

living with energy

IN IOWA



NOVEMBER 2020

Help other members in need with RECare ▶ See Page 12



Access Energy Cooperative receives Impact Award

Visit our website at www.accessenergycoop.com

Gift ideas from families and businesses served by co-ops

Pie recipes for Thanksgiving

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living with energy IN IOWA

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Even though Iowa has had its share of storms, including an August derecho, nearly two dozen linemen recently helped a Louisiana co-op restore power to its members.



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Just in time for the big feast, Iowa's co-op cooks share their favorite pie recipes. **PLUS:** Find out how you can receive a \$25 credit on your power bill!



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ON THE COVER



The Bakker family farms near Dike and is served by Grundy County REC. Shari Bakker is a fourth-generation farmer and owner of Farm Sweet Farm Candles. Each year, she donates a portion of the proceeds from her candle sales to an agricultural youth organization. Read more on Pages 10-11. Photo courtesy of Shari Bakker. ⚡

Thank you for investing your time with us every month

BY ANN THELEN

In the spirit of the season, I want to personally thank you for investing time in reading this publication each month. We work hard to develop compelling stories about how Iowa's electric cooperatives are powering lives and empowering communities, and it means so much to hear your positive feedback.

Over the summer, we conducted a scientific survey to learn more about our readers' preferences and demographics. We worked with Iowa's local electric cooperatives to email survey invitations to those who receive the magazine, and 722 electric co-op members completed our online survey. This response gives us a 3.6% margin of error and a 95% degree of probability in our findings, establishing a solid baseline to guide our decision making.

We learned some great things about our readers. Almost 90% of the co-op members who receive *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine read it every month, and nearly 50% of those who receive the magazine spend more than 10 minutes reading it. These findings are very encouraging in an environment saturated with marketing messages and businesses clamoring for your attention. We also learned that 62% of our readers are under the age of 65. Print is still a relevant and valuable communications tool, even in a digital world.

We have a very educated readership; 82% of our respondents have received education beyond high school. Our survey results also indicate that about one-third of our readers have been co-op members for 10 years or less.



Survey respondents rated their level of agreement to several questions about content preferences, and energy efficiency content ranked very high. Our readers want to save money and energy, and we'll continue to share home improvement tips and do-it-yourself projects in every issue.

As the editor of *Living with Energy in Iowa* for more than two years, it is a privilege to present these stories to you every month. It is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. I am deeply encouraged to know that many of our readers value the content and

find it useful in their lives.

Your local electric cooperative also sees the value in using this publication to provide education on electric safety, emerging technologies and energy efficiency, in addition to keeping you informed about local co-op news.

I wish you and your family a wonderful Thanksgiving. While gathering around the dining room table might look different this year due to the pandemic, we can still reflect on our blessings and be grateful for the simple things. I am certainly thankful to know more about you, our valued readers. ⚡

Ann Thelen is the editor of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a Cuisinart® Extra-Large Rotisserie Fryer and Steamer

This multitasking marvel not only fries an entire 14-pound turkey in an hour using less oil than a traditional fryer, it also fries up big portions of delicious appetizers, entrées, side dishes, breakfast treats and more! Use it without oil to steam all your favorites, like vegetables and dumplings. From appetizers to entrées to desserts, the options are endless! ⚡



Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com no later than Nov. 30, 2020. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the slow cooker from the September issue was Robert Jansen, Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Nov. 18	Blood Drive
Nov. 26-27	Office closed for Thanksgiving
Nov. 19-Dec. 31	Festival of Lights
Nov. 30	Fall Legislative Meeting
Dec. 24-25	Office closed for Christmas
Jan. 1	Office closed for New Year's Day

You can call us at 866-242-4232, 24 hours a day, seven days a week – or use our SmartHub App – for answers to billing and account questions, paying your bill, and service interruptions. ⚡



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

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LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

Balanced generation is a team effort

BY KEVIN WHEELER

Balancing reliable and affordable electricity with environmental responsibility is a longstanding commitment Associated Electric, power supplier for Access Energy Cooperative, makes to those receiving its electricity. By adding significant amounts of wind power to diversify generating sources, investing in environmental controls, and staying up to date with regulations and technologies, Associated continues to comply with environmental regulations at an affordable cost for members.



and monitor employee safety. They also handle reporting to state and federal agencies, securing permits, plus monitoring and taking samples of water, air and soil to ensure Associated continues to be a good steward of natural resources.

Significant investments make the difference

More than \$1.1 billion has been invested by Associated to reduce air emissions since 1994, resulting in tremendous improvements in air quality. Emissions from Associated's coal power plants have dropped 80 to 90%, depending on the specific emission being monitored. While the current results are impressive, compliance with new and changing land, air and water regulations is an ongoing priority.

Environmental commitment delivers results

"Making sure our power generation activities safeguard air, water and land is a big responsibility. Our track record shows Associated delivers meaningful results members can be proud of," says Brent Ross, Associated's managing director of environmental, health and safety. "It's a team effort."

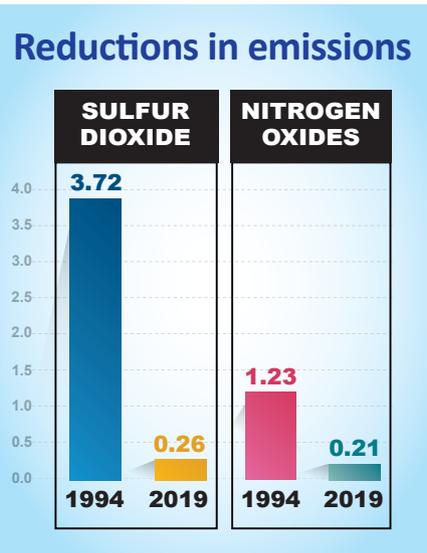
Ross and his staff keep up with complex federal and state regulatory changes, conduct safety and environmental training and audits,

Renewable energy diversifies generation sources

Associated receives power from seven wind farms. An eighth wind farm will be added later this year, meaning Associated will have 1,240 megawatts of wind power delivered from 626 wind turbines across three states. Locking in long-term, fixed-cost wind power helps Associated diversify its generation sources for years to come. About 30 megawatts of solar power is being produced by member-consumers connected to Associated's member systems, such as Access Energy Cooperative.

Whether the challenge is managing generation sources or making investments to ensure land, air and water are protected, Associated Electric and Access Energy Cooperative take their responsibilities seriously. ⚡

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



Access Energy Cooperative recognized with economic development Impact Award

Access Energy Cooperative's commitment goes far beyond ensuring safe, reliable, efficient and environmentally responsible energy. We actively create strategic partnerships and provide technical and financial assistance to support business growth and community vitality. Annually, the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) presents Impact Awards to utility partners who have been involved in significant economic development initiatives. During Access Energy Cooperative's September board meeting, the cooperative was recognized for its economic development accomplishments and commitment to the communities it serves.

Access Energy Cooperative was presented with an IADG Impact Award for community

development. The project support includes securing funds through the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant program to support upgrades to the Henry County Health Center in Mount Pleasant. These funds assisted with purchasing a new ambulance and installing new X-ray equipment to be used extensively by the Emergency Department. The loan will be paid back into Access Energy's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and will be available to support future projects.

"We commend Access Energy Cooperative for being an active supporter of business and community development in the territory it serves," says IADG President Rand Fisher. "The co-op provides essential financial and technical assistance that many



Kevin Wheeler, Access Energy Cooperative general manager/CEO (left), receives an Impact Award on behalf of Access Energy Cooperative from Rand Fisher, president of IADG.

times is a critical component in successfully securing projects, which create jobs and support community vitality." ⚡

IN THE COMMUNITY

Giving back to our community

Over the past few months, like so many of you, we've risen to meet new challenges and strengthen our community's safety net, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've made numerous adjustments to programs and operations to maintain business continuity while staying focused on the bigger mission of helping our consumer-members during this turbulent time.

While our purpose is to provide safe and reliable energy to you, the members we serve, we have a greater mission – to be a catalyst for good.

You're probably aware of our RECare program, where we take donations from generous members like you to help our most vulnerable

neighbors pay their bills.

Our investment in youth is a bright spot in our community programs, including the Youth Tour program, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. We also offer \$9,000 in scholarships to area high school seniors to help with their education.



We also have a strong commitment to safety – not just for our employees but also for our community. We visit schools to teach children of all ages how to stay safe around electricity. We extend that same training to area ENT professionals and county workers.

Access Energy Cooperative invests

in the economic development of the community through an active role in our local Chamber of Commerce, area development entities and the Iowa Area Development Group.

You'll also see our employees serving on local boards, coaching youth sports, volunteering at charitable events and participating in our blood drives. Because when you work at a co-op, you understand how important a strong community is – after all, without you, the co-op wouldn't exist.

We know that our core job is to keep the lights on, but our passion is our community. Because we live and work here too, and we want to make it a better place for all. Concern for community is the heart and soul of who we are, and we do our best to give back to our communities. Together, let's make this November the month about giving! ⚡

Iowa linemen demonstrate the power of “Cooperation Among Cooperatives”

Crews restore power to region

BY ANN THELEN



Iowa has seen its fair share of weather-related disasters, including 25 Federal Emergency Management Agency declared disasters in the past 10 years. From flooding to tornadoes to ice storms, the heart of the Midwest isn't immune from situations that take a toll on electric power infrastructure.

When there's a disaster or significant power outage, Iowa's electric cooperatives embody the co-op principle of "Cooperation Among Cooperatives." It's a foundational part of a members-first philosophy in ensuring safe, affordable and reliable power delivery. When someone is in need, co-op employees and directors step up to help. Whether it's helping a neighboring co-op or going across state lines as part of a mutual aid effort, Iowa co-ops have a long history of coming forward to serve members.

Helping after a hurricane

On the heels of the destruction the summer derecho caused in our state, linemen from Iowa's electric cooperatives didn't waver in their commitment to assist other co-ops members when another massive storm hit.

On Aug. 27, Hurricane Laura – a Category 4 hurricane – made landfall in the Gulf Region and knocked out electricity to more than 1 million people. Beauregard Electric Cooperative (BECi) in DeRidder, Louisiana, was hit incredibly hard. The hurricane left 43,000 BECi members in the dark, and due to the massive damage, 13,000 members were still without power three weeks after the storm.

That's when 21 linemen from seven of Iowa's electric cooperatives

answered the call for mutual aid and headed south to Louisiana on Sept. 18 for two weeks. When a cooperative provides aid in these situations, the impacted co-op reimburses for the services.

Dillon Clark and Aaron Nippert, linemen from Harlan-based Nishnabotna Valley REC, aren't strangers to tough working conditions. Nippert volunteered when Category 5 Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in 2005. Clark has helped other states and most recently helped other Iowa co-ops restore power after the derecho.

"By the time we arrived, the co-op members had already been without power for three weeks. A lot of the debris had been removed, so we could drive our vehicles to the job sites," Nippert says.

impacted by Hurricane Laura

He adds, however, that five consecutive days of rain from Tropical Storm Beta shortly after the Iowa crews arrived contributed to difficult working conditions. Large tents at Georgia Pacific Lumber served as the camp for the crews, and the ground was saturated. The tents were situated on plastic grates on the ground. Because the Louisiana soil there doesn't drain well, the rain quickly pools and sits. Fire ants and other insects contributed to uncomfortable living conditions.

"With another approaching storm, we were all moved to the local airport, which was all on a hard surface. It made the temporary living conditions much better," Clark says. "The members were initially told they would be without power for two months, so they were really happy when power was restored after a month."

Kurt Lowenberg, line foreman with Access Energy Cooperative in Mount Pleasant, has also been on the ground restoring power following a hurricane.

"It's gratifying to help others. When your own co-op and member-consumers are going through a major outage situation, we know how grateful we are to receive the mutual aid assistance," Lowenberg says. "The residents made signs thanking us and gave us goodie bags with soda, water and candy bars."

With the potential spread of COVID-19 a concern, the lineworkers had regular temperature checks before meals, and cots and tables were spread out to facilitate a degree of



social distancing. The crew enjoyed a variety of traditional Louisiana food, including delicious Cajun dishes.

"Where we worked, a lot of people had poor living conditions, yet they were so thankful we were there to help," says Jared Howard, a foreman with Anamosa-based Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative. Howard has also worked in hurricane- and storm-impacted regions in Iowa and the U.S.

"Any of those people would have given us the shirt off their back if we would have needed it. When the derecho hit our co-op's service territory, my home was out of power for three days. That was long enough for me, and I can't imagine being out of power for a month."

"Cooperation Among Cooperatives" – it's not just a tagline or phrase. It's a promise co-op member-consumers can always count on, day in and day out. ⚡

Ann Thelen is the editor of *Living with Energy in Iowa*.

Iowa cooperatives and linemen providing power restoration aid to Louisiana

Access Energy Cooperative

Kurt Lowenberg
Ben Smith
Colton Stephens
Jon Trumpold

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative

Thad DeMoss
Ryan Romano
Mark Waechter

Linn County Rural Electric Cooperative

Cory Cushion
Colby Duggan
Dana Mortensen
Justin Willett

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

Jared Howard
Travis Manders
Matt Osweiler
Mason Paustian

Midland Power Cooperative

Jordan Bos
Cody Busher

Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

Dillon Clark
Aaron Nippert

Prairie Energy Cooperative

Austin Codner
Scott Muhlenbruch





THANKSGIVING

Pie Recipes

Kentucky Pecan Pie

- 1 cup white corn syrup
- 1 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/3 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 whole eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 9-inch pie shell
- 1 1/2 cups whole pecans

Combine syrup, sugar, salt, butter and vanilla. Mix well, then add slightly beaten eggs. Pour into a 9-inch unbaked pie shell. Sprinkle pecans over entire pie. Bake at 350 degrees F for approximately 45 minutes.

Phyllis J. Kline • Missouri Valley
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

Good Ole Gooseberry Pie

- 3 cups gooseberries, divided
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3 tablespoons quick cooking tapioca
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 9-inch pie shells
- 2 tablespoons butter

Wash and stem gooseberries. Set aside 2 1/2 cups, then crush remaining 1/2 cup. Add sugar, tapioca and salt. Cook until bubbly and then cook 2 additional minutes, stirring occasionally. Add remaining whole berries. Line 9-inch pie plate with pastry, fill with berries and dot with butter. Add top crust, cut slits on top or make heart shapes with knife. Seal edges and bake at 400 degrees F for 35 minutes.

Betty Sorden • Webster • T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

Pumpkin Pecan Pie

- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 can pumpkin
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup dark corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 9-inch pie shell

Combine first 8 ingredients. Pour into unbaked pie shell. Bake at 350 degrees F for 40 minutes or until a knife inserted halfway between the middle and the edge comes out clean. Cool before serving.

Dode Westendorf • Waverly
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

Butternut Squash Pie

- 1 9-inch single pie crust
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 4 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 3 cups butternut squash, cooked and mashed
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup water
- 3 teaspoons vanilla extract
- whipped cream

Line a 9-inch pie plate with pastry, trim and flute edges. Cut out scrapes with a leaf shaped cookie cutter for garnish, if desired. Place on baking sheet and set aside. In a large bowl combine sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon. Beat in squash, butter, eggs, water and vanilla until smooth. Pour into crust. Cover edges loosely with foil. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15 minutes. Remove foil and bake 35 to 40 minutes longer or until knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Bake leaf cutouts for 5 to 7 minutes or until golden brown. Cool pie and cutouts on a wire rack for one hour. Refrigerate pie until chilled. Garnish with pastry leaves and whipped cream.

Sue Harrison • Le Mars
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

Tips source
AllRecipes.com

PARTY ON A PLATE

Use cutout shapes, crimps, braids and other fun tricks to make your pie look like a party on a plate.

PIE TIPS

ROLL OUT THE DOUGH

Use as little flour as possible when rolling out the dough. The pastry can absorb extra flour, which will also make it tough. After rolling out the dough, brush off loose flour with a pastry brush or gently brush it with the edge of a clean kitchen towel.

PIE TIPS

Southern Sweet Potato Pie

- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 2/3 cups sugar
- 1 cup mashed sweet potatoes
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup evaporated milk
- 1 9-inch pie shell, unbaked

In a large bowl, combine flour and sugar. Add sweet potatoes, eggs, corn syrup, nutmeg, salt, butter and milk. Beat well, then pour into pie shell. Bake at 350 degrees F for 55 to 60 minutes. Cool on wire rack for 1 hour. Refrigerate for at least 3 hours before serving.

Karen Caldwell • Albia
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Sour Cream Raisin Pie

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 9-inch pie crust
- whipping cream

In a large bowl, combine eggs, sour cream, sugar, vanilla, salt and nutmeg. Beat until smooth, then stir in raisins. Pour filling into pie crust. Bake in lower half of oven at 375 degrees F for 40 minutes or until filling is set. Allow to cool before serving with a dollop of whipping cream.

Tamara Kramer • Le Mars
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

Gingersnap Cranberry Lime Pie

- 4 ounces gingersnap cookies, approximately 18
- 1 cup walnut pieces
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 12 ounces cranberries, frozen or fresh
- 1 1/2 cups sugar, divided
- 1/3 cup water
- 3 large eggs
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 2 tablespoons orange zest
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup cold butter, cubed
- garnish: whole berries coated in sugar whipped topping**

Pulse cookies, walnuts, melted butter and brown sugar in a food processor. Press into bottom and sides of a deep pie pan. Bake at 350 degrees F for 12 to 15 minutes, until browned. Allow to cool. Cook cranberries, 1 cup sugar and water until berries burst and most liquid evaporates, approximately 12 to 15 minutes. Cool to lukewarm then puree until smooth. Add puree, remaining sugar, eggs, egg yolks, orange juice, orange zest and salt to a double boiler. Cook until thick enough to coat a spatula, approximately 8 to 10 minutes. When just warm, add butter one piece at a time, beating on high speed until the curd is lighter in color. Pour into crust and chill for 2 hours. Garnish with whole berries and serve with whipped topping.

Carol DeJong • Sibley
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.



Search our online recipe archive for thousands of recipes from Iowa's rural kitchens.

www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com/recipes

Wanted: Irish Recipes! The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

You don't have to hail from Ireland to celebrate the favorite foods of St. Patrick's Day! From corned beef and cabbage to Shepherd's Pie, Irish Stew and shamrock desserts, we're looking for Irish-inspired foods. If we run your recipe in the magazine, we'll send a \$25 credit for your electric co-op to apply to your power bill. Recipes submitted also may be archived on our website at www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com.

The deadline is Nov. 30, 2020. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions.

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

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

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

CHILL THE DOUGH

Chill the dough after rolling it out and lining the pie pan. This step relaxes the dough and prevents it from shrinking in the oven.

PIE TIPS

LET IT COOL AND SET

Fruit pies should cool at least four hours before slicing; custard pies should cool for two hours before serving or being refrigerated.

PIE TIPS

SET THE STRUCTURE

For custard pies and cream pies, it's often a good idea to pre-bake the crust, a.k.a. "blind baking" the crust.

PIE TIPS

IN THE OVEN

Bake pies on the lowest oven rack on a preheated sheet pan. This helps prevent soggy bottom crusts. A rimmed pan also prevents juicy fruit pies from bubbling over onto the oven floor.

PIE TIPS

Gift ideas from families and businesses

Shopping local benefits Iowa's communities

BY KAY SNYDER

This year has brought about unprecedented situations, from the COVID-19 pandemic to a derecho, many Iowans' lives and businesses have been impacted. Even in a typical year, buying products that are locally grown or made helps keep our local communities strong. More than ever, people are looking for more ways to support businesses run by friends, neighbors and community members. With Iowa's electric cooperatives powering businesses in all of the state's 99 counties, there are many opportunities to shop local this upcoming holiday season.

We've rounded up a sampling of some Iowa-based products to consider adding to your gift-giving list. In your communities, we invite you to discover the unique businesses that line Main Street or reside along the rural landscape.

Country View Dairy – Hawkeye

In 2011, Carolee and Dave Rapson built a creamery on their family farm and expanded their product offerings. Country View Dairy makes all-natural farmstead yogurt, in both original and Greek style, using the wholesome milk from the family's dairy herd. Additional dairy products include sour cream, frozen yogurt and whole milk. Their state-of-the-art creamery is located on the family farm, guaranteeing the freshest premium quality products. Visit their on-farm store to shop for dairy items, candles, soaps and more. To shop their products online and access a list of distributors, visit countryviewdairy.com.



Served by Allamakee-Clayton
Electric Cooperative

Hinterland Dairy Farmstead Cheese - Donnellson

Hinterland Dairy, owned by Ralph and Colleen Krogmeier, opened their cheese processing and retail business on their Iowa farm in 2019. Hinterland is a European term describing "land that is off from what is typically visible." This depicts their 400-acre dairy farm nestled between Fort Madison and Donnellson. Hinterland's milk is handcrafted with the best cultures and finest salt, creating a flavor that is unique to the farm. Products include cheese, cheese curds, cheese bundles and a wide variety of other local products. Visit their online store at hinterlanddairy.com.



Served by Access Energy Cooperative



Loess Hills Lavender Farm – Missouri Valley

In 2005, Mary and Tim Hamer visited lavender fields in Sequim, Washington. The trip ignited a spark in Mary to bring lavender to Iowa. In 2006, the Hamers planted their first 20 lavender plants and began the lavender farming journey. Loess Hills Lavender Farm, located north of Missouri Valley, has cultivated a thriving business and enthusiastic following. In addition to the beautiful lavender field, the farm boasts a gift shop with a full line of skincare and bath products and goods from many local artists. Handmade lavender products include lavender butter balm, lavender lotion, shower gel, spritz, bar soap and scented sachets. For more information, visit loesshillslavender.com.

Served by Harrison County
Rural Electric Cooperative

served by co-ops

Farm Sweet Farm – Dike

Shari Bakker is a fourth-generation farmer who farms alongside her husband Jarrod and three children. Shari grew up on a Century Farm in southwest Iowa, where her family raised hogs and row crops. She met her husband at Iowa State University, and they later moved to his hometown of Dike. They currently raise hogs, grow corn and soybeans, and both work off-the-farm jobs to support their dreams.



Shari created Farm Sweet Farm Candles out of her love for agriculture and a passion for starting her own business.



Each candle is made from soy-based wax and hand-created by Shari, with products researched and approved by her family. The scents are based on agricultural products, and wooden wicks provide a crackling ambiance. Shari believes in giving back, and each year donates a portion of the proceeds from her candle sales to an agricultural youth organization.

Farm Sweet Farm Candles celebrate all types of agriculture, and as the seasons change, so do the products and scents. Shari says, “My candles celebrate American agriculture and the farmers who provide us with so many choices.” For more information and to shop the online store, visit farmsweetfarmcandles.com.

Family served by Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative

Stensland Dairy – Larchwood

Stensland Family Farms is a multigenerational farm, which started in 1915 outside of Larchwood. The Stenslands operate a 200-cow dairy and recently opened an on-farm creamery. Approximately 1,500 acres of cropland feeds the cows that produce milk for the dairy. The milk is bottled and also used to create ice cream,



aged cheese and cheese curds. Stensland’s products are available at its on-farm store, Sioux Falls location and local grocery stores. To learn more, visit stenslandfamilyfarms.com.

Served by Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative



IOWA SMOKEHOUSE meat snacks and laura beth’s jar goods (Preferred Wholesale, Inc.) – Albia

Preferred Wholesale, Inc. started as a snack food distribution business in 1984. After many years of distributing other companies’ products, owner Lee Holsman and his family decided to create their brands. The company started with laura beth’s all-natural jams, salsas and pickled jar goods, and then added IOWA SMOKEHOUSE jerky and meat snacks. These products are now available across the U.S. Look for IOWA SMOKEHOUSE meats and laura beth’s products at Bomgaars, Mills Fleet Farm, Theisen’s, Tractor Supply, Hy-Vee, Fareway, Orscheln, Casey’s and more. Preferred Wholesale, Inc. will launch an online store in 2021, after completing a facility expansion project. To learn more, visit preferredwholesaleinc.com.

Served by Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative

When you “Buy Iowa,” you’re supporting local families and helping businesses thrive. In addition to online purchasing and home delivery, many businesses also offer gift cards for products and services. ⚡

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

IN THE COMMUNITY

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 \$1 a month will help others. The amount collected for contributions July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, was \$2,657.21. Thank you to those who have given to help others. This program is administered by the Iowa Community Action Program, and recipients must meet their guidelines. ⚡



To have an amount deducted from your monthly bill, 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 _____

ZIP Code _____

Phone # _____

Email _____

Account # (if known) _____

ENERGY RESEARCH

Access Energy helps fund the Iowa Energy Center and CGRER

Each year, Access Energy Cooperative contributes a portion of its gross revenues to the Iowa Energy Center at the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research at the University of Iowa.

The Iowa Energy Center helps to promote, develop and

advance energy efficiency programs and renewable energy research.

In addition, the center is available to answer questions on a variety of energy issues for the citizens of Iowa.

In 2020, Access Energy Cooperative paid \$37,873 (one-tenth of 1% of gross operating revenue for electric service). We are proud to help fund these two centers. ⚡



Proud sponsor of

Festival of Lights

Nov. 19-21, 25-29
 Dec. 2-6, 9-31
 5:30-9 p.m.

Midwest Old Threshers Campgrounds
 Mount Pleasant, Iowa

SAFETY MATTERS

MOVE OVER SLOW DOWN

If you see them working on the side of the road, please move over to the other lane and slow down.

You may not hear them, but they are thanking you!

Access Energy Cooperative
 A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Updates to residential rebate programs

Heat Pumps

Ground source heat pump must be at least 19.1 EER	
Ground source heat pump (indoor unit and loops)	\$750 per ton
Replace existing ground source heat pump (indoor unit)	\$400 per ton
Basement/crawlspace insulation <i>In conjunction with the installation of a new ground source heat pump system</i>	50% cost up to \$500
Dual Fuel, Mini-Split, Air-to-Air source heat pumps must be a least 17 SEER	
Dual fuel source heat pumps	\$250 per ton
Mini-split air source heat pumps	\$250 per ton
Air-to-air source heat pumps	\$100 per ton

Energy Efficient Appliances

Energy Star® window air conditioner	\$50
Electric water heater, new construction	\$250
Electric water heater replacing gas water heater	\$250
Electric water heater replacing electric water heater	\$250
Heat pump water heater, new construction or replacing gas or electric water heater	up to \$700
Advanced thermostat	\$50

Employee News

Ricardo Ortiz joined Access Energy Cooperative in September as the IT Administrator. He has been studying computer systems and software over the past 25 years, providing tech support to friends, family, colleagues and small businesses. He has also been consulting for non-profits, such as the Fellowship Cup and local churches. Welcome to the team, Ricardo!



Richard Clark has completed the apprenticeship program at Access Energy Cooperative and has been promoted to full Journeyman Lineman status. Rick serves on a crew at our Fairfield office. Congratulations, Rick! ⚡



PHOTO CONTEST

Enter for a chance to win \$50!

For the 2022 calendar, we are looking for more of those fantastic photos of rural settings in southeast Iowa that we have received in previous contests. We will choose 13 photos as winners to be placed in the large photo areas above the calendar pages. Each of the 13 winning entrants will receive \$50.

Please submit entries by March 31, 2021, to:

Photo Contest
c/o Access Energy Cooperative
P.O. Box 440
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

OR email them to:
contactus@accessenergycoop.com

CONTEST RULES

■ Full color photos are encouraged.

- **Entries must be in a horizontal layout.**
- **DIGITAL IMAGES ONLY WILL BE ACCEPTED IN ORIGINAL FILE SIZE.**
 - Minimum size requirement is **3300 x 2550 pixels.**
 - **Photocopies and digital pictures printed from a computer/printer will not be accepted.**
 - If an entry is received that does not meet the minimum requirements, it will be disqualified from the contest.
- Entrants may enter more than one photo.
- Entries must include the following information:
 - Entrant's name, address, phone number.
 - Title of the photograph.
 - County in which photo was taken.
- All entries will become the property of Access Energy Cooperative and may be used by Access Energy Cooperative for any purpose Access Energy Cooperative deems valid. (We can return them upon your

- request when the contest is complete.)
- Entrants agree to authorize Access Energy Cooperative to announce and publish their name, address and photograph in any forthcoming publicity without further remuneration, other than the prizes awarded in this contest.
- By submitting an entry in the contest, you agree to grant Access Energy Cooperative permissions and all rights to use the photo entry indefinitely for marketing purposes, which include but is not limited to a calendar or other printed materials promoting Access Energy Cooperative.
- All entrants must have sufficient permission of any recognizable persons appearing in the photograph to be able to grant to Access Energy Cooperative the right to display their photographic submission online or in printed material. ⚡



Iowa announces COVID-19 Residential Utility Disruption Prevention Program

In October, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) announced the launch of the new Residential Utility Disruption Prevention Program. The program will provide eligible households with up to \$2,000 toward electric, natural gas and water bills if they are at risk of disconnection due to an inability to pay due to a COVID-19-related loss of income. Payments through the program will be made directly to utility providers and applied to the applicant's account.

"We are facing an unprecedented pandemic and from the very beginning the state has made it a priority to provide critical assistance to families, farmers, renters, homeowners and small business owners," Gov. Reynolds says. "For Iowans who lost their job or saw their paycheck shrink as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Residential Utility Disruption Prevention Program will help them keep the power on and their water running."

The state allocated approximately \$14.5 million of federal CARES Act funds for utility assistance programs (the Small Business Utility Disruption Prevention Program launched in mid-July).

"We're pleased this program has been established to help provide some financial relief to local families in need during the pandemic," says Chuck Soderberg, executive



vice president/general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

To be eligible to receive assistance, a residential electric, natural gas and/or water utility customer must have:

- A primary Iowa residence with active residential utility accounts, renters may apply as long as the utility account is in the applicant's name.
- An unpaid utility bill balance or have previously entered into a payment plan with their utility provider.
- An annual income that is 80% of the median family income, based on county and household size.
- Experienced a COVID-19 loss of

income (job loss, reduction in hours, reduction in pay) on or after March 17, 2020, which resulted in hardship in paying bills for electric, natural gas, and/or water utility service provided between March 17, 2020, and Oct. 31, 2020.

"Iowans, especially our low-income citizens, have been greatly impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic," IEDA and Iowa Finance Authority Director Debi Durham says. "We are proud to make available this program offering to help our most vulnerable maintain critical utility services."

For a full list of eligibility requirements, additional information and to apply, visit iowahousingrecovery.com. Applications will be accepted between Oct. 8, 2020, and Nov. 20, 2020, or until funding is depleted, whichever comes first. Assistance will be awarded based on application completeness and eligibility in order received until all funds have been exhausted.

If you need assistance with documentation for your application, please contact your local electric cooperative. ⚡

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Cooler weather is here! Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about **42%** of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about **30%** on your energy bill. ⚡



Source: energy.gov

In every church basement

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

I recently found myself in the basement of the church I grew up in. It wouldn't matter how old I was – I would know the smell of that church anywhere: a chalky dryness just this side of musty, with a little lemon cleaner thrown in.

Over the years, I've visited many basements in houses of worship – for camps, Bible schools, baby showers, speaking engagements and teen lock-ins. And it's occurred to me that every church basement worth its salt has some of the same things in common.

First, there's the bar of gold soap in the bathroom, one split with black cracks, that has been perched on the edge of the sink since approximately 1972. Hand-pumped liquid soap has been slow to catch on in older churches. Probably because no one has dared to dump the rock-like bar that's still there "and has plenty of use in it."

Then, have you ever noticed the similarity of church dishware? I can just hear a ladies' society in 1946 picking out these dishes: "They've got to last! I'm sick of bake sales!" What's unfathomable, though, is why serviceable and sturdy equals ugly. In my girlhood church, the dishes are a heavy off-white porcelain, with a thick maroon band around the edges, looking for all the world as if they were seconds from an institution.

Curtains are another matter of equality in church basements. I have yet to visit the nether parts of a church that didn't have curtains worthy of a Sound of Music sequel – you know the one, where the von Trapp children get play clothing made from old draperies? In a burst of 1950s secular flair, they scream of tropical pineapples and palm leaves on a heavy, lined – and very dusty – print.

Tucked away somewhere just off



the basement will be the church nursery. You could probably make a fortune in here – some of these toys are most assuredly antiques and probably unsafe for any child under 3. In a recent nursery I visited, toys I hadn't seen for 40 years sat in the bin: a popcorn-type dome with wheels that was pushed around, colored balls hopping wildly; wooden blocks that were so faded you couldn't see whether there were numbers or letters printed on the sides; and a toy xylophone that seemed to be missing the mallet. On top of everything else, this room is often the recipient of shag carpeting in a 1970s shade of blazing orange or golden sunset.

Somewhere in the kitchen, maybe in a cupboard, or possibly on top of

a coat rack, will be a Lost and Found Box. These receptacles invariably contain the same items: a small doll with no hair, a little girl's plastic purse, a vinyl coin purse that zips (with 22 cents in it) and 14 ink pens flaunting seed corn insignia on the sides.

Perhaps we could start a bingo game of going from church to church to mark various church oddities on our cards. The winner would get the contents of the Lost and Found Boxes. And you'll get bonus points if the nursery has avocado green shag carpeting. 🌩

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



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