$ 87,709
Prepaid expenses	\$ 78,704	\$ 85,952
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$ 9,956,918	\$ 9,821,211
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 108,807,145	\$ 104,520,997
<u>EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES</u>		
LONG-TERM DEBT, less current portion	\$ 41,272,214	\$ 39,665,767
POST RETIREMENT BENEFITS OTHER THAN PENSIONS	\$ 611,503	\$ 667,015
DEFERRED CREDITS	\$ 3,226	\$ 5,989
MEMBERS' EQUITY AND RETAINED EARNINGS	\$ 58,839,674	\$ 56,755,317
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$ 2,732,724	\$ 2,213,523
Accrued expenses	\$ 1,445,644	\$ 1,361,888
Current portion of long-term debt	\$ 2,030,227	\$ 1,988,379
Consumer deposits	\$ 1,871,933	\$ 1,863,119
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 8,080,528	\$ 7,426,909
TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES	\$ 108,807,145	\$ 104,520,997

How Your Money Is Spent

Customer Serv/Sales 1%
 Consumer Accts 2%
 Interest 5%
 Admin/General 5%
 Depreciation 6%
 Operations/maint 13%
 Cost of Power 68%



Auditor opinion:

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Access Energy Cooperative as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

LWG CPAs & Advisors,
 Indianapolis, Indiana
 March 21, 2024

Statements of Revenue Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022

	2023	2022
REVENUES	\$ <u>36,913,640</u>	\$ <u>36,894,403</u>
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Purchased power / cost of sales	24,528,259	23,946,113
Operations	2,943,928	3,144,948
Maintenance	1,676,180	1,662,955
Consumer accounting expense	659,866	676,402
Consumer service and sales expense	514,967	523,002
Administrative expense	1,936,006	1,910,167
Depreciation	<u>2,341,918</u>	<u>2,265,793</u>
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>34,601,124</u>	<u>34,129,380</u>
OPERATING MARGINS BEFORE OTHER ITEMS	<u>2,312,516</u>	<u>2,765,023</u>
OTHER OPERATING ITEMS, NET		
Patronage revenue	2,206,711	883,143
Interest expense	<u>(1,690,945)</u>	<u>(1,484,068)</u>
TOTAL OTHER OPERATING ITEMS, NET	515,766	(600,925)
OPERATING MARGINS	<u>2,828,282</u>	<u>2,164,098</u>
NON-OPERATING ITEMS, NET		
Interest and dividend revenue	411,763	237,580
Gain (loss) on disposition of assets	13,751	153,393
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	73,837	(303,716)
All other, net	<u>(7,381)</u>	<u>(22,926)</u>
TOTAL NON-OPERATING ITEMS, NET	<u>491,970</u>	<u>64,331</u>
NET MARGINS	\$ <u>3,320,252</u>	\$ <u>2,228,429</u>



Daniel Philips
Director of Operations

Getting to know *your operations team*



*A*t the heart of everything we do lies a deep commitment to serving our members. We listen to members' needs and strive to exceed expectations for service to the best of our abilities.

Providing safe, reliable, efficient service means our employees do everything they can to keep your electric service on. For those times when a service interruption occurs, we work until all members have power restored.

We continue the attempt to stay ahead of the challenges Mother Nature sends our way with targeted system maintenance programs, proactive inspection routines, and strategic investments in equipment upgrades. Clearing brush and trees underneath the lines on our system is a significant part of keeping your power reliable. Your cooperative maintains a 5-year vegetation and tree clearing cycle, including pruning, brush mowing and chemical treatments to slow future growth.

In 2023, two new Apprentice Linemen joined our team. We were pleased to welcome Parker LaFoe and Trevor Durst.

Welcome
Parker Lafoe and
Trevor Durst

Vegetation Management *at a Glance*

2023 areas completed

Spraying

300 miles Batavia

180 miles Stockport

Mechanical Trimming

130 miles Coppock

100 miles Perlee

150 miles Lowell

10 miles Mt. Pleasant

Working with other people is part of fulfilling cooperative principle 7: Cooperation Among Cooperatives. Below, our employees help restore power for members of another cooperative after a storm; and in the lower right photo, Access Energy Cooperative crews work in cooperation with Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative employees.



Getting to know *your electric system*

While planning for the future, the Engineering Department remains steadfast in its commitment to innovation and reliability. In the past year, we continued upgrades to equipment and integrating technologies that enhanced our system efficiency and reliability to meet the evolving needs of our members.

We deployed a new style of substation reclosure that will not only improve the viability of our system, but also provide for more accurate data collection and better device coordination. From these changes, we also expect a reduction in momentary outages and faster fault interruption that will result in a reduction of equipment damage. By leveraging data analytics and automation, we're enhancing system reliability, minimizing downtime, and enhancing the overall member experience.

A diligent equipment inspection program also contributes to the reliability of our system. Our 2023 pole inspection plan produced a mere 1.91% fail rate. Out of 4493 poles tested, 86 were rejected and are scheduled to receive attention.

Our successful interconnections with renewable systems not only aligns with our environmental stewardship goals, but also our commitment to serve the needs of our members. In 2023, we added nine solar arrays for a total of 101.5 new kW on our system. With these additions, we now have 1.2 MW of energy produced by member renewable energy generation on our system.

Aligning with the cooperative principle for education and training, we are proud of leadership milestones accomplished by team members Kassie Bulen and Tyler Thein. Kassie graduated from the Henry County Leadership program. Tyler completed the Management Internship Program through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Tyler Thein
Director of Engineering



System Design *at a Glance*

624 Total work orders designed in 2023

72 New services

30 Service upgrades

192 Pole replacements

330 Misc system improvements

Top left: Kassie Bulen, Henry County Leadership program graduation

Left: sample of new intelligent substation reclosures

Bottom left: Engineering team department meeting including summer intern

Bottom right: Tyler Thein, Management Internship Program graduation





Kimberly Davis
Director of Member Services
and Public Relations

Getting to know *your member services and communications*

People are the reason we communicate. They are who we serve and are the motivation behind helping our communities. The cooperative employees are proud to support local community efforts through volunteerism and with our annual holiday food drive that was founded in 2023. Community events like the Midwest Old Threshers Drive-A-Tractor, Festival of Lights, area county fairs, and local parades could not exist without the support of local businesses. Access Energy Cooperative is proud to sponsor non-profit events that benefit our members.

Employees of the cooperative continue to serve our communities through blood donations. In 2023, 86 cooperative employees and their family members reached a lifetime donation total of 172 gallons of blood with ImpactLife. The cooperative hosts four blood drives per year and is very fortunate to have a supportive core group of donors within the cooperative.

Serving our communities is also demonstrated through our annual donation of electric water heaters for the Henry and Jefferson county Habitat for Humanity programs.

In support of our youth, up to two \$2,000 line worker scholarships and six \$1,500 scholarships are awarded for high school seniors each year. In addition, we sponsor up to two sophomores or juniors on a trip to Washington D.C. through the Youth Tour program. 2023 winners of these programs are highlighted on our website.

Billing and communications saw improvements in 2023 for members. Bills were updated with more descriptive labeling and a new time stamp for demand was added in preparation for the demand billing that was approved to begin in 2024. This allows



Photo above: Habitat For Humanity project water heater delivery

Below: Mt. Pleasant community holiday lighted parade

Below right: employees participate in 1st annual holiday food drive



Rebates paid \$78,502
Energy efficiency education \$218,105
Energy efficiency improvements financed \$29,013
Economic development loan fund balance \$523,151

Member Services *at a Glance*

members to know the date and time their demand was set. SmartHub is our app members can use to view their account, pay their bill, and monitor their energy usage, and underwent a significant upgrade. The website is undergoing significant changes in design, layout, and content, to be revealed in 2024.

Your cooperative reinstated offering energy audits to members with no fee, to help you find ways to save energy in your homes and possibly reduce demand.

Members are encouraged to stay up to date with what is happening at your cooperative by reading the *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* monthly magazine, following us on Facebook, and visiting our website at www.accessenergycoop.com.

Getting to know *your safety culture*

Safety is taken very seriously at your cooperative. Monthly safety meetings are coordinated by a safety committee comprised of employees from all departments, including three operations employees and three inside employees. This committee has developed and maintains a cooperative safety improvement plan. In 2023, some of the pieces of the plan implemented included: updating evacuation plans for each room at our facility and the contact lists of other utilities so that our linemen have direct access to this information on their iPads they use in the field. The safety committee also reviews and updates our Standard Operating Procedures.

Your cooperative is dedicated to providing safety education to the members and public. We provide safety demonstrations that teach people to respect electricity and know what to do

if they encounter dangerous situations. These presentations included students of all ages in southeast Iowa, county workers, law enforcement personnel, bus drivers, and first responders. We try to do everything we can to teach people to act safely.



Kurt Lowenberg
Safety Director/
Assistant Operations Manager

“The safety committee is dedicated to promoting a safe working environment for all by mitigating risks, training employees, and supporting a strong safety culture.”



Safety Activities *at a Glance*

22 Community safety demonstrations

932 Individuals participated

66 Cooperative crew observations

52 Accident Investigations

*Photos above: safety presentations to bus drivers and elementary students
Photos right and below: employees participating in various safety training events: pole top rescue, monthly meeting, and substation safety training*





Ricardo Ortiz
IT Administrator

Getting to know

your cooperative information technology

In our modern era, electricity fuels the technology integral to our daily lives. From the indispensable smartphone that connects us to loved ones and captures cherished moments to the servers that facilitate the sharing of these memories, technology permeates our existence. Our main goal is to ensure these devices have access to the power they need in a safe and reliable way.

We equip our line workers with industry-standard hardware and cutting-edge software tools, and we are always exploring new technologies and systems. To that end, in 2023 we updated our line workers' handheld and mobile communication technology. Today, more than ever, our line workers possess the capability to swiftly access and relay real-time information and, therefore, quickly identify events impacting our members. This connectivity boosts productivity and speeds up outage restoration, ensuring reliable power for our members so you can enjoy all the technology in your lives.

In 2023, we also bolstered our already strong lineup of security measures and access controls. Our IT team spearheaded periodic and ongoing cybersecurity initiatives and training sessions for all employees. This included teaching essential practices like managing passwords, maintaining good digital habits, recognizing and avoiding phishing attempts, and more.

We are committed to staying ahead of emerging threats, which is why we collaborate with over 50 other regional cooperatives in the fight against cyber threats. By pooling our resources and experiences, we create a formidable and genuinely industry-leading defense against determined cyber-attacker threats. The entire three-tiered system, including Access Energy Cooperative, NE Missouri Electric Power Cooperative, and Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. works night and day to protect your data from unauthorized access, data leaks, and ransomware attacks - safeguarding your information and peace of mind. We internally call these processes the "Cyber Dome" of protection.

At the end of the day, the heart of our mission is ensuring our people have reliable power to fuel your lives. By investing in the latest technologies and fostering strong partnerships throughout the region and beyond, we are also dedicated to keeping your electricity flowing safely and securely.

Our linemen use iPads in their daily work for efficiency and accuracy.

Your Information Technology *at a Glance*

8 Servers

42 Work stations

44 Handheld devices

265,000+ External Emails



STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866)632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202)690-7442; or
(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

