

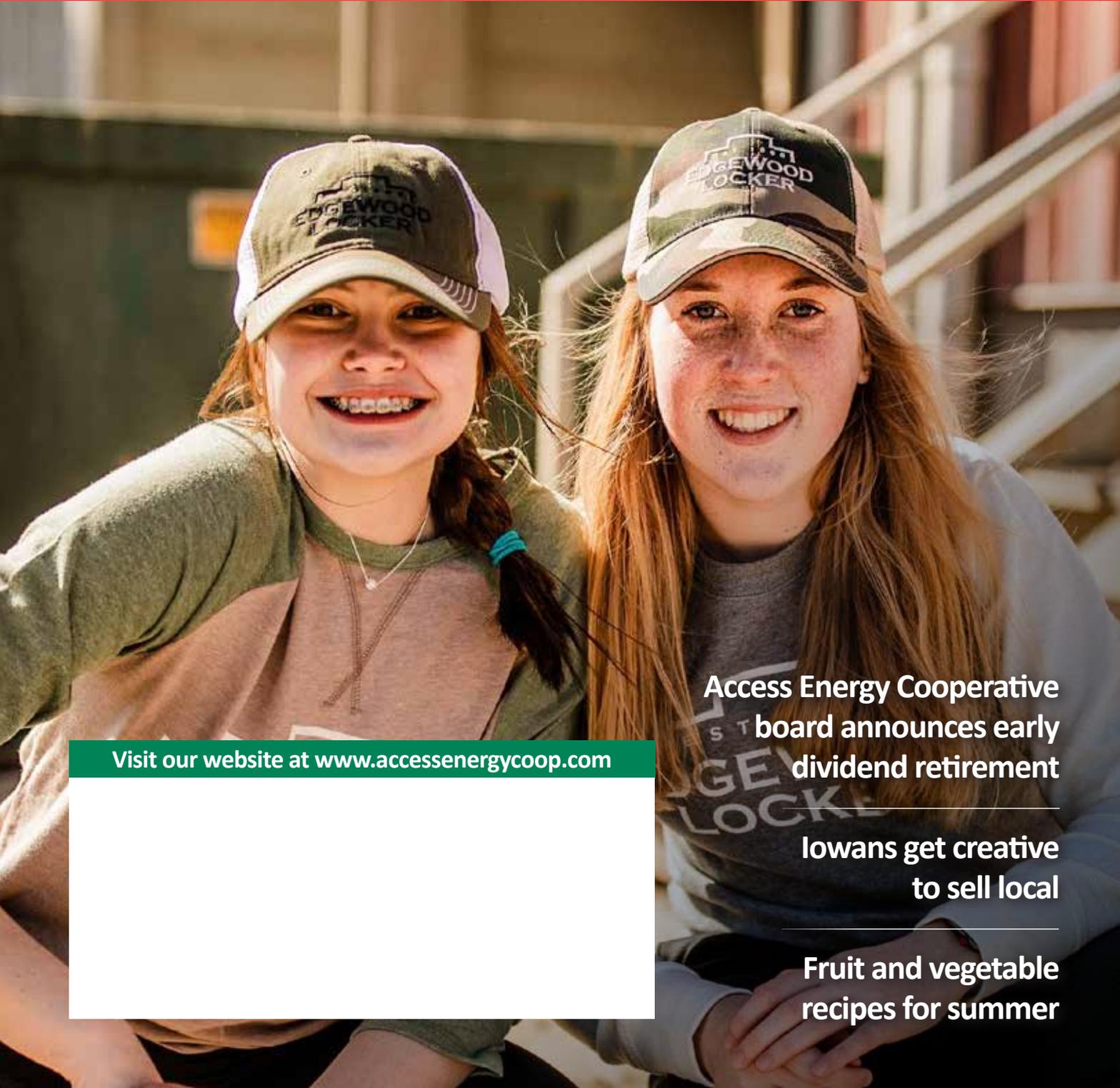
# living with energy

IN IOWA



JUNE 2021

Photo contest winners announced ▶ See Page 13



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

Access Energy Cooperative board announces early dividend retirement

Iowans get creative to sell local

Fruit and vegetable recipes for summer

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**ON THE COVER**



Ellie Bockenstedt (*left*) and Addy Kirby were students of Edgewood-Colesburg High School's 2020 digital multimedia marketing class taught by Jodi Ehlers. The class partnered with Edgewood Locker on real-world marketing activities, such as creating a fundraising brochure. The work inspired several students to take an advanced foods class where they grilled meat and staged food for marketing photography. Cassidy Steger, a fellow student and high school junior at the time, took the photos (including our cover image) and runs her own photography business, Cassidy Leigh Photography. Read more about local meat lockers on Pages 10-12 of this issue. ⚡

# There's no such thing as a free dinner: Beware of energy claims that sound too good to be true

BY CHUCK SODERBERG

*"Save 50% on your energy bills!"*

*"Stop paying your electric utility!"*

*"Save thousands on your heating and cooling costs!"*

Have you ever received a postcard or an email featuring one of these headlines? The postcard usually includes an invitation to a free dinner at a local restaurant where you can learn more about how to "save big" on your energy bills. There's even a local phone number you can call to reserve your spot, causing you to think that a reputable, local company is organizing this effort. It almost always is not.

As we move beyond the pandemic, these types of invitations will likely increase in our communities. It's easy to let our guard down because we want to believe the incredible claims we find in our inboxes and mailboxes. These dubious marketing campaigns will tout power converters for your meter, radiant barriers for your attic and other technologies that promise to save you hundreds or thousands of dollars on your energy bills.

Often, there is some truth to the technology and products being pitched in these postcards. For example, an aluminum radiant barrier placed in your attic can help reduce heat gain during the summer, but the efficiency claims are often overstated, and the product is often overpriced.

## Research the company

Before accepting an invitation or signing a long-term contract or financing program, please research the company on the Better Business Bureau website at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org). We also encourage you to contact your local electric co-op and speak to their member services department about the offer. As a reliable source



of information you can trust, your local co-op can answer your energy efficiency questions and suggest practical ways to save energy and money on your electric bills.

Locally owned and governed by the member-consumers we serve, Iowa's electric cooperatives fully support energy efficiency efforts. In fact, your local co-op offers several incentives, rebates and programs that can lower your electric bill. We can also provide information about which energy efficiency products may qualify for state or federal tax credits. Our priority is to make sure you're not tricked into spending your hard-earned money on products that don't work as

advertised. Be wary of exaggerated claims and overpriced products in these free dinner schemes.

## Resist pressure tactics

And if you do accept an invitation to a free dinner, don't feel pressured to make a purchase or sign on the dotted line until you've had time to research the company and the claims it is making. Any reputable business would encourage you to take the time you need to make an informed decision.

Please beware of these invitations – the actual cost of your free dinner could be more than you're willing to pay. ⚡

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

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

### Win a Cuisinart electric smoker!

This electric smoker is perfect for backyard barbecues! A spacious 548-square-inch interior means there is plenty of room to smoke a variety of Iowa-raised meats and fresh vegetables, with 1500 watts of heat to produce temperatures from 100 degrees F to 400 degrees F. The 30-inch vertical footprint makes it a perfect size for patios and decks. Three stainless steel racks can be easily removed for smoking large cuts of meat, and an easy-to-read thermometer on the front door makes monitoring internal temperature convenient. ⚡



### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) no later than June 30, 2021. 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 \$100 Earl May Garden Center gift card from the April issue was Monte Eggers, Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 20** Happy Father's Day!
- July 2** Happy birthday to our members! Access Energy Cooperative celebrates our 84th year.
- July 5** Office closed in observance of our nation's Independence Day.
- July 7** Board election opens; online voting available and packets mailed.
- Aug. 2** Online voting closes at 4:30 p.m., and mailed-in ballots will no longer be accepted.
- Aug. 3** Annual meeting of members at 7 p.m. No in-person events. Facebook live event only announcing election winners.

Even when our office is closed, you can call us at 866-242-4232, 24 hours a day, seven days a week 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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## LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

# 10 ways to save energy in the laundry room

BY KEVIN WHEELER

Your clothes washer and dryer account for a significant portion of energy consumption from major appliances, and let's face it – laundry is no one's favorite chore.



But you can make the most of your laundry energy use. There are several easy ways you can save energy (and money) in the laundry room. The Department of Energy recommends the following tips for saving on suds:

- 1. Wash with cold water.** Switching from warm water to cold water can cut one load's energy use by more than half, and by using a cold-water detergent, you can still achieve that brilliant clean you'd normally get from washing in warm water.
- 2. Wash full loads when possible.** Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up if you can.
- 3. Use the high-speed or extended spin cycle in the washer.** This setting will remove more

moisture before drying, reducing your drying time and the extra wear on clothing.

- 4. Dry heavier cottons separately.** Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.
  - 5. Make use of the "cool down" cycle.** If your dryer has this cycle option, you can save energy because the clothes will finish drying with the remaining heat in the dryer.
  - 6. Use lower heat settings to dry clothing.** Regardless of drying time, you'll still use less energy.
  - 7. Use dryer balls.** Dryer balls, usually wool or rubber, will help keep clothes separated for faster drying, and they can help reduce static, so you can eliminate dryer sheets.
  - 8. Switch loads while the dryer is warm.** This allows you to take advantage of the remaining heat from the previous cycle.
  - 9. Clean the lint filter after each drying cycle.** If you use dryer sheets, remember to scrub the filter once a month with a toothbrush to remove excess buildup.
  - 10. Purchase ENERGY STAR®-rated washers and dryers.** When it's time to purchase a new washer or dryer, look for the ENERGY STAR® label. New washers and dryers that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating use about 20% less energy than conventional models.
- To learn about additional ways you can save energy at home, visit Access Energy Cooperative's website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com) or the Department of Energy's home efficiency page at [www.energy.gov/energysaver](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver). ⚡



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

# Access Energy Cooperative announces early retirement of dividends to members

The Access Energy Cooperative board of directors voted to return patronage dividends early to members this year. All dividend payments will be processed in mid-June.

After reviewing the operating revenues for 2020, your board of directors approved a dividend retirement of \$1,039,887 for this year, which includes a pass-through amount of \$222,146 from Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative. The cooperative will pay off 100% of any remaining dividends for 1999; as well as 8% of 2000, 53% of 2006, 6% of 2007 and

12% of 2020. Returning a portion of a deferred year(s) patronage and a portion of the current year's patronage allocation allows both long-time and new cooperative members to receive benefits of cooperative membership.

If your 2021 dividend payment is greater than \$25, we will mail a check to you. If your dividend payment is less than \$25, we will apply a bill credit in mid-June for the amount. Accounts with payments of less than \$5 will continue to accumulate and will be paid in the year they reach or exceed \$5.

For members who have closed

their account with the cooperative, you have the option to receive the amount in your dividend account as a lump sum payment at the present discount rate or to receive payments at the normal retirement cycle, which is currently 22 years. If you are interested in receiving a lump sum payment, please contact our office at 866-242-4232 or by emailing [finance@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:finance@accessenergycoop.com).

For more information about patronage dividends, to make address corrections, or to submit questions, visit our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com). ⚡

ANNOUNCEMENT

# 2021 Access Energy Cooperative Annual Meeting of Members announcement

The Access Energy Cooperative board of directors voted to modify the format of the 2021 Annual Meeting of Members on Aug. 3, 2021, to eliminate the in-person portion of the meeting and conduct the election of directors by mail and electronic voting only.

As everyone is still faced with uncertainties surrounding gathering in large groups, current information available must be used to make decisions that affect future plans. This decision did not come easy for the board again this year; however, Access Energy Cooperative concluded it is the responsible choice to make.

The cooperative encourages members to take part in the director election. Voting materials and instructions will be mailed July 7, 2021. The election results will be aired as a live Facebook event on Aug. 3, 2021, at 7 p.m. ⚡

## Director candidates

The following candidates are running for director at this year's annual meeting on Aug. 3. Full candidate bios will be featured in the July issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa*.

### District 1

- **Marvin Larson**  
Fairfield, Iowa
- **Donald Roach**  
Libertyville, Iowa

### District 2

- **Dan Fullenkamp**  
West Point, Iowa
- **Larry White**  
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

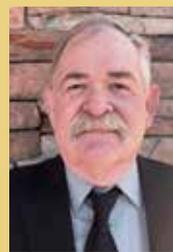
### District 3

- **Robert Chesnut III**  
Wever, Iowa
- **Leslie Loyd**  
New London, Iowa

### District 1



**Marvin Larson**



**Donald Roach**

### District 2



**Dan Fullenkamp**



**Larry White**

### District 3



**Robert Chesnut III**



**Leslie Loyd**

# Drilling down — four efficient cordless tools for dad

BY PAT KEEGAN AND BRAD THIESSEN



A cordless drill is one of the handiest tools for home projects.

With Father's Day this month, you might be thinking about buying some rechargeable power tools for the dad in your life whether that's your husband or father.

If your loved one enjoys tackling home projects, rechargeable tools are an excellent gift idea.

Rechargeable cordless tools are worth the investment when the corded version is the least convenient option. For example, a power drill is something you usually move around with and often use outside, so a cordless drill is much more convenient and a worthy investment. On the other hand, a table saw is usually not the first choice for cordless tools because it doesn't need to be moved repeatedly during a home project.

Quality cordless tools are usually less expensive if you buy them as part of a set instead of one tool at a time. And you can't typically mix and match between brands because each line of tools uses a unique battery. So, it may cost less in the long run to buy a cordless starter kit with a few helpful tools and a battery, then add tools to the set as needed.

Here are a few cordless tools that the father in your family will love!

## 1 Power drill

As one of the most-used power tools, a drill should be everyone's first cordless tool. Using a corded drill can mean constantly moving the cord around furniture, other tools

or your own feet, which can be dangerous. Cordless drills are easy to use, and the technology has improved so they have more power and hold a charge longer. Light-duty drills are smaller and less powerful but easy to use for smaller projects.

## 2 Leaf blower

If the father in your family uses a gas-powered leaf blower, you can do him (and your neighbors!) a favor by giving him a cordless leaf blower. This option is more energy efficient, much quieter and less polluting.

## 3 String trimmer

A string trimmer is a quick way to trim weeds and grass

# 2



near walls, bricks and rocks. If your family uses an outdated gas trimmer around the yard, it's time for a change. Two-stroke engines pollute the air and require regular maintenance. Electric trimmers are more energy efficient and quieter. You can find a variety of models between \$50 and \$150, and it's worth paying a little more to get a highly rated model that will last longer.

## 4 Flashlight

Today's LED technology is amazing – LED flashlights can produce 20 times as much light as incandescent ones. And they come in a variety of options, from tiny key chain lights

to headlamps to waterproof spotlights. A flashlight can usually give better light than a cell phone, especially if you're working in a tight space like under a sink. A flashlight often comes as part of a cordless tool set, or you can buy a single unit that recharges using a USB port on a charger, USB wall socket or mobile phone battery.

Batteries make cordless tools possible. Lithium-ion batteries are more expensive, but they're gaining popularity because they hold a charge longer. While they hold a longer life, they still degrade over time and may need to be replaced in about three years.

It's worth buying a reputable brand of cordless tools so you can be

confident you will be able to find a replacement battery. Lithium-ion batteries should not be disposed with trash because they are a fire hazard and contain toxic chemicals. Your local waste disposal service can provide information on how to dispose of these batteries properly.

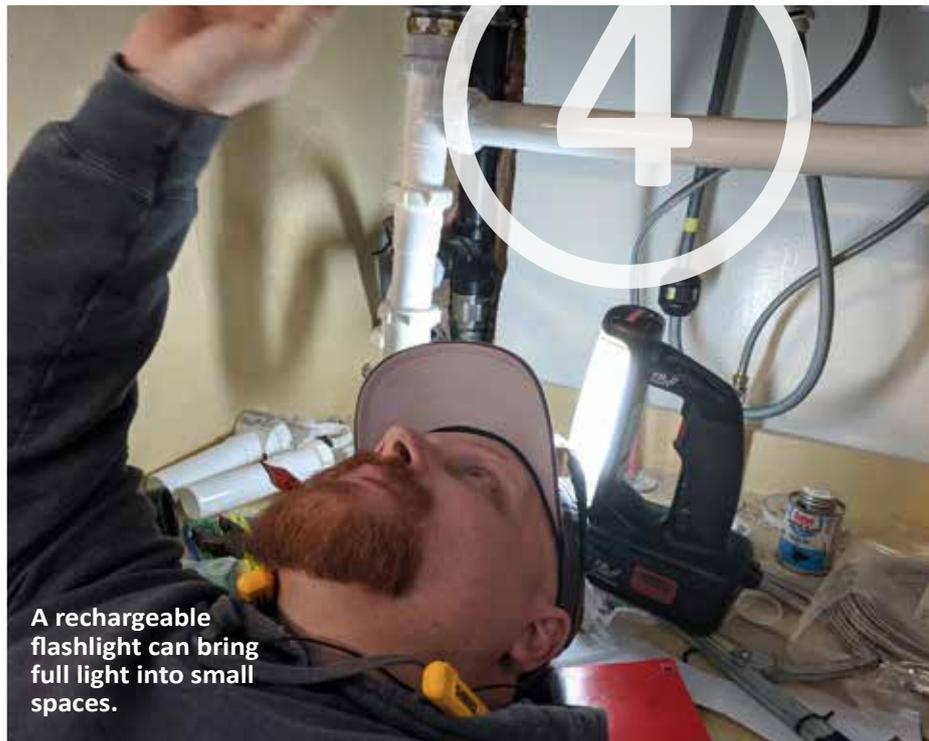
It goes without saying, but these cordless tool gift ideas aren't just for dads or Father's Day. All DIY enthusiasts would enjoy any of these gifts any time of the year and hopefully put them to good use! ⚡

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



A rechargeable string trimmer is quieter and more energy-efficient than a gas-powered model.

# 3



# 4

A rechargeable flashlight can bring full light into small spaces.

Photo Credit: Makita Tools

# FRESH

VEGETABLE & FRUIT

## RECIPES



### Green Beans and Bacon

- 2½ pounds green beans, trimmed kosher salt**
- ½ pound bacon, roughly chopped**
- 1 small onion, finely chopped**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- juice of ½ lemon**
- freshly ground pepper**
- salt, optional**

Add green beans to a large pot of boiling salted water. Cook until bright green in color and crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Drain, then shock green beans in a large bowl of ice water to stop the cooking. Drain again, pat dry, then set aside. Cook bacon in a large, heavy sauté pan until crisp, about 5 minutes. Remove bacon and place on a paper-towel lined plate to drain. Spoon off excess grease from the pan, leaving 2 tablespoons. Add onion and sauté until soft, about 4-5 minutes. Sprinkle in garlic and red pepper flakes and sauté 1 minute. Add green beans and cook until heated. Return bacon to the pan. Add lemon juice, pepper and salt, if desired. Stir well. *Serves 6-8*

**Kathleen Steele • Hedrick**  
Access Energy Cooperative

### Fresh Basil Cucumber Salad

- 1 English cucumber, diced**
- 2-3 Roma tomatoes, cubed**
- ¼ cup fresh basil, chopped**
- 1 cup bread cheese, cut into small cubes**
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil**
- Himalayan salt**
- pepper**

In a bowl, combine the cucumber, tomatoes and basil. On medium-low heat, warm cubed bread cheese until hot. Once hot, add to veggies. Drizzle with olive oil, add salt and pepper to taste and blend. Best served while cheese is hot. *Serves 3-4*

**Amy Rudolph • Renwick**  
Boone Valley Electric Cooperative

### Awesome Marinated Tomatoes

- 1 pound cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered**
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced**
- ½ green pepper, diced (more if you prefer)**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- ½ tablespoon cilantro**
- ½ tablespoon parsley**
- ½ tablespoon lemon juice**
- ½ tablespoon lime juice**
- salt and pepper, to taste**

Toss all ingredients together. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours, or 24 hours for full flavor.

**Becky McClenathan • Toledo**  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

### Grandma's Pasta Salad

- ½ pound spaghetti**
- 1 onion, chopped**
- 1 green pepper, chopped**
- 1 cup celery, chopped**
- 7 grape tomatoes, chopped**
- 1 cup fresh peas**
- 1 cup cheese, shredded**
- 8 ounces creamy Italian dressing**
- ⅓ cup sugar**
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard**

In a large bowl, combine cooked spaghetti, vegetables and cheese. In a separate bowl, mix Italian dressing, sugar and mustard then pour over salad. Cover and chill.

**Marlene Burns • Swisher**  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

**Fresh Facts Source:**  
Iowa State University  
Extension and  
Outreach, Spend  
Smart. Eat Smart.

#### RIPEN TO SWEETEN

Avocados, unripe melons and tree fruits (pears, plums, peaches and nectarines) should be kept at room temperature to ripen and become sweeter. Once fully ripened, store in the refrigerator until you are ready to eat them.

## Carrot Raisin Salad

- 4 cups carrots, shredded (4-5 large)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups raisins
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Miracle Whip
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2-3 tablespoons milk

Combine carrots and raisins in a bowl. In a separate bowl, mix remaining ingredients, then spread over carrots and raisins. Mix thoroughly.

Sonya Colvin • Ames • Consumers Energy

## Blackberry Salad

- 3 ounces cherry Jell-O
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 cup blueberry yogurt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cup fresh blackberries

Dissolve Jell-O in boiling water. Add yogurt, lemon juice and blackberries. Mix and refrigerate for 30-60 minutes. *Serves 4*

Deanna Foreman • Rock Valley  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## Cucumber Salad

- 1 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar
- 4 teaspoons vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dill weed
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt, optional
- 4 medium cucumbers, peeled and sliced thin
- 3 green onions, chopped

Combine mayonnaise, sugar, vinegar, dill and salt. Mix well, then toss in cucumbers and onions. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour. *Serves 8*

Esther Miller • Alford • Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## Sautéed Summer Squash

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup onions, diced
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup green peppers, diced
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon Italian seasoning
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon garlic salt
- 4 cups zucchini and summer squash, sliced  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded

Add oil to a large skillet. Sauté onions and green peppers with Italian seasoning and salts until the vegetables are tender. Add zucchini, summer squash and water. Cover and cook over low heat for 15 minutes, or until squash is tender. Top with cheese. Keep on low heat until the cheese melts. Serve immediately. *Serves 4-6*

Gloria Moser • Larchwood  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## Angel Food Strawberry Dessert

- 1 small package strawberry Jell-O
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 cup cold water (can have ice in it)
- 2 cups whipped topping
- 4 cups angel food cake, torn into pieces
- 2 cups strawberries

Dissolve Jell-O and lemon juice in boiling water. Add cold water to thicken (can be refrigerated to help thicken). Once thickened, whip Jell-O until light and fluffy. Fold in whipped topping, angel food cake pieces and strawberries. Add mixture to a 9x13-inch pan. Chill before serving. *Serves 12*

Karen Heiden • Dows • Prairie Energy Cooperative

### STORE IN CRISPER DRAWER

Keep your refrigerator at or below 40 degrees F and use the crisper drawer for produce when possible.

FRESH FACTS

### STEM SIDE DOWN

Tomatoes will keep longer when stored stem side down.

FRESH FACTS

### REFRIGERATE CUT PRODUCE

Any cut produce must be refrigerated to prevent foodborne illness.

FRESH FACTS

### USE RUNNING WATER

Wash produce under running water rather than putting it in a container of water. This increases the likelihood of washing away potential contaminants.

FRESH FACTS

## Wanted: Flavorful Pork Recipes The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

Pork is a versatile protein that pairs perfectly with any flavor profile! No matter if it's tangy, herbaceous or fruity, we want your favorite recipe for a flavorful pork dish. If we run your recipe in the magazine, we'll send a \$25 credit for your electric co-op to apply to your power bill. Recipes submitted also may be archived on our website at [www.livingwithenergyiowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiowa.com).

The deadline is June 30, 2021. 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@livingwithenergyiowa.com](mailto:recipes@livingwithenergyiowa.com)  
(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

**MAIL:**  
**Recipes**

*Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine  
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48  
Urbandale, Iowa 50322

### WASH ALL PRODUCE

Wash all produce before you eat it. Even fruits that have thick peels, such as oranges, bananas and melons, should be washed.

FRESH FACTS

# Iowans get creative to sell local

BY KAY SNYDER

Farmers, agribusinesses and meat lockers innovate to meet consumer demand



Nothing says summertime like pork chops or ribeye steaks sizzling on the grill! With grilling season in full swing, Iowans are sure to find high-quality and flavorful protein options no matter if they shop at the grocery store, local meat locker or purchase from a neighboring farmer.

The movement to “buy local” foods – especially meat – skyrocketed when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and consumers were preparing more of their own meals. The increased demand for animal protein exposed gaps in meat processing systems, causing the traditional farm-to-fork cycle to derail. There wasn’t a shortage of livestock; the supply chain was disrupted by worker shortages at processing facilities due to the pandemic. As a result of the disruption, food insecurity increased and consumers wanted more control over the source and supply of their food. The trend to buy local is expected to continue throughout 2021 and beyond.

Iowa’s livestock farmers lead the nation in pork production and are in the top 10 states for beef production. Globally, Iowa meats are recognized as the standard of high quality and flavor. With the challenges large meat processing plants faced during 2020, Iowans turned their attention to sourcing meat from small local lockers.

In general, local demand for meat has far outweighed capacity. Local meat lockers – many in electric cooperative-served areas – have developed unique offerings and business model responses to strengthen Iowa’s overall food processing supply chain, support rural communities and help meet consumer demand.

## Expansions in Edgewood

Edgewood Locker is embarking on the construction of a 19,000-square-foot facility in Edgewood. The additional space will help satisfy demand from wholesale and retail customers. It is expected to quadruple the volume of wholesale

business, increasing the production of products such as jerky, sausage and more. As of early this year, Edgewood Locker’s processing capacity for individual farmer-owned beef was sold out through 2021 and 2022. Owners expect the new facility to open sometime next year and anticipate adding 14 full-time jobs for the community.

Central Iowa Power Cooperative has applied for possible U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) support of this project. Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative and Dairyland Power also offered to provide support from their revolving loan funds, if needed.

## New opportunities in Camanche

Naeve Family Beef in Camanche plans to construct a 14,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art processing and packaging facility this year. The startup company will provide locally raised protein products to local consumers, retailers, restaurants,



grocery stores and food distributors. It will also offer custom processing and packaging to farmers across the Midwest. The new plant is expected to process 50 head-per-day and create 45 to 50 new jobs for the region.

### Customer service in Osage

S&S Meats & Spirits has a vending machine filled with meat products that are available to the community of Osage all year. No matter if the shop is open, this vending machine offers a rotating stock of beef sticks, bacon, cured pork and other locker-made products. In addition to the vending machine, they offer curbside pick up and meat bundles for customers who may not have the finances or freezer space to buy a half or quarter of beef or pork. The meat bundles provide a larger selection of meat at a reduced per pound price. Throughout COVID-19 shutdowns, S&S owners and staff used social media to stay connected with customers.

### Mobile meat processing in Hull

Old Parlor Meat Company is a custom meat-processing business with a unique twist – its mobile unit travels to livestock when it is

time for slaughter. Bringing the processing facility to the farm saves time and is less stressful for the animals. The carcass is brought back to a permanent location on the Van Grouw family farm between Rock Valley and Hull, where meat can be aged, cut, trimmed and packaged to customers’ specifications.

### Program expands market opportunities

In May 2020, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship adopted the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Program, designating Iowa as the seventh state to enter the program. CIS allows meat processed at state-inspected plants to be sold outside of Iowa. To qualify for the program, a meat processor must have less than 25 full-time employees and comply with all federal food safety, sanitation and facility regulations.

This means that livestock producers can sell their meat and poultry across state lines if processed at a CIS facility. Before this program, farmers had to use a USDA-inspected facility to sell out of state, but small and mid-sized livestock farms could rarely

access those plants due to volume requirements and logistics tailored to larger producers. The CIS program allows farmers to grow their business, move more products and access new markets. It also gives consumers more access to Iowa-raised processed meats.

“Local meat lockers play an important role in their communities and the food supply chain,” says Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig. “We pursued the CIS program to help small Iowa businesses grow and give consumers more access to Iowa-grown meat and poultry products.”

Story City Locker was Iowa’s first meat processor to be approved for the CIS program. They originally were interested in the CIS program to fill a 15% lag in their schedule, but with COVID-19-related product demand, the locker quickly gained traction and experienced a 25% increase. Story City Locker is now booking well into 2022 for custom processing. Being approved for the program has positioned the locker well for future growth. ⚡

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



EMPLOYEE NEWS

# Congratulations to Cole Hetzler



Access Energy Cooperative is proud to announce that employee Cole Hetzler has accepted the position of crew foreman at the cooperative, effective May 3. Cole was hired as an apprentice lineman in 2012 and has served as journeyman lineman since 2015. Congratulations, and thank you for your dedication to the members of Access Energy Cooperative! ⚡

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

A dirty filter causes your air conditioner to work harder than necessary.

Remember to change your air filter every month (or every two months) to prevent dust buildup, which can lead to even bigger problems.

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



SAFETY MATTERS



**MOVE OVER**  
**SLOW DOWN**

Most of our linemen have families and children. Help us wish them a Happy Father's Day this month by keeping our lineworkers safe! If you see workers on the side of the road, move over to the other lane and slow down. You may not hear them, but they are thanking you!

## Use your mobile device to monitor energy usage



Members of Access Energy Cooperative have a tool called the SmartHub App that makes it easy to pay your bill, look up account information, notify you if your power is out and so much more!

Download the SmartHub app on your mobile device and start using it today. You can also use it on your computer through our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com). ⚡

iOS

Android



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

# Congratulations to Access Energy Cooperative's photo contest winners!

This year's winning Photo Contest entries will appear in the 2022 Access Energy Cooperative calendar, and each will receive \$50. Thank you to everyone who submitted entries.

The 2022 calendars will be mailed to members July 7 in your annual meeting voting packet. 📧



December 2021 • Mary Adkins  
On Ice • Lee Co.



January 2022 • Beatrice McDowell  
Morning Mist at Oakland Mills  
Henry Co.



February 2022 • Jerry Parton  
Iowa Snowy Sunset • Henry Co.



March 2022 • Katie Mertens  
Evening Glow • Henry Co.



April 2022 • Mary Adkins  
A Lite Lunch • Henry Co.



May 2022 • Barb Brown  
Spring Time • Henry Co.



June 2022 • Bridget Beckman  
Backyard Summer Sunset • Henry Co.



July 2022 • Barb Brown  
Busy Bee • Henry Co.



August 2022 • Diane Jennings  
A Sunflower Day • Lee Co.



September 2022 • Terri Bain  
A Break in the Storm • Henry Co.



October 2022 • Sherry Taglauer  
Fall Reflections • Washington Co.



November 2022 • Darlyne Engelman  
Autumn Brilliance • Jefferson Co.



December 2022 • Rita Mullin  
Winterscape • Henry Co.

# Nominate a community volunteer by June 30!



## Step 1:

Go to [www.IowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.IowaShineTheLight.com) from June 1-30 to make a nomination and to review the contest rules.

## Step 2:

As a nominator, provide your contact information and answer the following question in 500 words or less.

**How has your nominee made a positive difference in the community, and why do they deserve to be recognized?**



### It's time to nominate a community volunteer!

Iowa's electric cooperatives are excited to announce a new statewide contest, which celebrates our cooperative commitment to community. Called **Shine the Light**, the contest will accept nominations in June and award three winners with a \$1,500 check to their local charity or community organization.

"We're excited to launch this cooperative effort to shine the light on local volunteers," says Erin Campbell, director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric

Cooperatives. "So many people throughout the areas served by Iowa's electric cooperatives deserve to be recognized for making a positive impact."

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the Shine the Light contest will accept contest entries online during the month of June. The three winners will be announced during the Iowa State Fair in August. In addition to receiving a \$1,500 donation for their charity or nonprofit of choice, the winners will also be featured in the September issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine.

### How to nominate

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers. If you receive electricity from an electric cooperative in Iowa, you're a co-op member-consumer and invited to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians. ⚡

# INSIDE A REAL-LIFE FARMHOUSE

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

It's impossible not to notice the farmhouse decorating craze has taken over. On Instagram, you're invited to vote for your favorite farm kitchens. In magazines, you have an opportunity to win the items pictured in the spread. On home decorating TV shows, you can hold your phone camera up to the screen to find out where to buy the items featured.

I often chuckle when viewing these glossy creations. In my opinion, not one of those houses has come within 100 miles of a real farm. How do I know?

Both Kent and I grew up in farmhouses on real farms with real animals and crops and buildings. And we know that a real farmhouse contains the following at one time or another:

- **A mud porch or breezeway.** Now, that's not to say that some of these illustrious houses don't sport those as well, but a real farmhouse has a spot for mud-encrusted boots sitting on a scrap of rug or some newspapers. It holds an old refrigerator full of animal serums and other veterinary medicines. Syringes for administering the meds litter the countertops, along with a variety of work gloves. On the floor is a gunny sack or an old box with bulbs that haven't yet been planted and starts of the neighbor's flowers that need to get in the ground.
- **Evidence of animals in the house.** This is in addition to any pampered pet you may have roaming the premises. Real farmhouses are known to harbor piglets in a bushel basket behind the oil burner stove or a calf born too early in cold temperatures lounging in the bathtub. Real farmhouses have a bucket of eggs that have been recently gathered but still retain evidence of their origins clinging to the shells.



- **A pile of farm publications.** The pile starts in the kitchen and expands from the desk to the floor to beside the rocking chair. Not the carefully placed and curated tomes that the photographers want you to see. These include the oldies that your grandfather also read to the new ones that propose more modern methods of agriculture to those catering to the women in the family. There's 4-H information mixed in, along with the local shopper, open to an upcoming auction bill. You will notice that some of these publications have gaping squares, where a recipe or a phone number was clipped out and stuck inside the cupboard door.
- **A less-than-picturesque laundry room.** The laundry room in a real farmhouse isn't the neatly ordered shelves, clean appliances and cheery oversized words

tacked on the wall that you'll see in these various media. Instead, it has filthy, grease-encased blue jeans in a heap on the floor. In a sink next to the washer, soak ancient towels used to stanch the bleeding of the dog, who had wandered into some sort of scrape with a larger animal and is bearing the wounds to prove it. The detergents piled on top of the dryer are all extra heavy-duty grease lifters, bleaches and soda-based concoctions to get rid of the smells.

So, I'll smile and give a condescending glance at the farmhouses that are proffered for my decorating wants. And then I'll wonder how a pile of dirty blue jeans would look in that magazine spread. ⚡

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, two incredibly adorable grandsons and a lovely granddaughter.



Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperatives  
of Iowa

# LIKE FATHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

Join Touchstone Energy Cooperatives in celebrating  
the power of human connections.