

# living with energy

IN IOWA



AUGUST 2021

Win up to \$100 in Access Energy Cooperative's photo contest ▶ See Page 5

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

Understanding power surges and blinks

Spectacular sandwich recipes

Electric co-ops support rural child care options



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To have your photo considered for a future cover, email high-res images to editor@livingwithenergyiowa.com. If we select your photo, you'll be awarded with **\$100.**



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**ON THE COVER**



Congratulations to Karleen Stanley, a member of North West REC in Orange City, for submitting this month's cover image. She captured this beautiful photo while sitting on her front porch in Plymouth County. ⚡

# Thank you for shining the light on local volunteers

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



Earlier this summer, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives had an opportunity to try something new. Following last year's pandemic

precautions and derecho destruction, we thought the timing was right to shine the light on positive efforts in our state. The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa started the Shine the Light contest to honor the unsung heroes in our communities who volunteer their time and talents.

In the pages of this magazine and through your electric co-op's social media posts, you were invited to nominate a local volunteer in June. Because this was our first year managing the statewide contest, we didn't know what kind of response to expect. We are thrilled to share that 39 people from 19 of Iowa's electric cooperatives nominated a local volunteer through our contest website.

We received the email confirmation messages as nominations were submitted. It was truly a blessing to read each entry as they popped into my inbox. I looked forward to learning about incredible Iowans as the month went on; it was a delight to read the heartfelt essays from the nominators.

Our judging panel is now working on the difficult task of sorting through the entries to select three winners who will each receive \$1,500 for their local charity or community organization of choice. We will feature the three winners in next month's issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine, and we have already identified several other nominees that we may highlight in future issues.

On behalf of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, I want to

thank the Iowa electric cooperative member-consumers and employees who took the time to submit a nomination this summer. You have truly helped us in our cooperative effort to shine the light on community heroes. Thanks to you, our new contest is off to a great start, and we are already looking forward to being inspired by next year's nominees!

On Pages 10-11, you will find the list of our 39 nominees, in alphabetical order by last name. We want to honor each and every one of them for their commitment to their communities – it's the same guiding principle that drives your electric cooperative every day. ⚡

Erin Campbell is the director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.



## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

### Win a Breville Panini Press & Grill!

Make spectacular sandwiches at home with a Breville Panini Press & Grill. The versatile appliance is perfect for quick weeknight meals and casual entertaining, doing double duty as an indoor grill and sandwich press. With a large surface area, this family-friendly machine accommodates up to four sandwiches at once. ⚡



#### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) no later than Aug. 31, 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 Cuisinart smoker from our June issue was Jeanie Hall, Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.



## UPCOMING EVENTS



**Sept. 2-6** **Midwest Old Threshers Reunion in Mt. Pleasant; proud sponsor of the Drive-A-Tractor Event**

**Sept. 6** **Office closed for Labor Day**

You can access your account information 24 hours a day, every day, on our website 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.*

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## LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

# A balanced fuel mix promotes power reliability

BY KEVIN WHEELER

As I've noted in past columns, the energy industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation as consumer demand for more renewable energy sources grows, and innovation and technology continue to advance exponentially. You're likely witnessing this energy evolution firsthand.

In driving across the region, you may have noticed fields of solar panels along with an increase in solar panels on your neighbors' roofs. Maybe you've heard about the impending changes in the transportation sector with most major vehicle companies announcing plans to offer more electric vehicles at more affordable prices.

Consumer interest in renewable energy is strong and growing. In addition, national studies indicate that consumers have an expectation that companies operate in an ethical and responsible manner – including when it comes to the environment.

At Access Energy Cooperative, it is in our mission statement and one of the principles under which we operate to focus on the good of our community. While our primary function is to provide safe, reliable and efficient energy to our members, we are more than an electricity provider. Because we are a cooperative, we exist to enrich the lives of our members and to serve the long-term interests of our community. We feel we're doing both by investing in renewable energy sources.

Green energy is certainly not new. Solar, wind and hydro power have been around for decades. However, the recent innovations and advances in renewable technology have led to sharp decreases in cost, making it more feasible and accessible. In recent years our power supplier, Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. has been able to adjust our fuel mix by utilizing more

renewables. Today, 25% of our fuel mix is comprised of renewable energy sources, which are hydro and wind.



However, to borrow a nautical analogy, it takes a long time to turn the direction of a large ship – and changing the energy mix we use to power homes and businesses doesn't happen overnight. While renewable energy use is increasing, we will still depend on

traditional forms of energy to keep power flowing reliably to your home. After all, solar and wind energy are referred to as “intermittent” power since the sun does not always shine and the wind does not always blow. This fact, coupled with the growing demand for renewables, creates its own challenges. That's why there is real value in maintaining a balanced mixture of fuel types to ensure reliability and resiliency, and to meet the growing demand for electricity.

As the energy industry continues to evolve, Access Energy Cooperative is striving to take advantage of technology advances and market opportunities as they become available. This means Access Energy Cooperative can leverage the flexibility of the grid to offer a wider range of renewable power selections as we continue to bring safe, reliable and affordable power to our community.

Albert Einstein once observed that, “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.” In order for Access Energy Cooperative to meet the growing demand for renewable energy and ensure the reliability of our power supply, we must constantly make operational adjustments as we strive for balance and a brighter future for our members. ⚡

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

## Thank you to our summer help

Access Energy Cooperative appreciates the dedication and hard work of our summer help employees, Jordan Magnani and Riley Sammons. Jordan will return to Cornell College as a senior this fall and Riley plans to attend lineworker school next spring. ⚡



Jordan Magnani



Riley Sammons

## Win up to \$100 in the Access Energy Cooperative photo contest

The annual photo contest is now open for the 2023 Access Energy Cooperative calendar.

We will award \$75 to each photographer whose entry is selected as one of the 13 featured photos for the calendar. If the winning entry is submitted by a member of Access Energy Cooperative, they will receive an additional \$25 bill credit!

We're looking for photos of rural settings in southeast Iowa, including

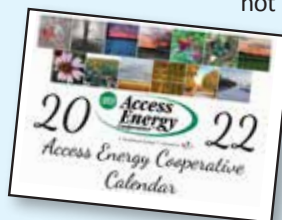
landscapes, animals, buildings or people in any season of the year. Horizontal photos work best so that artwork does not need to be cropped to fit on

a calendar page. Entries should be high-resolution files so they can be enlarged correctly, and judges give preference to full-color photos.

Submit all entries by March 31, 2022, to

[mktg@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:mktg@accessenergycoop.com).

Visit [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com) for complete rules. ⚡



# Our commitment to protecting your privacy

### Information we collect

Access Energy Cooperative will receive and retain information about member-consumers/customers through applications or other forms; transactions with us, our affiliates or others; from a consumer-reporting agency; and advanced metering infrastructure.

Access Energy Cooperative will limit the use and collection of nonpublic personal information to that which is necessary to maintain and administer financial services, beneficial in designing, operating and maintaining the Cooperative's electric system to offer affordable and reliable electric service.

This information will not be shared with third parties unless: the information is provided to help complete a member-consumer/customer-initiated transaction; the member-consumer/customer has requested it; the disclosure is required by law, warrant or court order; or the disclosure is required by banking regulation.

"Third Party" is defined as any person or entity other than: employees of the Cooperative; the Cooperative's designated legal counsel; or any entity contractually bound to the Cooperative to provide billing or collection services

for electric cooperative accounts. When member-consumer/customer information is provided to any third parties, that third party must be bound by appropriate confidentiality and non-disclosure obligations.

Access Energy Cooperative limits employee access to member-consumer/customer information to those with a business reason for knowing such information. All employees are educated on the importance of confidentiality and member-consumer/customer privacy. Any employee that violates the privacy of our member-consumers/customers will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures and possible termination.

Appropriate physical, electronic and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure information are put in place to prevent unauthorized access, maintain data accuracy and ensure the correct use of information.

### Right to be informed

Information regarding operational aspects of the Cooperative's advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) and related programs will be made available to members as requested.

Member-consumers will be better

informed about their electricity consumption.

Member-consumers will have access to information that helps explain available billing rate structures and options, outage information, peak demand and the impact of energy consumption habits with the AMI.

The purpose of the collection, use, retention and sharing of energy consumption data shall be made known to the member-consumers in a clear and transparent manner.

Member-consumers will be informed of the available choices and consent options regarding the collection, use and disclosure of energy consumption data.

Requests to correct inaccurate information will be responded to in a timely manner.

Member-consumers who wish to file a privacy violation complaint have the right to submit the same to the Cooperative for resolution. If not satisfied with the resolution proposed by the Cooperative staff, the same may be submitted to the Cooperative's board of directors for a resolution. If the issue is still not resolved to the member-consumer's satisfaction, the member-consumer may pursue alternative remedies. ⚡



# Child care options expand with rural utility support

BY KAY SNYDER



Child care has joined workforce and housing as one of the most critical needs across Iowa. According to a report from the Iowa Department of Human Service's Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, 28% of Iowa communities are considered child care deserts. A child care desert is defined as a city with more than 50 children in the community and more than three children per child care slot.

Child care shortages are complex issues that must be addressed at different levels. As communities tackle this issue, it is no surprise that Iowa's rural utilities are engaged and supporting long-term solutions.

## Stanton: Need for child care spurs additional development

Stanton has many projects focused on adding to the community's quality of life while attracting technology companies and new citizens. One key project is the expansion of the Stanton Child Resource Center (SCRC).

Two to three years ago, the community began initial conversations to expand and renovate the existing SCRC facility. But with new considerations due



to COVID-19, the planning group began exploring options for a less-expensive facility and one that could accommodate pandemic-related guidelines. These factors led to the decision to build a new SCRC facility in a different location.

As additional people were brought into the planning conversation, an opportunity arose to tap into property in a 22-acre section of land owned by the Stanton Area Industrial Foundation and create a master plan for development of the Stanton Technology Park.

The new 11,000-square-foot SCRC facility will accommodate up to 130 children, which is 50 more than the current facility. It will be the first business in the new Stanton Technology Park, which is the perfect amenity for future businesses and

employees in the area.

"A lot of people are looking at getting out of the cities. They'd like to raise their children in a rural setting, but they need good jobs, housing and reliable day care," says Kevin Cabbage, CEO and general manager of Farmers Mutual Telephone Company. "We will start with the day care and then build around it. This is just one component of an answer to growing southwest Iowa."

The project is currently in the fundraising stage and dirt work will be completed this fall. The new SCRC is expected to open in Spring or Summer 2022. Southwest Iowa REC, Central Iowa Power Cooperative and Farmers Mutual Telephone Company, support this effort, which will provide electric power and telecommunications to the day care and future technology park.

"Southwest Iowa REC is pleased to support the Stanton Child Resource Center and Stanton Technology Park," says Phil Kinser, CEO of Southwest Iowa REC. "Local families are well-served by the center, and the need to serve more children and families is critical to area development."



### Glidden: New child care center coming soon

Conversations and planning for a child care center in Glidden began several years ago. These discussions led to the development of Lil Wildcat Education Center, Inc. in 2020, which will construct and operate a child care facility in the community.

Fundraising is in full swing for this new 5,327-square-foot child care facility that will be located next to the Glidden-Ralston School building. The new day care will be a licensed child care center with rooms for infants through five-year-olds, plus a before- and after-school program. Though the education center will be located near the school, it will operate year-round to provide consistent opportunities for families who need day care throughout the year.

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) is supporting the new child care facility in several ways through its contributions and also by coordinating funds from Basin Electric Cooperative and CoBank. RVEC also secured funds through the U.S. Department of Agriculture

(USDA) Revolving Loan & Grant Program to provide a \$360,000, 10-year, 0% interest loan from its Revolving Loan Fund when approvals for additional funding and a land sale are cleared this summer.

If all goes as expected, construction will begin within the next few months, with the opening in Spring 2022.

### Panora: Little Panther expands to meet demand

Little Panther Daycare & Preschool in Panora has recently broken ground on a 1,440-square-foot expansion of its existing building. This addition will allow the facility to accommodate 15 more children and two additional full-time employees.

Currently, Little Panthers has a three-year wait for its classrooms. Page Arganbright, director of Little Panther, recognized two local cooperatives that stepped up to provide 0% interest loans to support the expansion and speed the path to construction. Cozy Nelsen, CEO of Guthrie County REC, says Little Panther was one of the first projects

funded through Guthrie County REC's Revolving Loan Fund.

"Little Panther Daycare is an invaluable asset for Panora and the surrounding area," says Nelsen. "Guthrie County REC is proud to continue to support this much-needed expansion."

The Panora Telco leadership was similarly enthusiastic. General manager Andy Randol says they have also supported Little Panther from the beginning because they know the critical role day care provides in the community.

As with most challenges, there are many answers to help alleviate child care needs in Iowa and the results may be slow to recognize. Iowa's rural utility partners continue to demonstrate their commitment to community by providing technical and financial assistance to support impactful community initiatives, including child care facilities across the state. 🌱

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



Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) has been helpful to many utility partners and communities as they have collaborated to support solutions for child care and other challenges. For more information, contact your rural electric cooperative or IADG at [www.iadg.com](http://www.iadg.com).



# SPECTACULAR Sandwich RECIPES



## Oven-fried Pork Tenderloin Sandwiches

- 2 tablespoons light olive oil
- ½ cup flour
- seasoned salt, optional
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup milk
- ¾ cup panko breadcrumbs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 4 pork loin slices (4 ounces each), tenderized
- 4 hamburger buns

Line a 9x13-inch sheet pan with oven-safe parchment paper. Drizzle olive oil over parchment paper and set aside. Place flour in a shallow bowl or pie plate, add seasoned salt if desired. In a second shallow bowl, beat egg and milk together. In a third shallow bowl, combine panko breadcrumbs, salt and pepper. Dredge both sides of pork slices in flour, then the egg mixture, then the seasoned breadcrumbs. Place loin slices on sheet pan with oil. Bake at 400 degrees F for 20-25 minutes turning halfway through, internal temperature should be 145 degrees F. Serve on buns. *Serves 4*

**Barb Sexton • Rockwell City  
Calhoun County Rural Electric  
Cooperative Association**

## Spinach Sandwiches

- 3 cups fresh spinach
- ½ cup celery, diced
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- mayonnaise
- salt and pepper, to taste
- white or wheat bread

Shred spinach then add celery, onion and eggs. Add mayonnaise until mixture reaches a spreading consistency. Season to taste. Chill until ready to eat. Spread between slices of bread.

**Penny Sue Haley • Keswick  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative**

## Tuna Burgers

- 1 can tuna, drained
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- ½ cup American cheese, cut up
- 1 small onion, minced
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- salt and pepper, to taste
- buns

Mix together tuna, celery, cheese, onion, mayonnaise, salt and pepper. Put tuna mixture on buns. Wrap buns in aluminum foil and place on baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15 minutes.

**Annalee Buffington • Marshalltown  
Consumers Energy**

## Cheese Salad Sandwiches for a Crowd

- 10 pounds American cheese, grated
- 2 cups sweet pickle relish
- 2 4½ -ounce cans pimento
- 2 dozen hard-boiled eggs, peeled and grated
- 3 quarts Miracle Whip
- ⅔ cup granulated sugar
- evaporated milk, optional

Mix all ingredients together, adding additional Miracle Whip if needed. May also thin with some evaporated milk. Spread on bread, buns or crackers. This recipe can be divided in half for 75 people, or by 10 for 15-18 people. *Serves 150*

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

Source:  
Sandwich America

### THE EARL OF SANDWICH

The man credited with creating the first sandwich is John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich. Legend suggests he was unwilling to free up his hands during gambling events, so his servants brought meat between two slices of bread that he could hold with one hand.



## Jazzed-up Ham and Cheese Sandwiches

- 24 sweet Hawaiian rolls
- 2 pounds smoked ham
- 1 pound pepper jack cheese
- 1 pound cheddar cheese
- 1 cup butter
- 4 tablespoons dried minced onions
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons mushrooms, chopped (optional)

Slice rolls in half. Put bottom half in greased 9x13-inch pan. Layer ham and cheese. Put top half of rolls on top. Melt butter with remaining ingredients and spread over top of buns. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20-30 minutes.

Steph Messner • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## Favorite Chicken Salad Sandwiches

- 1 12.5-ounce can white meat chicken
- 1 8-ounce can water chestnuts, finely chopped
- dill or sweet pickle relish
- mayonnaise
- bread

Mix chicken and water chestnuts together. Add relish and mayonnaise to taste. Spread on your favorite bread and enjoy.

Sandy Slaymaker • Victor  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## Grilled Cheese Taverns

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 can tomato soup
- ½ can water
- ¼ cup ketchup
- ½ teaspoon mustard
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- salt and pepper, to taste
- bread
- butter
- American cheese slices
- dill pickle sandwich chips

Brown ground beef with onion, drain grease. Stir in soup, water, ketchup, mustard, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, sugar, salt and pepper. Simmer on low for 1-2 hours, stirring frequently. Heat griddle to 350 degrees F. Butter one side of bread slice and place buttered side down on griddle. Top with a slice of cheese, enough tavern meat mixture to just cover the bread, dill pickles and another slice of bread, buttered side up. Grill 2-3 minutes on each side or until bread is browned and crispy. Let cool a bit before slicing in half diagonally. Tavern meat mixture freezes well for later use.

Joni Rus • Rock Valley  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative



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

[www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com/recipes](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com/recipes)

## Wanted: Christmas Morning Recipes The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

With good tidings and great joy in mind, we want your favorite Christmas morning recipes! No matter if your dish is savory, sweet, simple or extra special, breakfast gathered around the Christmas tree is sure to be a treasured holiday tradition. 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](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com).

The deadline is Aug. 31, 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@livingwithenergyiniowa.com](mailto:recipes@livingwithenergyiniowa.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

### KIDS LOVE THEIR PB&Js

The average American child eats about 1,500 PB&J sandwiches by the time they graduate high school.

SANDWICH BITES

### SANDWICHES BY THE MILLIONS

Americans eat about 300 million sandwiches every day, and National Sandwich Day is celebrated on Nov. 3.

SANDWICH BITES

### HAM REIGNS SUPREME

The most popular sandwich in America is the standard ham sandwich with ham, cheese, mustard and mayonnaise. It is followed in popularity by the BLT.

SANDWICH BITES

### NO. 1 SANDWICH ON THE MENU

Sandwiches are on the menu more frequently than any other type of entrée at restaurants.

SANDWICH BITES

# Shine the Light contest nominees

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



## 2021 SHINE THE LIGHT NOMINEES

**Brad Arndorfer** from Bancroft was nominated by **Richard Arndorfer of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Bancroft Volunteer Firefighter's Association**.

**Suzanne Asklesen** from Cambridge was nominated by **Carol Gilbert of Midland Power Cooperative** for her work with the **Ballard Education Foundation**.

**Helen Beneke** from Pocahontas was nominated by **Parker Aden of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Pocahontas County Foundation**.

**Barb Brennan** from Emmetsburg was nominated by **LuAnn Opheim of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for her work with **Unity Lutheran Ministries**.

**Lynn Buth** from Danbury was nominated by **Clem & Kay Wessling of North West Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with **Danbury EMT**.

**Catherine Burkman** from Albia was nominated by **Aimee Campbell of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.** for her work with the **Albia Victorian Stroll**.

**Cathy & Denny Carlson** from Hampton were nominated by **Karen Ringleib of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative** for their work with **Carlson Tree Farm**.

**Sandy Carson** was nominated by **Alexis Carson of Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.** for her work with the **Clarke Athletic Booster Club**.

**Judy Combs** from Bloomfield was nominated by **Joye Lore-Lawson of Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Davis County Tourism Board**.

**Karen Conrad** from Epworth was nominated by **Janet Berger of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Epworth Community Food Pantry**.

**Jim Davies** from Hampton was nominated by **Christy Mason of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Windsor Theatre Development Corporation**.

**Gary Doehrmann** from Waverly was nominated by **Anne Sesker of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Waverly Fire Department**.

**Skott Gent** from Monmouth was nominated by **Nancy Miller of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Maquoketa FFA Alumni**.

**Hayden George** from Albia was nominated by **Roger George of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.** for his work with the **CJ3 Foundation**.

**Michael Goodin** from Schleswig was nominated by **Leroy Hight of Western Iowa Power Cooperative** for his work with **Under the Son Childcare**.

**Dawn Hamilton** from Malcom was nominated by **Marna Montgomery of T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Malcom Food Pantry**.

The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa are driven by our commitment to community. To celebrate local volunteers this summer, we launched the Shine the Light contest. Employees and member-consumers of Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives were invited to nominate someone who makes a positive difference in their community.

Three winners will be awarded a \$1,500 donation to their charity or community organization of choice and featured in the September issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine.

Please join us in congratulating and thanking these nominees for their outstanding commitment to community. Learn more at [www.IowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.IowaShineTheLight.com). 🌟

Erin Campbell is the director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.





**Arika Hammond** from Cherokee was nominated by **June Hammond of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Puppy Jake Foundation**.

**Robert Hantsbarger** from Arthur was nominated by **Twyla Godbersen of North West Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Schaller Volunteer Fire Department**.

**Patti Hastings** from Harpers Ferry was nominated by **Hollee McCormick of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **American Legion Auxiliary**.

**Ronda Hughes** from Lime Springs was nominated by **Jason Passmore of MiEnergy Cooperative** for her work with the **Lime Springs Betterment Foundation**.

**Jodi Irlmieir** from Anita was nominated by **Lorilyn Schultes of Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association** for her work with **Anita Town & Country**.

**Chris Jensen** from Hamlin was nominated by **Gail Petersen of Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association** for her work with the **Caring and Sharing**.

**Barry Johnson** from Hampton was nominated by **Garrett Thompson of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Harriman-Nielsen Historic Farm**.

**Margaret (Margie) Kenyon** from Dallas Center was nominated by **Carolyn Snyder of Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association** for her work with the **Minburn Community Betterment Group**.

**Cynthia (Cindy) Loots** from Pomeroy was nominated by **Nancy Bruns of Calhoun County Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Pomeroy Area Veteran's Park**.

**Erica Luebbers** was nominated by **Amanda Petersen of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Royal Family Kids Camp**.

**Steve Mixer** from Burlington was nominated by **Gina Hardin of Access Energy Cooperative** for his work with the **Des Moines County Community Emergency Response Team**.

**Dwight Morenz** from Lake City was nominated by **Darcy Maulsby of Calhoun County Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with **Central School Preservation**.

**Linda Muhlbauer** from Manilla was nominated by **Jean Voegel of Western Iowa Power Cooperative** for her work with **Main Street Manning**.

**George North** from Allison was nominated by **Deb McWhirter of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with **Allison Wilder Park**.

**Dan & Carol Patterson** from Marengo were nominated by **Nancy McMann of T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative** for their work with **Marengo Food Distribution**.

**Stacy Pippitt** from Missouri Valley was nominated by **Lori Clark of Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with **St. Paul Community Table**.

**Larry Rapagnani** from Marcus was nominated by **Jolene Deichmann of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for his work with **Community Ministries**.

**Lori Roose** from Waverly was nominated by **Sandi Miller of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Little Lambs Preschool**.

**Todd Ross** from Denmark was nominated by **Renae Welborn of Access Energy Cooperative** for his work with **Denmark Fire & Rescue**.

**Marianne Sjaarda** from Sioux Center was nominated by **Jen Sandbulte of North West Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **HOPE Food Pantry**.

**Beth Thole** from Sibley was nominated by **Don & Cindy Thole of Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.** for her work with the **McCallum Museum/Farm Shed**.

**Matthew Turack** from Griswold was nominated by **John Turack of Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Pregnancy Center of Southwest Iowa**.

**Marlene Walthart** was nominated by **Dawn Eveleth of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Emmet County Animal Shelter**.

*We'll announce the three winners during the 2021 Iowa State Fair. Visit the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa booth in the Bruce Rastetter 4-H Exhibits Building.*

# Practice safety with gasoline dispensing facilities near electrical equipment

One of the most common safety violations found near electricity lines is the location of the gasoline dispensing facilities on the farmstead in relation to the meter pole or farm buildings.

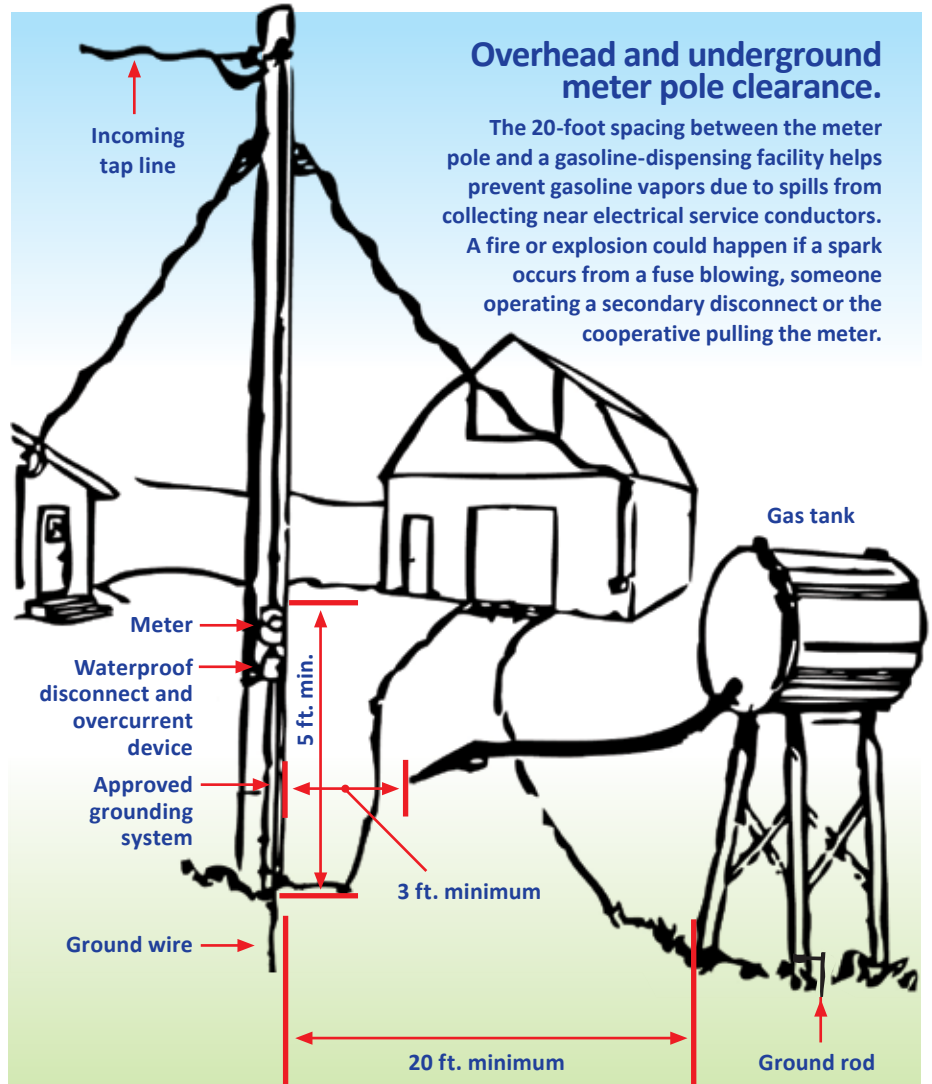
The National Electrical Code shows the requirements your farm wiring system should follow. One section of the wiring code covers the requirements for electrical equipment and wiring for all voltages in locations where fire or explosion hazards may exist due to flammable gases or vapors, flammable liquids, etc.

The National Electric Safety Code (NESC) outlines the standards that the utility follows. Because of the hazard that exists in the vicinity of gasoline dispensing facilities, and especially the hazard to Access Energy Cooperative personnel wherever there is a possibility of electric sparks or arcing igniting flammable vapors, we follow these standards closely. NESC suggests that electric utilities not permit the installation of meter poles or service entrances within 20 feet of a gasoline dispensing barrel or tank, or within 3 feet of any point that could be reached by a gasoline dispensing nozzle. In addition, it is recommended that existing installations with less than the required clearances be modified to provide the required clearances.

It would be quite costly for Access Energy Cooperative to change the location of existing meter poles. Therefore, we ask every member to check to make sure their gasoline dispensing facilities are located 20 feet from the meter pole. The end of the dispensing nozzle should not be within 3 feet of the meter pole.

If Access Energy Cooperative discovers a violation of this requirement near our equipment, we have no choice but to disconnect the electric service at the site until the hazard is corrected.

In addition to these location requirements, please make sure your gasoline dispensing facilities are electrically bonded to the electrical ground of the farm wiring system. Install a ground rod at your gasoline tank and connect the tank to the ground rod and to the farm wiring ground. ⚡



## TRIENNIAL SURVEY

# Your opinion matters to us

Access Energy Cooperative, in conjunction with our power supplier, Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc., conducts a survey of our members approximately every three years. We want to know what we can do to improve your service.

The goals of this survey are to find out how we are treating you, what we are doing that is good for our members and things we can improve. We use this information to design programs and services.

The survey will be conducted both

online and through telephone interviews. Those who are randomly selected to take the survey can select the format that best fits their lifestyle. The phone interview is expected to last about 12 minutes, and the online version should be quicker. Your responses are kept completely anonymous, and your information is completely protected.

The survey will take place this fall. We will keep you posted when we have a more secure time frame. If you receive a call or email to take the survey, we hope you will help tell us how we are doing. ⚡



# Understanding power surges and blinks

BY ABBY BERRY

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

## What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts – this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.



Photo by David Smith, Power on the Prairie.

Access Energy Cooperative encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

## What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a

variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other weather events.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are good because it means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

No matter the cause, Access Energy Cooperative crews will be on their way to inspect damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help, too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 866-242-4232. ⚡

Abby Berry is the senior communications resources manager at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

## MEMBER THANK YOU

Dear Access office staff and ground crew,  
Thank you for your fast and efficient service, Monday, June 14. From the time I called the outage in, to power completely restored – 30 minutes! Best customer service award goes to all of you!

With gratitude,  
Access Energy Cooperative member

## Call us if you are out of service

Access Energy Cooperative is proud of the reliability of our system, as well as the quick restoration process should an outage occur. As a reminder, the quicker you let us know you are out of power, the quicker we can restore it. Never assume we know that you are out of power.

For the fastest service, please call us at 866-242-4232. Our Facebook page is not monitored 24/7, so a message posted there may not receive attention as quickly as a phone call. ⚡

# Working together to combat cyber attacks

BY PAUL WESSLUND

Computer hacking is a top news story these days, and for years, electric cooperatives have focused on blocking cyber threats from interfering with the nationwide electric grid that keeps our lights on. You can also help defend against that electronic mischief – and you should!

## Protecting the “smart grid”

The network of power lines, transformers and substations adds up to an incredibly complex system that reliably brings us conveniences of modern life. That network is transforming into a “smart grid” that does an even better job of delivering electricity.

It’s adding renewable energy sources like solar and wind power, which calls for sophisticated software to keep power flowing at night or when the wind isn’t blowing. Computer algorithms make plans for the most efficient and reliable operations when forecasts call for storms, wildfires or times of high-power use.

Making such modern miracles happen means joining with another dominant part of today’s world – the internet.

The blink-of-an-eye speed of balancing the generation of electricity with the flip of a light switch relies heavily on the electronically connected world. The internet is incredibly useful, but also a target of troublemakers from lone, self-taught experts to international crime rings. Electric utilities know this and work every day through their own offices and national organizations on cyber safety.

You can take smart steps, too, to protect yourself and the electric grid. Because the power grid uses the internet, that means that any of your internet-connected devices

are also part of the grid: computers, security cameras, printers, smart TVs, health monitors – even cars and lightbulbs can be connected to the internet.

## Four ways to be cyber secure

Here are the top tips experts advise to defend against hackers:

- 1 Lock the front door.** If you have wireless internet in your home, the traffic comes in through the router. If you take just one step, create a strong password for that router, and set a reminder to change the password regularly.
- 2 Use a secret code.** Weak passwords make things easier for hackers. A study found the most-used password in 2021 was “123456.” A more secure option uses combinations of uppercase and lowercase letters, combined with numbers and special symbols like “&” or “!” Be aware that every major internet-connected appliance comes with its own factory-installed password you should change right away.

**3 Stay vigilant.** If you receive an email with an attachment you weren’t expecting, don’t open the attachment. If you get a message with a link you didn’t know was coming, don’t click it. Even if it’s from a friend, call them and ask if they sent it – hackers can send messages using your friend’s address.

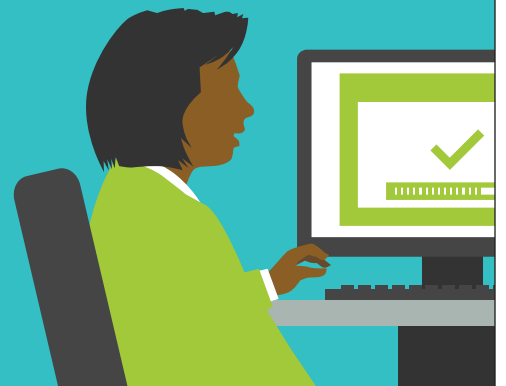
**4 Stay state-of-the-art.** Your computer and other devices will regularly offer updates – install them. They often contain security updates to protect against the latest cyber threats. And they will come to you directly through your computer, phone or printer.

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month is in October, and the Department of Homeland Security has titled this year’s theme, “If you connect it, protect it.” That’s good advice for your home – and for the electric grid! ⚡

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

## Four Ways to Combat Cyber Threats

- 1.** Periodically change the password for your Wi-Fi router.
- 2.** Use unique codes or phrases to create stronger passwords.
- 3.** Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders.
- 4.** Update software regularly.





# School clothes shopping showdown

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

When our three boys were at home, one of my least-favorite chores of the year was determining what clothing fit after a long summer of what always seemed to be unprecedented growth. As August rolled around, I would haul out the contents of their closets for the annual “try-on.”

This was met with great resistance by the male contingent. I don’t know if girls would have been any easier, but each of my sons swore the clothing in their closet was just fine, even though I had seen inches of ankle showing in the blue jeans and bulging seams on the T-shirts over the summer.

The final showdown usually came the night before the scheduled shopping trip, when they were forced to try everything on so I could make notes. They would rip items on and off with a speed I couldn’t have purchased on a school day, so my notes were usually perfunctory and illegible.

## Dressing room drama

It was a challenge to do the shopping day with all three boys, but I didn’t have the time or energy to take them one at a time. We would set off in fairly high spirits, but ultimately, we always found ourselves in the same situation – the boys inside a men’s dressing room with me standing outside the entrance, trying to get them to try things I was bringing in.

Any one of the three would hiss, “Mom, get OUT OF THE MEN’S DRESSING ROOM!”

“What’s the big deal? Everyone is curtained off,” I’d reply. As I looked around, I realized the only other dressing room occupants were other mothers trying to get a glimpse of



whether the jeans on their own child were too tight or too long.

I added, “If you won’t come out into the store so I can see what you’re wearing, I have to come in.”

“I am NOT coming out there,” a son would growl.

“Okay, your choice,” I’d blithely chirp, ripping the curtain open.

No matter how an item of clothing fit, my sons would pronounce it “fine.” Too big, falling off the shoulders, stomach showing, pants squeezing, hems dragging . . . it was all “fine.” It took the persistence of a sleuth to get a true picture of what fit and what didn’t.

We’d arrive home, crabby, tired and hungry.

## Foiling mom’s plans

I thought I arrived at a great solution the year the boys were old

enough to drive themselves. I sent them shopping with a list and some money and told them to come home with what they needed. Our youngest son returned with a bag of socks and three video games. He determined he didn’t need anything else to wear. Plot foiled.

My husband Kent was in a dressing room trying on jeans recently, when he overheard a conversation a man and his son were having next to him. The father instructed, “When mom comes over, tell her you love it. If you say it’s ‘fine,’ she’ll make you go out and show her.”

It seems they’re on to us, moms. 🚀

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.





**FOCUSED ON YOUR STREET. NOT WALL STREET.**

Think of your not-for-profit Touchstone Energy cooperative as your very own local energy advisor. After all, we're owned by you and the other members in our community, which means you'll always have a say in how your co-op runs. To learn more, visit [TouchstoneEnergy.com](http://TouchstoneEnergy.com).

**YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION.**