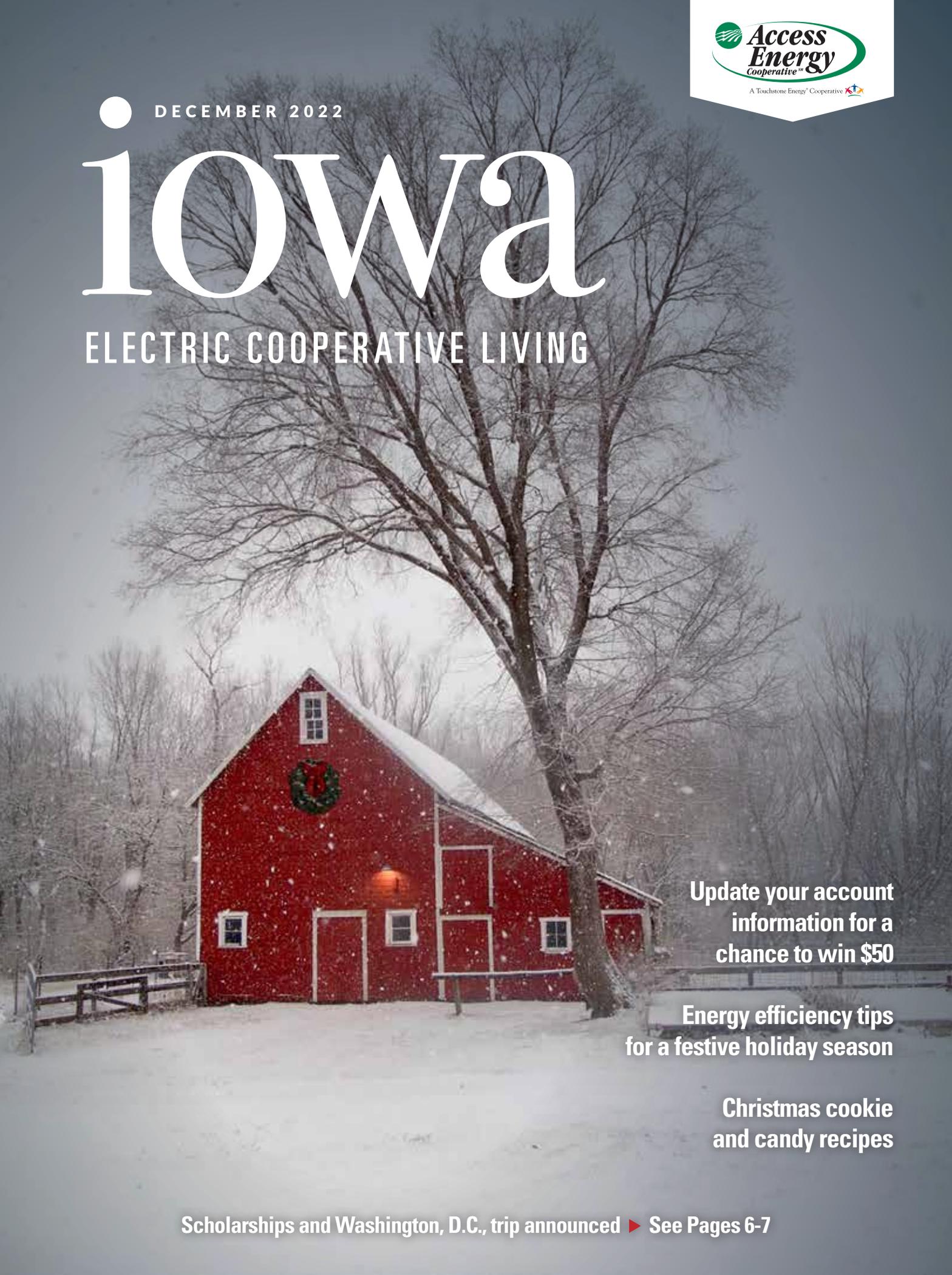


DECEMBER 2022

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



Update your account  
information for a  
chance to win \$50

Energy efficiency tips  
for a festive holiday season

Christmas cookie  
and candy recipes

Scholarships and Washington, D.C., trip announced ▶ See Pages 6-7

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Every local electric cooperative maintains an independent mailing list of its members, so please send your change of address directly to your local electric cooperative's office. *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine cannot make an address change for you.

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ON THE COVER

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

# THE KEYS TO COOPERATIVE SUCCESS: PEOPLE. POWER. PURPOSE.

BY ROGER SOLOMONSON



The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) recently held its 2022 annual meeting in early December. As the IAEC

board president, it was my honor to review achievements and share accomplishments with our member cooperatives who attended from across the state. While preparing for the event, we selected an annual meeting theme that we thought best represented the keys to our success through the decades. It all boils down to these three factors: People. Power. Purpose.

## People.

The people who form a local electric cooperative must be united in achieving a common goal. It then takes leaders from that group to stand up and govern the actions of the co-op as directors of the board. And only through effective management can a team of mission-driven professionals work every day to serve the co-op members with excellence. It all starts with the right people at every level.

At the statewide association, we are blessed with a dedicated and knowledgeable staff who provide valuable insight and leadership in several ways. Your local cooperative is receiving best-in-class services regarding education, safety training, advocacy, regulatory guidance, communications services, employee benefits, youth programs and more.

## Power.

Our electric cooperative business model is focused on providing power that is safe, affordable, reliable and environmentally responsible. Each co-op must determine the best way to balance these four priorities to best

serve its member-consumers. On the statewide level, we will continue to advocate for the cooperative business model, which champions local ownership and governance.

And in today's world, utilizing a diverse portfolio of electric generation assets has become paramount in ensuring reliability as electric co-ops embrace an "all-of-the-above" approach to keep the lights on.

## Purpose.

What sets cooperatives apart from other electric utilities is **why** we're in business. Electric cooperatives exist solely to serve their member-consumers. We are committed to powering lives and empowering communities to improve the quality of life for our members.

IAEC coordinates several programs that provide value to our local communities. Our Iowa Youth

Leadership Academy virtual sessions in October and Iowa Youth Tour trip to D.C. in June are great examples of how Iowa's electric cooperatives invest in the next generation of co-op leaders. Our statewide Shine the Light contest in June highlights our cooperative commitment to community as member-consumers and employees of Iowa electric co-ops are invited to nominate local volunteers who are making a positive difference.

As I reflect on the electric cooperative accomplishments of 2022, it all ties back to People. Power. Purpose.

Finally, I would like to personally wish you and your family a blessed Christmas holiday. May you celebrate the season in good health with family and friends.

*Roger Solomonson is the board president of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and a board director for Heartland Power Cooperative in Thompson.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win a Tovala Smart Oven!



This countertop convection oven allows you to choose between five modes: steam, bake, broil, reheat and toast. It automatically switches between cook cycles to ensure a perfectly cooked meal every time. The Tovala Smart Oven is smartphone controlled and includes a library of chef-crafted recipes and a meal subscription credit.

**ENTER ONLINE BY DEC. 31!**

## Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than Dec. 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the pork prize from the October issue was Glen Villanueva from Access Energy Cooperative.

## HELP OTHERS BY CONTRIBUTING TO RECare

RECare is a program where members help other members in need. You may make a one-time contribution to the RECare program, or you may enclose an amount each month with your monthly electric bill. Just one dollar a month will help others. We thank those who have given to help others. This program is administered by the Iowa Community Action Program, and recipients must meet their guidelines.



### You can use SmartHub to enroll in RECare!

To have a monthly amount added to your electric bill:

1. Log in to your SmartHub account. Go to the Billing & Payments tab. Select RECare, and follow instructions; or
2. Send the form below to:

**RECare**  
c/o Access Energy Cooperative  
P.O. Box 440  
Mount Pleasant, IA 52641

## MEMBER AUTHORIZATION FORM

I would like to make a (check one):

One-time contribution of

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly contribution of

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

(That will be added to my bill)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Account # (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

## HELPING OTHERS

BY KEVIN WHEELER



The holiday season is finally here. Some call it the most wonderful season of all. That's because we associate it with family traditions and gathering with

friends and loved ones. It's a time of giving and spreading joy.

But giving back reminds me of the many good things we have right here in our community and why it's so important to spread the good as far as we can, especially to the most vulnerable in our local area. I'm also reminded of how wonderful our community is and what a big impact we can have when we work together.

When you are a member of Access Energy Cooperative, you help us spread the good throughout the year. Through our RECare program, your donations help local families and individuals in need by providing financial assistance with their energy bills. When you donate to this fund, you're making a big difference in someone's life. You are helping to meet an immediate, critical need, but just as importantly, you are telling this person the community cares.

You've likely heard me say that the cooperative principle "concern for

community" is part of Access Energy Cooperative's DNA. It defines who we are as an organization. When we first brought electricity to this community in 1938, the quality of life improved. But other things also need to be addressed, and through the years, this co-op has been at the forefront of bringing improvements to the quality of life in this community.

This includes programs for the youth in our communities. We participate in the Youth Tour, where we take our community's young people to Washington, D.C., for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. We also have a scholarship program and a lineworker scholarship program for seniors looking to further their education. You can find more information on these programs on Pages 6-7, or on our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com). Ultimately, the entire community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors.

We hope you will think of Access Energy Cooperative as more than your energy provider, but also as a catalyst for good in our community.

We wish our members a joyous holiday season. May it be merry and bright!

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

## PHOTO CONTEST

# WIN UP TO \$100 IN THE ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE PHOTO CONTEST



Thirteen photos will be chosen as featured photos in the 2024 Access Energy Cooperative calendar. Winners will be awarded \$75, plus an additional **\$25 bill credit** if they are a member of the cooperative.

Color photos are preferred in a horizontal layout. Submissions will be accepted until March 31, 2023. Send entries to [mktg@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:mktg@accessenergycoop.com). Visit [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com) for complete rules.

# GOING OUT ON A LIMB TO REDUCE OUTAGES

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN

Trees and plants provide many benefits, but poorly placed trees can lead to big problems. Fallen limbs, branches and trees are a top cause of power outages in Iowa. When this happens, electric power restoration can be timely, costly and inconvenient for electric cooperative members. A proactive and strategic approach to keeping trees away from power is vital to providing you with safe and reliable electric service.

## Why tree trimming is necessary

In 2003, the Northeast U.S. suffered a power outage that was the second most widespread electrical power outage in U.S. history. More than 10 million people in Canada and 45 million people in the U.S. were affected. The blackout was caused when high-voltage power lines came in contact with overgrown trees. The cascading effect forced the shutdown of more than 100 power plants. It only took nine seconds for the grid to collapse. Federal regulations for vegetation management by power providers soon followed to prevent a similar situation from happening again.

Vegetation management is a preventative process to keep trees and brush from coming into contact with power lines. The area – typically 25 feet in each direction of the power line – is known as the utility right of way. This process is important for electric service reliability and more importantly for safety. If a child is climbing a tree with branches that are in contact with energized power lines, it could be fatal for the child. When a limb brings down a power line in a storm, the line remains energized and dangerous until the cooperative can safely de-energize it.

## Annual vegetation management

Like all electric cooperatives in Iowa, Access Energy Cooperative is on a cycle of managing the vegetation process on annual rotations.



Daniel Philips, director of operations at Access Energy Cooperative, says the co-op's top priorities are safety – first and foremost – and reliability.

“We are proactive because we don't ever want someone hurt due to a vegetation problem,” he says. “When you have a robust plan, your outages will decrease significantly.”

In its 10-county southeast Iowa service territory, Access Energy Cooperative has 2,200 miles of lines, which means 430 miles are managed each year.

“We work to maintain a 20-foot clear zone on each side of the power lines,” Philips says. “Trimming is a necessity of having safe, reliable power.”

Contact Access Energy Cooperative if you have questions about proper vegetation management or where to plant trees. If you have a tree or other vegetation that is in contact with a power line, never attempt to prune it yourself. Contact Access Energy Cooperative for assistance.

*Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

DEC. 23	Office closed in observance of Christmas
DEC. 26	Office closed in observance of Christmas
DEC. 28	\$50 drawing for member account updates
JAN. 2	Office closed in observance of New Year's Day

You can access your account information 24/7 on our website at [accessenergycoop.com](http://accessenergycoop.com) or through our SmartHub app for mobile devices. You can also call our office to report service interruptions and request account information at 866-242-4232.



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

**Office:** Access Energy Cooperative  
1800 W. Washington St., P.O. Box 440  
Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641

**Phone:** 319-385-1577 or 866-242-4232

**Fax:** 319-385-6873

**Call Before You Dig (Iowa One Call):** 8-1-1

**Website:** [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/AccessEnergyCoop](https://facebook.com/AccessEnergyCoop)

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/AccessEnergyC](https://twitter.com/AccessEnergyC)

**Email:** [contactus@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:contactus@accessenergycoop.com)

**Office Hours:** Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Friday, 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Call our office 24/7: 319-385-1577

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## IDLE SERVICE INVOICES WILL BE MAILED IN JANUARY

Notices for idle services, any service that has been in place but not used for 12 months or longer, will be mailed in January with an invoice for the annual fee. If you receive a notice, please review and determine if you want to retain the service. If you no longer want to retain the service, please complete the form and return the notice to our office.

The annual fee for an idle service is currently \$107, which goes toward the cost of the cooperative's investment in the facilities. This fee cannot be divided into monthly installments. If you receive an idle service letter and are no longer the owner of the property, please notify our office at 866-242-4232.

# ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

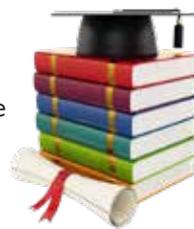
Access Energy Cooperative is offering \$9,000 in scholarships to high school seniors! This includes six \$1,500 awards, two in each of the cooperative's three districts.

Applicants must be high school seniors receiving post-secondary education. Parents or legal guardians must be members of the cooperative. More details can be found on our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com).

Applications can be found:

- At all area high school guidance counselor offices
- By visiting our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com), downloading the application and faxing, mailing or bringing it to our office; the form can also be submitted online

- By contacting the Access Energy Cooperative headquarters office in Mt. Pleasant at 866-242-4232



Applications will be due in our office March 15, 2023. Winners will be chosen and announced at their senior awards ceremonies.

### When are the scholarships given?

A portion of the scholarship (\$500) will be awarded to recipients at the completion of their first semester of post-secondary education, with proof of enrollment for the second semester. The remaining \$1,000 will be awarded after completion of the third semester, with proof of enrollment for the fourth semester.

## EFFICIENCY TIPS FOR A FESTIVE HOLIDAY SEASON

The holidays are a magical time when we come together with our loved ones to share food, gifts and quality time. It's also the most expensive time of year for many families. Along with the expense of gifts, meals and travel comes colder weather and darker nights, leading to more electricity use and higher energy bills.

One way to reduce the financial burden of the most wonderful time of year is by implementing efficiency practices to use less energy throughout the holiday season.

### Home efficiency basics

If you are hosting guests this holiday season, your household will consume more electricity than normal. A good first step is to follow home efficiency basics, including:

- Program your thermostat to 68 degrees when you are home. Then dial it back 8-10 degrees when you leave the house or go to sleep.
- Use cold water in your washer and only run full loads.

- Turn off lights and the TV when not in use.
- Shut down computers and gaming systems instead of putting them in sleep or standby mode.
- Lower the thermostat when guests are over or cooking food, as these activities will warm up your home.

### Save energy in the kitchen

Use the oven light to check food. Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by up to 25 degrees, according to the Department of Energy (DOE). Use a slow cooker, microwave, toaster oven or warming plate when possible. These appliances use less energy than an oven and stovetop. According to the DOE, a toaster oven can use up to half the energy of the average electric stove over the same cooking time.

Let hot food cool to room temperature before placing it into the refrigerator. This ensures you don't increase the temperature inside your fridge and cause it to use more energy to cool down.

### Efficient holiday decorating

Make the switch to LEDs for all your holiday lighting this year – both inside and outside the home. LED holiday lights consume 70% less energy than conventional incandescent light strands. Another convenient and energy-saving tip is to use timers so you don't have to remember to unplug your lights every evening.

### Use less energy while you're away

Water heating is the second-largest energy expense in your home, accounting for about 18% of your utility bill, according to the DOE. Switching your water heater to "vacation mode" will reduce wasted energy by keeping the water at a lower temperature. If your water heater does not have vacation mode on the dial, you can adjust it to the lowest setting.

Set your thermostat to around 55 degrees so you're not wasting energy to heat the home while you're away. This temperature is warm enough to keep your pipes and appliances functioning well in colder outdoor temperatures.

# ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE LINEWORKER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Up to two \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded per year to students enrolled, or planning to enroll, in a one- or two-year electric lineworker program, such as the Northwest Iowa Community College Powerline program in Sheldon or the utilities/lineman program at State Technical College in Linn, Missouri.

## 2023 timelines

- March 15 – Application deadline
- April 30 – Awards announced
- Award recipients have until March 31, 2024, to apply for initial scholarship payment

## Eligibility requirements

- Must be a high school graduate
- Must maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or above
- Must reside in southeast Iowa in the general Access Energy Cooperative service area (not limited to Access Energy Cooperative territorial boundaries)



## Application process

Find an application:

- At all area high school guidance counselor offices
- By visiting our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)
- By contacting the Access Energy Cooperative headquarters office in Mt. Pleasant at 866-242-4232

Complete details can be found on our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com).

## REMINDER: WIN A \$50 BILL CREDIT BY UPDATING YOUR ACCOUNT INFORMATION



All Access Energy Cooperative bills mailed in November included a notice for members to update their account information. Any member who submits an update will be entered into a drawing for a **\$50 bill credit**. The drawing will be held **Dec. 28**.

## SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS: WIN A FREE TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

What do 1,500 high school students, our nation's capital and electric cooperatives have in common? The answer is the electric cooperative Youth Tour, of course! Youth Tour was established to inspire our next generation of leaders. Since 1964, more than 50,000 young Americans have taken advantage of this special opportunity offered by their electric cooperatives.

It takes place June 18-23, 2023, when hundreds of electric co-ops across the country send participants to Washington, D.C., for a chance to learn about the cooperative business model and enjoy a full week of sightseeing.

While in D.C., participants have a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss the issues that are important back home. Without a doubt, Youth Tour has grown into an invaluable program that gives young Americans an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Access Energy Cooperative sends two students each year. If you're a high school sophomore or junior interested in traveling to Washington, D.C., to experience a once-in-a-lifetime trip, visit [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com) to download or submit an application. Applications also can be found at your guidance counselor's office or by calling our office at 866-242-4232.

### Applications are due Feb. 28, 2023.

Personal interviews to choose our two student representatives will be held at our office on March 8, 2023. You must be able to participate in an interview to be selected.



# CHRISTMAS COOKIE & CANDY RECIPES

## TWO-TONED FUDGE

- 2½ cups sugar
- ¾ cup evaporated milk
- ⅓ cup margarine
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 cups mini marshmallows
- 1 cup butterscotch chips
- 1 cup pecan halves, chopped
- ½ teaspoon maple extract
- 2 cups milk chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- pecan halves for garnish

In large saucepan, combine sugar, milk, margarine and salt. Cook, stirring constantly until mixture comes to full boil. Boil 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and add marshmallows. Mix until melted and mixture is smooth. Place half the mixture in bowl and add butterscotch chips, chopped pecans and maple extract. Stir until melted and mixture is smooth. Set butterscotch mixture aside. Add chocolate chips and vanilla to remaining half of the mixture. Spread chocolate mixture into foil-lined 8- or 9-inch square pan. Put butterscotch mixture over top. Garnish with pecan halves. Chill for 2-3 hours, until firm. Cut into squares. *Yield 12-16 squares*

Bonnie Miller • Eldon • Access Energy Cooperative

## PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE

- 2 cups sugar
- ⅔ cup whole milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup marshmallow creme
- 1 cup peanut butter (creamy or chunky)

In medium saucepan, combine sugar and milk. Bring to a boil until soft-ball stage or 235 degrees F on a candy thermometer. Remove from heat, then stir in vanilla. Add marshmallow creme and peanut butter, stir quickly. Pour into a 9-inch square pan lined with buttered parchment paper. Cool completely before cutting. *Yield 25 pieces, approximately*

Doris Handlos • Audubon  
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

## SOUTHERN PECAN PRALINES

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup white sugar
- ½ cup cream
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup pecan halves

In medium-size pan, dissolve sugars in cream and boil until 228 degrees F. Add butter and pecans. Cook until soft-ball stage, 236 degrees F. Cool, then beat until somewhat thickened but not until it loses its gloss. Drop by tablespoons on waxed paper, it will flatten out. *Yield 12 pralines*

Sue Cook • Deep River • T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## CHRISTMAS TOFFEE

- 2 sticks butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons water
- 6 ounces milk chocolate chips

In heavy saucepan, combine butter, sugar and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally until mixture reaches 290 degrees F, soft-crack stage. Very quickly pour mixture into greased 15x10-inch pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips over top, stir until melted and smooth. Chill and break into pieces. *Yield about 2 pounds candy*

**Teresa Mowrer • Guthrie Center  
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association**

## PECO FLAKE CANDY

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups raw peanuts
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 1 package raw chip coconut

Combine sugar, syrup and water in heavy pan. Cook, stirring constantly until sugar dissolves. Add salt and nuts. Cook, stirring occasionally to hard-crack stage, 294 degrees F. Add butter, vanilla and soda. Stir in coconut and pour onto two buttered cookie sheets. While warm, pull to desired thickness. Crack into pieces when cooled.

**Phyllis Vander Linden • Ashton  
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

## KRIS KRINGLES

- 12 ounces chocolate chips (2 cups)
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar  
dash salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 cup dry roasted peanuts, chopped  
optional: peanut butter and cherry chips

Melt chocolate chips and butter in 1-quart pan. Beat in eggs until smooth and glossy. Add confectioners' sugar, salt and vanilla. Mix well, then stir in coconut and peanuts. Add peanut butter and cherry chips to taste, if desired. Spread in a 7x11-inch pan, an 8x8-inch pan or in candy molds. Chill several hours or overnight. Slice ¼-inch thick. *Yield 20-24 pieces*

**Norene Hancox • Seymour  
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

## NUT MALLOW GOODIES

- 1 cup chocolate chips
- ½ cup peanut butter
- 7 ounces marshmallow creme
- 1 cup salted peanuts

Combine chocolate chips and peanut butter in double boiler. Melt and stir until blended. Remove from heat and add creme and nuts, mix well. Spread on greased pan or drop by teaspoon. Chill until firm.

**Rebecca Pederson • Clear Lake  
Prairie Energy Cooperative**

## SPRITZ TOFFEE COOKIES

- 1¼ cups flour
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- ½ cup butter, softened
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 1 bag milk chocolate chips, melted
- 1 bag Heath toffee bits

Mix flour, brown sugar, butter and vanilla together. Don't chill dough as it may be too stiff to press. Using star design, press cookies onto ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F for 7-9 minutes or until set and lightly browned, cool. When completely cooled, dip each cookie halfway into melted chocolate chips. Place on wax paper and sprinkle with toffee bits. *Yield approximately 1½ dozen cookies*

**Patsy Vander Schaaf • Sheldon  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative**

**WANTED:**

## BREAKFAST RECIPES

**THE REWARD:**

**\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!**

**Deadline is Dec. 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](mailto:recipes@ieclmagazine.com)  
(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

**MAIL: Recipes**

*Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* • 8525 Douglas Ave.,  
Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992



# BUSINESS LEADERS HONORED WITH IOWA VENTURE AWARDS

BY KAY SNYDER



## CNI Ag Independent Retailers

*Nominated by Midland Power Cooperative*

The newest occupant of the Southview Industrial Park in Iowa Falls is CNI Ag Independent Retailers (CNI), which purchased the 24,000-square-foot speculative building for their new facility. CNI is a national distributor of crop protection products, including seed, seed treatments and micronutrients, serving its 400 independent retailers across 1,200 locations in 44 states. The Iowa Falls distribution center is the first in Iowa and will allow for continued growth in the Midwest. This location will also house a bulk packaging facility, office and meeting space.

The speculative building was built as a partnership between Iowa Falls Area Development Corporation, Midland Power, Corn Belt Power and the City of Iowa Falls. It was built to market the city to prospective businesses like CNI.



## KWF, LLC

*Nominated by Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative*

Kirchhoff Welding and Fabrication LLC (KWF) was started by Kyle Kirchhoff as a part-time business making small products for local businesses in his garage in Griswold. Since then, KWF has experienced steady growth and now employs 14 people. It has a five-building footprint housing a CNC plasma cutter, vertical band saw, press brake and state-of-the-art paint booth. KWF manufactures various equipment, including augers and conveyors, a spray boom for a helicopter, and a cement mixer truck body. With products sold nationally and internationally, their customer base has grown to include Purina and Tyson Foods pet food programs. Nishnabotna Valley REC continues to actively support KWF's growth.

Since 1988, the Iowa Area Development Group and its electric cooperative, municipal utility and independent telecommunication company partners annually recognize growing companies with an Iowa Venture Award. The award recognizes entrepreneurs and organizations for their leadership, capital investment and employment opportunities they are creating.

The following companies were honored at a luncheon during the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' annual meeting on Dec. 1. View all 287 honorees in the Iowa Venture Award Hall of Fame at [www.IADG.com/HallOfFame](http://www.IADG.com/HallOfFame).

## Hen Haven

*Nominated by Southwest Iowa REC*

Hen Haven's layer facilities began operation in the 1990s, supplying shell eggs to the breaker industry. Seeing the future need for cage-free eggs, the owners remodeled nine layer barns and added new processing machinery to sell eggs to the cage-free breaker market.

Freebird Holdco LLC purchased the site in 2021 and renamed the company Hen Haven. At the end of November 2021, the site suffered a fire, causing a catastrophic loss of one layer house, the processing plant and the biosecurity facilities. Just as the company started to rebuild in February 2022, highly pathogenic avian influenza hit, and the site was depopulated. During that time, the determined Hen Haven team worked tirelessly to shorten the cleanup period, repopulate the barns and resume operation. The recent challenges demonstrate the Hen Haven team's dedication to delivering top products and services to their customers and partners.

## SHELL ROCK SOY PROCESSING NAMED “OUTSTANDING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR”

*Nominated by Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative*

Mid-Iowa Growth purchased nearly 100 acres in the Butler Logistic Park near Shell Rock to be the site of a startup soybean processing facility. The Shell Rock Soy Processing (SRSP) complex is now ramping up to full operation. The facility expects to crush 38.5 million soybean bushels annually, producing 847,000 tons of soybean meal for livestock markets and more than 400 million pounds of soybean oil. SRSP expects to purchase 150 truckloads of soybeans per day. The company will employ 50 to 60 people when fully operational.

Many partners, including Butler County REC and Corn Belt Power Cooperative, supported the development of the Butler Logistics Park, SRSP and other businesses within the complex. Butler County REC also constructed a new substation to meet their needs.



### Godbersen Metal Works

*Nominated by Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative*

Godbersen Metal Works (GMetal) was founded in 2019 by Kent and Jill Godbersen. It is built on a family heritage of quality manufacturing, which began in 1965. The company is a metal fabricator specializing in assembly, bending, laser cutting, machining, powder coat painting, warehousing and welding. They work with multiple metals, including aluminum, stainless steel and steel.

GMetal acquired a vacant manufacturing facility in Spencer and immediately made facility improvements and energy efficiency upgrades. They have built a customer base that supports 23 jobs and has the capacity to double as they source additional workers.

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative and Corn Belt Power supported GMetal with several technical and financial programs, including a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Economic Development Loan.



### Marker 126

*Nominated by Prairie Energy Cooperative*

Marker 126 is a new travel center that recently opened at mile marker 126 on Highway 20 near Fort Dodge. Owners Kevin and Sheila Stumpf had a vision for a travel destination that provides a high-end experience for all types of travelers. Marker 126 is a family operation, including their daughter and son.

Marker 126 opened in September with an impressive slate of ever-expanding amenities. In addition to gas, diesel and offerings of a convenience store, Marker 126 houses Table 126, offering nutritious meals made from locally sourced fresh ingredients, the Brew 126 coffee shop and a creamery serving ice cream.

Sheila designed the building, and it includes indoor and outdoor seating, a fireplace area, and a loft for meetings or groups. Coming soon are electric vehicle charging stations, a dog park and a play area for kids. A trucker campground, including a shower house, is also being planned.

Prairie Energy has worked with the Stumpfs throughout the planning and building phase. Prairie Energy, Midland Power and Corn Belt Power supported this facility through their Revolving Loan Funds.



### SFM Fairfield

*Nominated by Access Energy Cooperative*

Sun & Fun Motorsports (SFM) Fairfield opened their new showroom and parts center in the Fairfield Business & Industrial Park in August. SFM Fairfield offers ATVs, side-by-sides and motorcycles from a growing stable of brands, including Can-Am, CFMOTO, SSR and Benelli. They also offer parts and services for these brands and more.

SFM was formed in 2013 by Scott Goedken and is headquartered in Iowa City. After adding two additional dealerships in Iowa City, SFM searched for a location to better serve southeast Iowa and the surrounding border states. Fairfield was selected because of the available speculative building, location and local support.

Access Energy Cooperative and Northeast Power supported the development of the industrial park, the construction of the speculative building and the location of SFM to the park.

*Kay Snyder is the director of marketing and communications for the Iowa Area Development Group.*

# KEEPING POWER FLOWING CALLS FOR INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

BY PAUL WESSLUND

Various factors, like extreme weather and increased use of renewable energy, affect the electric utility industry so much that there's even a new way to talk about it: resilience.

You might be surprised to learn that “resilience” isn't strictly used to describe the major changes affecting electricity service. Instead, it's about actionable steps electric utilities take to keep power flowing.

A few years ago, “reliability” was the term of choice. Reliability meant trimming trees near power lines and keeping squirrels from chewing up electrical equipment. Attention to those priorities worked. The average American's electricity stayed on well over 99.9% of the time. That reliability record is still holding up, but it's under pressure on several emerging fronts.

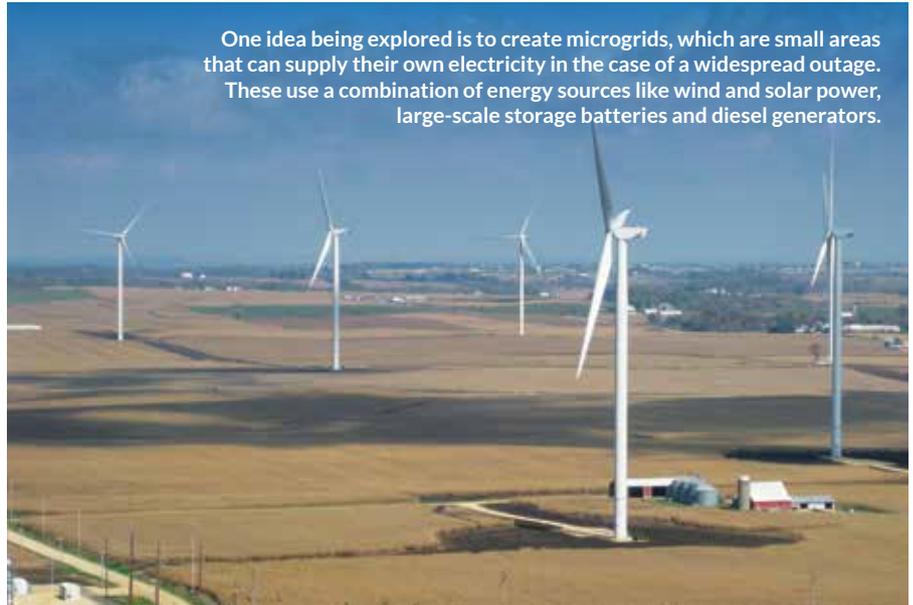
More powerful and frequent natural disasters and even the growing fleets of electric vehicles call for all-electric utilities to learn new ways to do their job. Maintaining the power grid means planning for sudden and large-scale disruptions.

If you're unsure about the difference between “reliability” and “resilience,” you're not alone. Even utilities can have slightly different definitions. But most tend to agree that grid resiliency is the ability to withstand and recover from disruptive events and to predict and adapt to ensure consumers have the reliable power they need in a time of new energy challenges.

A less-formal definition from the Future Electric Utility Regulation Advisory Group compares electric service to a boxing match:

“Reliability is when you can take a punch. Resilience is how fast you get up off the canvas after you've been hit hard.”

Electricity is more important than ever in our daily lives. At the same time,



One idea being explored is to create microgrids, which are small areas that can supply their own electricity in the case of a widespread outage. These use a combination of energy sources like wind and solar power, large-scale storage batteries and diesel generators.

weather events can suddenly take that essential electricity away from many people. Utilities need to be ready to get back up off the canvas quickly. Last year, Congress passed and the White House signed a law that includes a \$10.5 billion Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership Program.

Here are a few other ways electric utilities are building resilience:

- **Coordinated, local planning**  
Cybersecurity is an example of government and utilities working closely together, sharing information to protect against the latest cyber threats. In other cases, one size does not fit all. Electric cooperatives, in particular, point out that resilience means paying attention to regional and local differences.
- **Microgrids**  
One idea being explored is to create small areas that can supply their electricity in the case of a widespread outage. These microgrids use a combination of energy sources like wind and solar power, large-scale storage batteries and diesel generators.

## ■ Continued modernization

Electric utilities are investing in building power lines connecting to new renewable energy sources. They're also investing in digital equipment and sensors that can more quickly detect and resolve power outages or other problems.

There are opportunities as well – the growing number of electric vehicles plugged in overnight could be seen as a huge energy drain on the grid when the batteries in the electric cars are charging. Or those same batteries, when fully charged, could be a source of reserve power to supply the home in case of a large, unplanned outage.

There's no doubt that major changes to how we generate and consume energy are happening. But utilities, including electric cooperatives, are answering the call with innovative solutions to serve their local communities. That's called resilience.

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

# 'TIS THE SEASON – TO CELEBRATE SAFELY!

This isn't just the time of year that we eat more than usual, it's also the time when we have the most household accidents and fires. To help make sure your holidays don't go from merry to scary, remember these tips.

## 12 Days of Holiday Safety Tips

**1** Keep decorations at least three feet away from heat sources – especially those with an open flame, like fireplaces and candles. And remember to blow out candles when you leave the room or go to sleep.

**2** The best decorations are safe decorations, so when you are decorating, make sure not to run cords under rugs or furniture, out of windows, or across walkways and sidewalks.

**3** If you have a natural Christmas tree, water it to keep it fresh and safe. Real trees can dry up and turn into kindling in no time at all. Get rid of the tree after Christmas. Dried-out trees are a fire hazard and should not be left in the home or garage.

**4** Always turn off your decorations when you leave your home and when you're sleeping. Most deadly fires happen while people are asleep.

**5** Be mindful of how you are using electrical outlets. If you're using extension cords or adapters that add receptacles, consider having a qualified electrician add more outlets to your home. Extension cords are a common cause of home fires.

**6** Only use electronics in dry areas. As tempting as it is, you just can't decorate your aquarium with icicle lights!

**7** Remember that phones and tablets should stay on your nightstand. We all love falling asleep to the muffled crooning of Bing Crosby and Michael Bublé, but overheated electronics under pillows and blankets are dangerous.

**8** Need a perfect gift idea? How about a smoke alarm? Every home needs a working smoke alarm in each bedroom, outside sleeping areas, and on every level, including the basement. And remember to test your own to make sure they're working.

**9** If you're using a space heater, switch it off before leaving the room. It only takes seconds for a fire to start if a space heater tips over or comes in contact with something combustible, like a blanket or curtains.

**10** Inspect your decorations and discard any that are damaged or worn out. Talk to your aunt about that life-sized Elvis-dressed-as-Santa statue. It's falling apart, it's creepy and it's got to go.

**11** Keep batteries stored safely in their packaging and out of reach of anything that might try to eat them, like small children and pets. Eating a battery can be deadly.

**12** The best gift for your family is to upgrade to Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupter breakers or outlets. It is estimated that half of the electrical fires that occur every year could be prevented by AFCIs. All upgrades should be completed by a qualified electrician.

# SMART APPLIANCES FOR THE SMART CHEF

BY KATHERINE LOVING

Whether you're a master chef or a culinary novice, smart appliances add convenience to any kitchen. They can guide you step-by-step or even perform the cooking themselves.

Smart appliances typically rely only on Wi-Fi paired with a custom smartphone application, while others can work with common smart home systems like Google Home or Amazon Alexa. You can set smart devices to begin a programmed routine to turn on lights, adjust the thermostat and many other tasks.

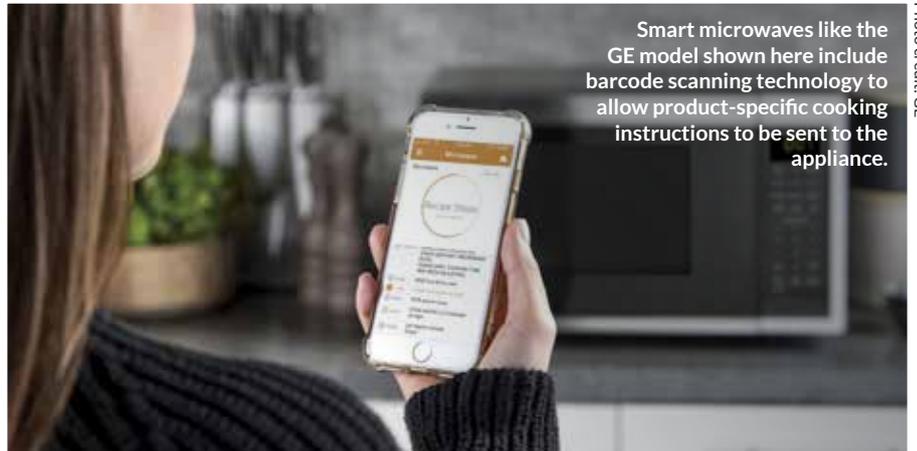
## Cooktops and ranges

Induction cooktops are an innovation in themselves. Induction cooking works by using a magnetic field to deliver energy directly to induction-specific cookware. They are 32% more energy efficient than gas cooktops and about 75% more efficient than electric cooktops.

Like other smart cooktops, smart induction models recognize when a pan is placed on an element and automatically turn off when a pan is removed from the cooktop. Brands like Samsung and Bosch offer additional smart functions like synchronizing the cooktop with a brand-matched smart ventilation hood. The smart hood activates when cooking begins and adapts to cooking intensity on the fly.

Smart ranges can also include this function and often feature a barcode scanning system that allows you to scan store-bought foods, prompting the oven to start based on the instructions. Smart ranges can be controlled remotely to preheat, change and monitor temperatures through the companion app or an integrated home system. A few brands offer a Wi-Fi-connected cooking thermometer to allow remote monitoring.

For novice chefs, many smart ovens and cooktops have guided step-



Smart microwaves like the GE model shown here include barcode scanning technology to allow product-specific cooking instructions to be sent to the appliance.

Photo credit: GE



The June Oven includes an in-oven camera that allows progress to be tracked from its app, which provides progress monitoring and notifications to your phone when cooking is complete.

Photo credit: June



Induction cooktops, like the Samsung model shown here, transfer heat directly to the cookware, which is specially made for induction cooking.

Photo credit: Samsung

by-step recipes within the app to help control the cook time and temperature.

## Countertop ovens

Manufacturers are adding smart functionality to their countertop cooking options as well. The June Oven includes an in-oven camera that allows progress to be tracked from an app. The app also provides progress monitoring with push notifications to your phone.

Tovala offers a smaller countertop oven for ready-to-cook meals. These ovens use barcode scanning technology for both Tovala meals and those from the grocery store. The app also uses push notifications to track progress.

Like Tovala, the Breville smart oven offers guided recipes and an app that directs cooking temperature and function, such as air fry or bake, as the recipe advances. The Breville smart oven uses an onboard chip to monitor and stabilize temperature from all sides for more efficient cooking.

## Microwaves and other gadgets

Other common kitchen appliances and small devices are getting smart, too. Microwaves from manufacturers like LG, Whirlpool, GE, Sharp and Toshiba include the barcode scanning function to allow product-specific cooking instructions to be sent to the appliance.

Smart kitchen scales, air fryers and pasta makers are also available to connect to your phone for guided measuring and cooking. Try a smart meat thermometer if you're looking for a smart kitchen gadget that won't break the bank. These handy little devices work with an app to specify optimal cook time and temperature, and notify the chef when the meat is ready.

As appliances and kitchen gadgets get smarter, home chefs will have more options for convenience and functionality. Bon appétit!

*Katherine Loving writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

# KITCHEN TOOLS TELL THE STORY OF RURAL IOWA

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

Like many of you, I've been spending more time in the kitchen lately, cooking holiday meals and treats. As I was washing some dishes the other night, a wooden-handled cookie spatula caught my eye.

The stainless-steel blade is printed with the John Deere logo and "Merry Christmas 1966, Snyder Implement Co., Lake City, Iowa." I inherited it from my grandma Katherine Dougherty, and it's one of my go-to gadgets for serving cake and brownies.

I remember tagging along many times in the early 1980s with my dad to Snyder Implement when it was located on the east edge of town. I loved checking out the farm toys just around the corner from the parts counter. I also remember begging Dad for some money so I could work the candy machine near the shop where the mechanics worked.

## Cooking up rural nostalgia

As I look around my kitchen today, I think about how many gadgets record a history of rural Iowa over the last 100 years. I love my blue, glazed-ceramic salt-and-pepper shakers in the shape of 3-inch-tall grain elevators printed with the words "Farmers Coop Grain Co., Yetter, Iowa."

Then there's the white, magnetic clip with the iconic double-circle logo from Farmers Co-op Grain Co. The phone numbers for the Yetter elevator and Lake City office on the clip reflect the seven-digit phone system with Lake City's 464 prefix, which came into use around the early 1960s.

The seven-digit phone system must not have been in use when Arndt's Café & Tavern at Yetter had personalized, blue plastic salt-and-pepper shakers. Back then, you had to call 24-95 (an Auburn number) to reach the café, which was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Arndt.

Speaking of Auburn, I have a metal flour sifter from the Auburn Hardware Co. ("Where you always get a square



deal") and one from Zehms Grocery in Knierim. "When it's sifted down, you'll find it pays to trade with Zehms Grocery," proclaims the yellow, black and red sifter, which noted that Zehms paid cash for poultry, cream and eggs.

Then there are my vintage hot pads from Farmers Cooperative Creamery, phone 243, in Corning ("Butter Your Income with Us," and "Try Your Co-op First"), and the C-D Farm Service Company in Spencer, which offered petroleum, L.P. gas, fertilizers, feed, seed, chemicals, twine, motor oils, grease and animal health products. I wonder how many of these companies are still in business. Not many, I suspect.

While businesses don't give away as many kitchen gadgets as they used to, I still love them when I get them, from an instant-read thermometer from the Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association to a plastic cutting board from Latham Hi-Tech Seeds.

These modern items continue to tell a story about the evolution of rural Iowa. They also reflect how some things never change, like the need for handy tools and the pleasure of eating home-cooked meals. Mmmm, I could go for some cake. Where's that John Deere spatula?

*Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at [www.darcymaulsby.com](http://www.darcymaulsby.com).*



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