

JANUARY 2023

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Scholarships available  
to high school seniors

New year, smarter home

Comforting casserole recipes

Changes to bill and 2023 rate information ▶ See Page 4

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ON THE COVER

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

# CELEBRATING A DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



Whether you're celebrating a birthday or a historic anniversary, 75 years is a major milestone. At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

(IAEC), January 1948 was important because it marked the first month we published a statewide newspaper for member-consumers, titled "IRECA News." Sharing news and happenings from when IAEC was known as the Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the monthly tabloid quickly became a trusted and valuable source for information as more rural Iowa homes and businesses were receiving electricity through rural electric cooperatives.

An editorial in the first issue exactly 75 years ago reads:

*"The editors will do everything their knowledge and zeal will allow to make the publication foremost in its field. They hope to present material which will so inform members they will be inspired to contact others who ought to unite with us and to convince outside readers the cooperative system merits their wholehearted support."*

## Remaining steadfast in our mission

While the name and format of our monthly statewide publication have changed a few times over the decades, our commitment to our readers has not. We remain faithful to the legacy of providing valuable information to Iowa's electric cooperative member-consumers about co-ops, rural economic development, energy efficiency, industry trends and electric safety. We also make the magazine more enjoyable by including recipes, contests and reader-submitted cover photos.

And in a world shifting to digital platforms, we prefer to mail a printed magazine each month because it breaks through the digital noise and gets read. According to a scientifically valid readership survey we conducted in 2020, 87% of those who receive our magazine take time to read it each month. In fact, 44% of those who receive this magazine spend 10 minutes or more reading our 16 pages of content each month! We simply can't get that kind of engagement in a digital format.



But we do embrace digital technology when it makes strategic sense. A few years ago, we scanned every hard copy of the statewide publication in our central files and digitized the pages of each monthly issue to preserve our archive for generations to come. I enjoy history and learning about the past in order to guide our future, so I am grateful for the ability to

access and search 900 monthly issues with the click of a mouse.

## Energy topics stay at the forefront

Reading through our archive, I have seen many topics over the decades that are cycling back in the news today, including stories on nuclear technology, supply chain concerns and generating enough electricity to meet the growing electric demand of consumers. We'll look back on some of those headlines throughout the year as we celebrate our diamond anniversary.

I like to think that those first editors would be proud of where we stand 75 years later, carrying the torch they ignited so long ago. May this monthly publication continue to provide useful information to member-consumers of Iowa's electric cooperatives for another 75 years! Our cooperative system indeed merits your wholehearted support.

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

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win a Fire HD 10 Plus Tablet

This 10.1-inch, full HD, 32 GB tablet boasts a display that is 10% brighter than previous generation, with more than 2 million pixels. Enjoy your favorite apps like Netflix, Facebook, Hulu, Instagram and more through Amazon's Appstore. Ask Alexa to play videos and music, open apps, make calls or send messages, check the weather, access compatible smart home devices and more.

### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than Jan. 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the \$100 gift card for a local business from the November issue was Jeff V. Collins from Guthrie County REC.



**ENTER ONLINE BY JAN. 31!**

# CHANGES ON YOUR BILL AND 2023 RATES

BY KEVIN WHEELER



Members may notice some minor changes on your upcoming bill. In order to be more transparent, we are changing the labels on the bill to better describe

the charges so it is easier for you to understand what they are. This image (right) shows what changes will be made.

Effective April 1, 2023, Access Energy Cooperative will implement our first rate increase to members since 2016. Even though the costs from our power supplier have increased during this time, those increases were not passed on to the members. We will hold member information meetings in February for all members who have questions. Three main factors are driving the rate increase. First and foremost is a significant increase in the cost of power from our power supplier. Power cost is the largest part of expenses; it accounts for 68% of your bill. Compared to other cooperatives, whose power cost ranges from 55% to 60% of their bills, it is evident that Access Energy Cooperative is very efficient in providing service to our members.

Second, as with most products you purchase, our costs of purchasing materials have increased. It has also become more difficult to obtain some items because of supply chain issues. Over the last two years, our material costs have increased by about 30%. With supply chain issues, we have been ordering and storing materials in preparation for future needs.

Finally, the cooperative's overhead and operational costs have increased. As all of our members have noticed, the cost of fuel and other expenses have increased. The cooperative is not immune to cost increases. As with any business, the employees

Access Energy Cooperative  
PO Box 440  
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 52641  
(866) 242-4232 or (319) 385-1577  
24 HOUR EMERGENCY or OUTAGE SERVICE:  
View and pay your bill online at  
[www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)

Page 1 of 2

Account Number  
Billing Date 11/28/2022 Due Date 12/24/2022

**Billing Summary**

Amount Due Last Billing	192.85
Payments	192.85 CR
Balance Forward	0.00
Current Charges	202.23
<b>Total Amount Due</b>	<b>202.23</b>
<b>After Due Date Pay</b>	<b>205.23</b>

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

**Messages**  
Do you need to update your contact information with us? See the bill insert on how you could win a \$50 bill credit just by making sure we have your current information!

Account: Map Loc: Desc: HOUSE Rate: 101  
Service Address:

**Meter Reading Details**  
Multiplier 1.0 Type Electric

Meter	Current Reading:	79,214
	Previous Reading:	77,530
	Usage	1,684

**Detail of Charges**

KWH Usage (1,684 kWh @ 0.0999 per kWh)	168.23
KW (9.85 KW @ 0.00 per KW RDG 9.848)	0.00
Fixed Facilities Charge	32.00
County Tax	2.00
<b>Total This Service</b>	<b>202.23</b>

**KWH Used**

Days	KWh/Day	Cost/Day
This Month	30	\$0.13

	This Month	Last Month	Last Year
Avg Temperature (in degrees Fahrenheit)	43	53	43

are the most valuable asset of our cooperative. Our expenses to maintain a highly qualified workforce have also increased. The cooperative employees are highly skilled, trained, and educated to provide our members with exceptional service.

Over the past year, we have been discussing the increasing costs and how they affect the cooperative. Your board of directors has thoroughly discussed these cost increases for several months, so it is evident that decisions to raise rates are taken very seriously. Additional increases in power costs are expected in 2024 and 2025, so your board will constantly evaluate how this will affect the cooperative. We expect there will be additional rate increases in 2024 and 2025.

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

- "KWH Usage" will now be **"Energy charge"**
- "KW" will now be **"Demand charge"**
- "Fixed Facilities Charge" will now be **"Base charge"**

## MEMBER INFORMATION MEETINGS

Access Energy Cooperative will hold three member information meetings, one in each of our three districts. The primary purpose of these meetings is to share information about the upcoming rate increase that will be effective April 1. All members are invited to attend the meeting in your respective district. All meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m.

# 2023 POWER SUPPLY RATES IMPACTED BY FUEL COSTS, INFLATION, ENERGY POLICIES

BY DAVID J. TUDOR



As the leader of Associated Electric Cooperative, I work with a team of dedicated employees generating electricity for six transmission and

51 distribution cooperatives, including Access Energy Cooperative. Our mission, plainly stated, is to provide reliable, affordable and responsibly generated electricity to those we serve.

Associated is governed by our 12-person board of directors; transmission member-owners who provide strategic guidance and make key decisions as representatives of their membership across the 51 cooperatives in Iowa, Missouri and Oklahoma.

In September, the Associated board of directors made the difficult decision to approve a budget for 2023 with a wholesale power rate increase that will go into effect on April 1. This decision was not taken lightly and will be Associated's first rate increase to wholesale power rates since 2017, despite the significant costs incurred during historic Winter Storm Uri in February 2021. During Winter Storm

Uri, Associated's 57 cooperatives did not experience rolling blackouts.

Associated's wholesale power rates are designed to reflect the costs to serve the system and collect revenues in proportion to those costs. With the increase next year, member rates will still be competitive in the region and nation.

As you have seen in your area and across our country, costs for many things are way up, but none more than fuels and energy-related products and services. Likewise, Associated's need for a rate increase is due to growing revenue requirements across many categories but is driven primarily by higher prices for the fuel and transportation used to generate most of our electricity. Supply and demand determines much of the cost for our fuels, as does inflation, the regulatory environment and energy policies from Washington, D.C.

Our pledge to you is that Associated and its employees will continue to do our best to protect the reliable, affordable power you have come to expect. As a cooperative, it's in our DNA. And it's our privilege to serve this cooperative system.

*David J. Tudor is the CEO and general manager of Associated Electric Cooperative.*

## LIGHTED PARADE

Access Energy Cooperative was named the winner of "Best Lighted Display" in the 2022 holiday parade in Mount Pleasant.



*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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**Twitter:** twitter.com/AccessEnergyC  
**Email:** contactus@accessenergycoop.com  
**Office Hours:** Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Friday, 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
Call our office 24/7: 319-385-1577

Payments can be placed in dropbox under flag pole. Visa and MasterCard accepted.

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maholtkamp@accessenergycoop.com

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

### DISTRICT 1 MEETING

**Feb. 21 at 6:30 p.m.**  
Cambridge Building on  
the Jefferson County  
Fairgrounds  
2606 West Burlington St.  
Fairfield, Iowa

### DISTRICT 2 MEETING

**Feb. 16 at 6:30 p.m.**  
Access Energy  
Cooperative office  
1800 West Washington St.  
Mount Pleasant, Iowa

### DISTRICT 3 MEETING

**Feb. 23 at 6:30 p.m.**  
Hitching Post  
2165 County Rd 103  
West Point, Iowa

Contact 866-242-4232 or email contactus@accessenergycoop.com with any questions.

# SFM FAIRFIELD HONORED WITH IOWA VENTURE AWARD

The Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) and its rural electric cooperative partners honored seven distinguished Iowa companies with Iowa Venture Awards at a luncheon held in conjunction with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' annual meeting in December. Debi Durham, director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Iowa Finance Authority, joined IADG as the presenter of the awards.

## SFM Fairfield

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

SFM was formed in 2013 by Scott Goedken and is headquartered in



Front row from left to right: Bruce Nuzum, Iowa Area Development Group; Debi Durham, Iowa Economic Development Authority and Iowa Finance Authority; Scott Goedken, SFM; Chad Goedken, Sun & Fun. Back row from left to right: Marvin Newton, Access Energy Cooperative; Doug Aeilts, Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative; Kevin Wheeler, Access Energy Cooperative.

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

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

JAN. 10	Welcome Back Reception for legislators in Des Moines
JAN. 19	Regular board meeting
FEB. 16	District 2 Member Information Meeting
FEB. 21	District 1 Member Information Meeting
FEB. 23	District 3 Member Information Meeting
FEB. 28	Youth Tour application deadline
MARCH 8	Youth Tour interviews
MARCH 15	Scholarship application deadlines
MARCH 15	REC Day on the Hill in Des Moines
MARCH 31	Photo contest deadline

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

## WIN A \$25 BILL CREDIT BY USING SMARTHUB

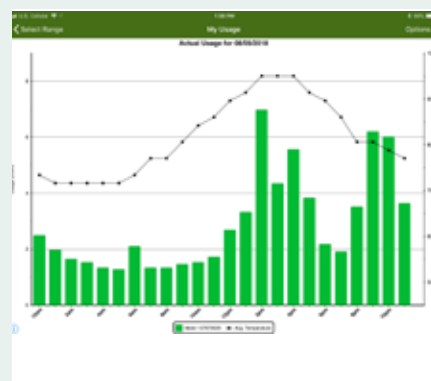


Your energy use may not be something you can see, but it is with the SmartHub app! You can easily see how much energy you have used over a period of time that you want to track. SmartHub even sums it up in easy-to-read graphs.

You can use SmartHub to monitor your usage to help save energy. It allows you to set up a notification alert when your usage is outside a certain threshold. You can use this to help control your energy bill.

To encourage members to try SmartHub, anyone who has an active SmartHub this month will be entered in a drawing to win a \$25 bill credit. Don't have an account? Simply:

- Look up your account number
- Go to [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)
- Click "Access Account Online" in the banner at the top
- Find "New User?" and click the link to enroll



The app is also available from the Apple App Store and Google Play. SmartHub also allows you to:

- Report outages
- Access account information
- Check balances and make payments

Take control of your energy use – enroll today!

**Use SmartHub for a chance to win a \$25 bill credit.**

# LINEWORKER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

### 2023 timelines

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

### Eligibility requirements

- Must be a high school graduate

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

### Application process

Find an application:

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

## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Access Energy Cooperative is offering \$9,000 in scholarships to high school seniors! This includes six \$1,500 awards, two in each of the cooperative's three districts. Applicants must be a high school senior receiving post-secondary education. Parents or legal guardians must be members of the cooperative.

Applications can be found:

- At all area high school guidance counselor offices
- By visiting our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com), downloading the application and faxing, mailing or bringing it to our office; the form can also be submitted online
- By contacting the Access Energy Cooperative headquarters office in Mount Pleasant at 866-242-4232

**Applications are due in our office March 15. More details can be found on our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com).**

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

## EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS

Access Energy Cooperative honored nearly 250 years of service to co-op members at our annual employee appreciation dinner. Thank you to each of these employees for their long-standing dedication to our members!



Scott Augsburger  
35 years



Daniel Phillips  
35 years



Alan Raymer  
35 years



Marva Crowl  
25 years



Mark Fulton  
25 years



Tony Brown  
15 years



Levon Mullen  
15 years



Cherity Wibben  
15 years



Brian Baylor  
10 years



Cole Hertzler  
10 years



Kurt Lowenberg  
10 years



Jordan Ross  
10 years



Rick Clark  
5 years

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

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

Youth Tour takes place June 17-23. Hundreds of electric co-ops across the country will send participants to Washington, D.C., for a chance to learn about the cooperative business model and enjoy a full week of sightseeing. While in D.C., participants have a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss the issues that are important back home.

Applications are due in our office Feb. 28. Personal interviews to choose our two student representatives will be held at our office March 8. You must be able to participate in an interview on that date to be selected.



## BAKED GOULASH

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded, divided
- 1 24-ounce jar spaghetti sauce
- 1 8-ounce package elbow macaroni, cooked and drained
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

Brown beef and onion, drain. In large bowl, combine 1 cup cheese and remaining ingredients. Add beef and onion to pasta and sauce mixture. Place in 9x13-inch baking dish and top with remaining 1 cup cheese. Bake covered at 350 degrees F for 20-25 minutes until done. *Serves 6-8*

Connie Betts • Woodbine  
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

## BEV'S CASSEROLE

- ¼ pound cooked chicken, turkey or ham
- 1 cup uncooked macaroni
- 1 cup cheese, cut up
- 1 can cream of mushroom or chicken soup
- 1 cup milk
- 3 tablespoons onion, chopped

Mix all ingredients together and put in a 9-inch square baking dish. Cover and refrigerate several hours or overnight. Bake covered at 350 degrees F for 45 minutes. Make this simple casserole with leftover chicken, turkey or ham. Add a salad and your next meal is ready. *Serves 6*

Rhonda Benton • Rowan • Prairie Energy Cooperative

## CHICKEN PASTA OVERNIGHT CASSEROLE

- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 6-8 dashes tabasco sauce
- garlic salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 cups Colby Jack cheese, shredded, divided
- 1 7-ounce package shell pasta, uncooked
- 3-4 cups chicken, cooked and cubed
- 1 can water chestnuts, sliced and drained
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 cup celery, sliced
- 1 small bag frozen mixed vegetables

Put soups in mixing bowl and beat to smooth. Add milk, 1 cup at a time, until absorbed. Add seasonings and stir well. Add 1 cup cheese and remaining ingredients, stir until well mixed. Pour into buttered or sprayed 9x13-inch casserole dish. Cover tightly with saran or Press-n-Seal wrap. Refrigerate overnight. Set out 1 hour before baking. Bake covered with foil at 325 degrees F for 1½ hours. Uncover and add remaining 1 cup cheese. Cook for 30 minutes more for light browning. *Serves 10-12*

Belinda Fink • Cambridge • Consumers Energy



## UPSIDE DOWN PIZZA CASSEROLE

- 1½ pounds ground beef
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon onion, chopped or minced
- 1 16-ounce jar spaghetti sauce
- sliced pepperoni, optional
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1 cup flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Parmesan cheese

Brown beef with salt, pepper and onion, drain. Mix beef with spaghetti sauce and pepperoni, if desired. Layer the meat mixture in a 9x13-inch pan. Sprinkle mozzarella cheese over meat. Make a crust by mixing flour, eggs, milk and oil. Pour the crust mixture over top. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top and bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour. *Serves 6-8*

Judy Jackson • Hedrick  
Access Energy Cooperative

## BUSY DAY CASSEROLE

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 4 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 can mixed vegetables
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 pound cheese, shredded, optional

Brown beef with butter, drain grease. Put in 10x10x2-inch glass baking dish. Add potatoes, salt, vegetables and soup. Mix will and cover. Bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour, or until potatoes are done. If desired, top with cheese and melt in the oven for a few minutes. *Serves 9*

Raymond Robbins • Fort Madison  
Access Energy Cooperative

## CABBAGE CASSEROLE

- 1 medium head cabbage
- ½ cup butter or margarine
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

Cut up and cook cabbage, then place in casserole dish. Combine butter and flour and cook 2 minutes. Add milk, cream cheese, salt and pepper. Stir until cream cheese is melted. Pour mixture over cabbage. Bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour. *Serves 4-6*

Lori Collingwood • Ladora  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## CHEESEBURGER QUICHE

- ½ pound ground beef, browned
- ⅓ cup onion, chopped
- ½ cup milk
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1½ cups cheese, shredded
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- pie shell, optional

Mix ingredients together and place in pie pan, with or without pie shell. Bake at 350 degrees F for 35 minutes. *Serves 4*

Rebecca Hancox • Plano  
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative

## HAM/CHICKEN CASSEROLE

- 1 box Rice-a-Roni wild rice
- ½ small package frozen peas
- 1½-2 cups ham, diced
- 1½-2 cups rotisserie chicken, bite-sized pieces
- 2 cups cheese, shredded
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- ½ teaspoon curry powder
- croutons

Prepare wild rice according to package directions. Mix all ingredients together except for croutons. Place in a greased 9x13-inch casserole pan. Top with croutons (can substitute with diced bread mixed in melted butter). Bake at 350 degrees F for 1-1½ hours, or until hot and bubbly. *Serves 12*

Deb Wentzien • Lincoln  
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

WANTED:

## BEEF RECIPES

THE REWARD:

\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is Jan. 31

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

EMAIL: [recipes@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:recipes@ieclmagazine.com)

(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

MAIL: Recipes

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



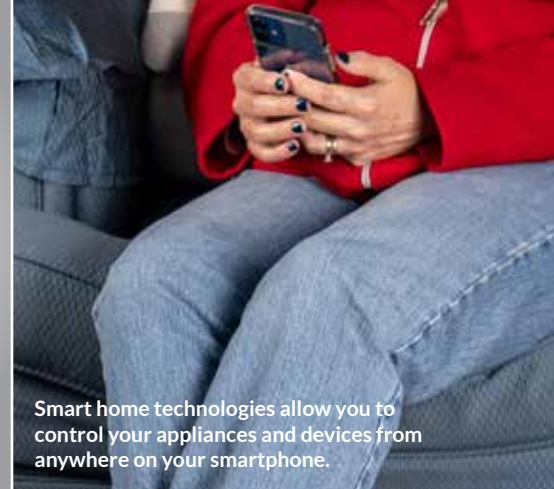
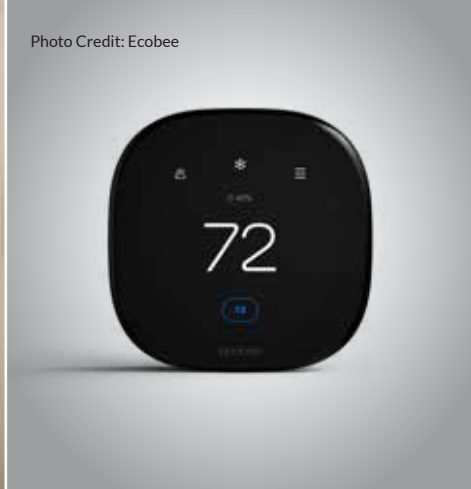
# NEW YEAR, SMARTER HOME

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE





Smart window coverings, such as these Serena Smart Roller Shades, can help save energy in the winter and summer with app capabilities and preset schedules.



Smart home technologies allow you to control your appliances and devices from anywhere on your smartphone.

You've probably heard the term "smart home" a lot in recent years. If you're curious about what makes a home smart, how it can boost energy efficiency and help you save money, you've come to the right place.

"Smart" was originally an acronym for self-monitoring analysis and reporting technology. It refers to technology that can be programmed for automation or controlled remotely using Bluetooth or Wi-Fi from a smartphone app or online. A smart home is one with automated control of appliances and systems, such as lighting fixtures and heating and cooling systems.

There are multiple reasons people choose to automate their homes, including convenience, energy efficiency and security. Just because a product is smart doesn't mean it's energy efficient. Added connectivity, lights and touchscreens can actually increase your energy use. Always look for the ENERGY STAR® logo when shopping, which certifies the products meet standards for energy efficiency.

Energy savings typically come from automating the systems, devices and appliances in your home to use less energy or use energy when it costs less. Here are a few ways you can start implementing smart technology at home.

### Smart upgrades for the entire home

Because heating and cooling account for the most energy use in a home, these systems are the best place to look for energy savings.

Smart thermostats offer features and functionality that can help you

save energy and money without thinking about it, including learning preferences and automatically setting temperatures. Geofencing is a feature that uses your phone's location to gauge your distance from home and adjusts the temperature accordingly.

Smart thermostats also let you control the thermostat from anywhere with an internet connection, and automatic software updates use new algorithms to maximize energy savings. Features vary by product, so be sure to choose one that's right for you.

Smart window coverings are increasing in popularity and availability. They can help save energy both in the winter and summer by operating based on the temperature of the room or a preset schedule.

Smart lighting can help you remotely control lights in your home based on occupancy or a preset schedule. Lighting also can be paired with home security systems.

You can use smart outlets and power strips to control devices from outside the home or manage use based on load. For example, you can plug your computer and devices into a load-sensing power strip that turns off peripheral devices, such as monitors and printers, when your computer is not in use.

### Smart streaming for the living room

Many people use Wi-Fi to stream TV shows and movies. Smart TVs with built-in streaming functionality offer the most efficient way to stream content. If your TV cannot connect to the internet for streaming, opt for

a streaming media player, such as Roku or Apple TV. They use 15 times less energy than a gaming console to stream the same shows and movies.

### Save on suds in the laundry room

Smart washing machines can be scheduled for off-peak energy times (when people in your community use less energy), which is helpful if your electric rate is based on the time of day energy is used. Smart clothes dryers can shut off automatically when your clothes are dry.

### Smart savings in the kitchen

There are many options for smart appliances in the heart of the home. Smart refrigerators offer energy-saving features, such as notifications when the door is left open. Some models have digital screens that show the fridge's contents to keep you from opening the door.

Smart ovens let you preheat when you are on your way home or check if you forgot to turn off the oven when you are away. Toasters, range hoods, microwaves and countertop ice makers are among the growing list of additional smart kitchen gadgets available.

More smart home technologies are on the horizon, bringing more ways to operate the various systems, devices and appliances in your home. As you think about ways to make your home smarter, remember to look for products that use the same smart home apps, which will make these new technologies even easier to manage.

*Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

# CHARGING HABITS TO EXTEND BATTERY LIFE

BY PAUL WESSLUND

Many of us are so connected to our phones, tablets and laptops that we panic when the battery nears the dreaded 0% mark. We want our device batteries to perform well for as long as possible. If you ever fret over your devices' power levels, here are a few tips on striking the right balance between battery health and how you work and play.

## 1 Keep your battery about 40% to 80% charged.

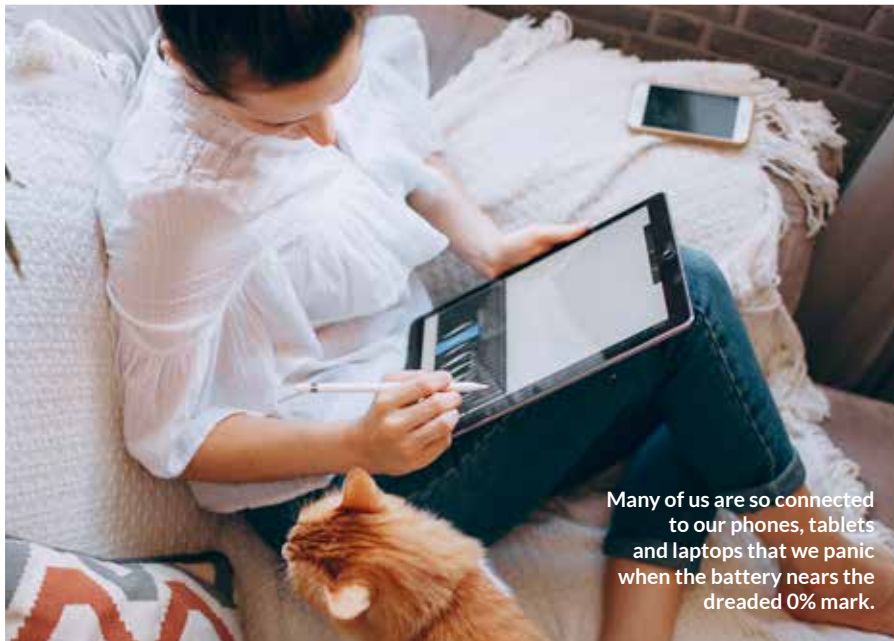
There's a lot of reasonable advice around the internet to keep your phone charged between 20% and 80% or between 40% and 80%. To understand those recommendations, it helps to know how rechargeable batteries work.

Rechargeable batteries work by containing two different materials that produce electricity when particles flow from one to the other. They flow in the other direction when being recharged. That process will degrade any battery over time. Keeping both sides of the battery in balance, with the device charged at about 50%, will put the least stress on the battery to make it last longer.

But that's unrealistic because no one is going to keep their phone half-charged all the time. So, experts try to make it easier by recommending 20% to 80% or 40% to 80% ranges. Apple devices offer even more flexibility, pointing out that modern rechargeable batteries are designed to last for years under a variety of ways you use them.

## 2 Overnight charging can add stress to some batteries.

Charging your device up to 100% or letting it drain to 0% until it shuts down does put extra stress on the battery and can shorten its life. That's why charging your devices occasionally throughout the day can make sense rather than keeping them plugged in while you sleep.

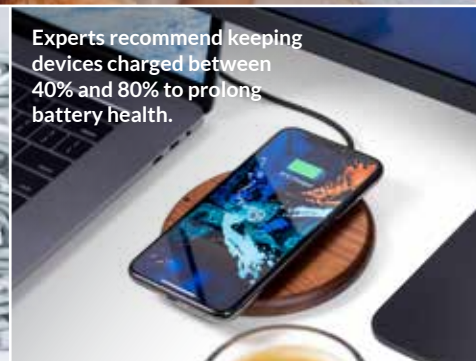


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Experts recommend keeping devices charged between 40% and 80% to prolong battery health.



## 3 Keep it cool, but not cold.

One absolute in battery care is not to let your device get warmer than 95 degrees. Keep it out of the sun, and never leave it in a hot vehicle. If the device does get hot, don't go to the other extreme and put it in the freezer. Just place it in the shade or take the cover off for a while.

## 4 Use less power.

It sounds simple, but one of the easiest ways to put less stress on the battery is to use less power. You can close energy-draining apps and functions when you're not using them, and you can activate energy-saving settings like putting the device to sleep sooner. Another easy way to reduce battery use is to activate "airplane

mode" now and then. You may be inconvenienced by a temporary pause on receiving emails or phone calls, but it might help you focus on that movie you're watching, the trail you're hiking or the conversation with your dinner companions.

If you're the kind of person who likes to turn in their electronics every couple of years for the latest versions, these recommendations likely won't apply. But if you want your devices to last longer, these suggestions can help prolong battery life.

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

# HOW ELECTRIC VEHICLES IMPACT THE GRID

BY KATHERINE LOVING

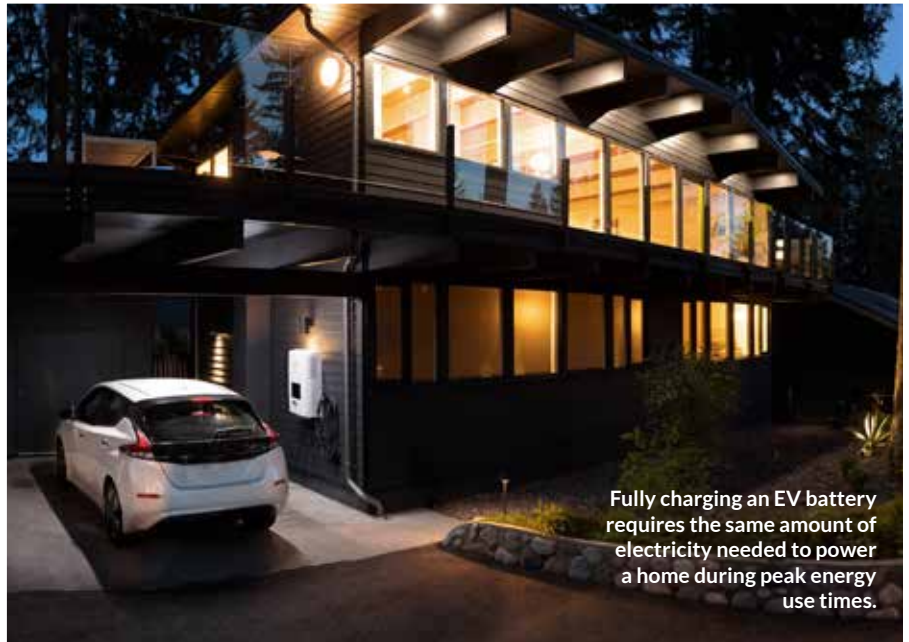
There was a record increase in electric vehicle (EV) sales last year, and experts predict that by 2035, many major vehicle manufacturers will only produce electric models. With this increase comes the need for more electricity to power EVs.

A 2021 Department of Energy study showed that increased electrification, or replacement of direct fossil fuel use with electricity, would account for a 38% increase in electricity demand by 2050 – and EVs will play a major role in this increased electrification. These shifts will significantly impact the nation's grid, which means power supply and grid infrastructure must be carefully planned to accommodate the increased need for electricity.

## The realities of EV charging

EV charging presents new challenges in maintaining the electric grid. Fully charging an EV battery requires the same amount of electricity needed to power a home during peak energy use times. However, EV charging is a concentrated pull of energy over an extended period, which can add stress to the local power grid by increasing the amount of electricity a utility has to provide. Additionally, the neighborhood transformer needs adequate capacity to handle the increased load. EV charging can shorten the lifespan of transformers by straining and overloading their capacity if they are not matched to a neighborhood's energy needs.

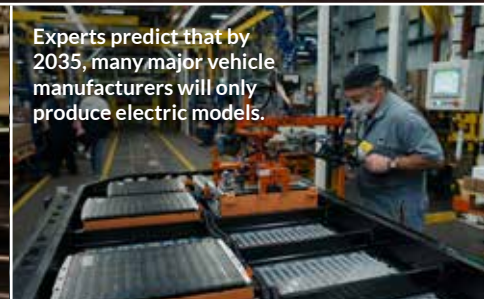
Electric cooperatives are currently identifying ways to manage this new pattern of electricity use, though exact strategies will vary based on each utility's unique needs. Analyzing energy load patterns or identifying where and when the local grid has spikes in demand can provide electric co-ops with data on where to place higher-capacity transformers. This analysis can also provide a picture of overall energy use and patterns to help forecast energy consumption for the



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Last year saw a record increase in EV sales.



Experts predict that by 2035, many major vehicle manufacturers will only produce electric models.

future. Planning system maintenance and upgrades are also part of that long-range forecasting; however, this has been recently complicated by supply chain issues with transformers, as wait times are upward of one year.

## Coordinating helps ease demand

EV owners can play a role in reducing energy costs and system stress associated with charging. Check with your local electric co-op to see if they offer an EV charging rate. Typically, an EV rate incentivizes charging during the night when electricity demand and wholesale energy rates are lower. Charging at night is also a great way to ease demand in your neighborhood, even without a special EV rate.

Another potential change on the horizon is a new energy peak time. EV drivers that plug in to charge as soon

as they return home from work would create even more electricity demand during this busy time of day. But if EV drivers use a timer to schedule charging at night, the electricity demand could be spread over a more extended period to reduce stress on the grid. This would be especially beneficial for neighborhoods with multiple EV drivers.

EVs are only expected to increase in number. Electric co-ops and EV owners both have roles to play in accommodating increased demand. If you own an EV, let your electric co-op know so they can better plan energy demand for you and your neighbors.

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

Photo credit: Ford

# HOW TO SAFELY USE A GENERATOR

Before using a portable generator, it's essential to understand the potential dangers associated with using them, such as their production of carbon monoxide (CO). CO is an odorless, colorless and tasteless poisonous gas that is called the "silent killer" because it is virtually undetectable without the use of technology like CO alarms. Follow these tips when using a generator.

- **Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator.** Be sure you understand the directions before hooking up the generator.
- **A generator is a temporary power source.** It should never be used as a permanent solution.
- **Maintain adequate ventilation because generators emit CO.** It's against fire code to operate a generator in your home, garage or other enclosed building. Place it in a dry location outdoors. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends generators be positioned at least 20 feet from doors, windows and vents to prevent CO from entering the home.
- **Never plug a portable electric generator into a wall outlet or connect directly to a home's wiring.** This can energize utility power lines and injure you or others working nearby. Electrical back feed can also damage the generator and home electrical equipment.
- **Turn off the generator and allow cooling before refueling.** Gasoline and its vapors may ignite if they come in contact with hot components or an electric spark. Store fuel in a properly designed container in a secure location away from the generator or other fuel-burning appliances, such as water heaters. Always have a fully charged, approved fire extinguisher located nearby.



Photo: Honda

- **Protect your appliances.** Turn off or disconnect all appliances and lights before you begin operating the portable generator. Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit. Remember, generators are for temporary usage, so prioritize your needs.
- **Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated in wet conditions.** Use a generator only when necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- **Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.** Many generator components are hot enough to burn you during operation.
- **Use proper extension cords.** Use only safety-tested, shop-type electrical cords designed and rated for heavier, outdoor use to connect appliances. Many generators are equipped with twist-lock connects to reduce the chance of accidental disconnections due to vibrations.
- **Shut down the generator properly.** Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
- **Remember maintenance between uses.** Drain the gasoline from the generator while it is being stored. It's also a good idea to inspect the fuel and oil filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality, and to start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency situation happens.

For more information, visit Safe Electricity at [safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org)

# CALL FOR DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

Your board of directors is elected by and from the membership of Access Energy Cooperative. Three seats are up for election, one in each of the three districts. Each board member is elected to a term of three years.

Terms that will expire with the 2023 annual meeting to be held Tuesday, Aug. 1, include:

- **District 1**, David Hollingsworth
- **District 2**, Jerry Barker
- **District 3**, Michael Holtkamp

The board of directors will be appointing a nominating committee this month who will select candidates to run for the expiring terms. Anyone interested in running for a seat on the board may contact a member of the nominating committee, which will be posted in our office, on our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com), and in this magazine; or you can call our office at 866-242-4232.

To serve on the Access Energy Cooperative board of directors, candidates must meet all of the qualifications as specified in the cooperative Bylaws, Section 3 as summarized below.

No member shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold any position of trust in the cooperative who is:

- Not a bona fide resident of premises served by the cooperative
- In any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, or a business selling electric energy or supplies

to the cooperative or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members

- Within five (5) years preceding a director candidate nomination was an employee of the cooperative
- A close relative of a director or employee of the cooperative, with close relative being defined as: spouse, cohabitant, mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister, brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, and natural, step and adopted children
- Within fifteen (15) years preceding a director candidate nomination been convicted of a felony whether by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, plea of guilt or plea of nolo contendere
- Is or becomes the full-time employee or agent of another director or employee
- Is or becomes the full-time employer or principal of another director
- The incumbent of or candidate for an elective public office other than on a school board, board of supervisors, township trustee, township clerk or member of the state legislature

When a membership is held jointly, either one, but not both, may be elected a director, provided, however, that neither shall be eligible to become or remain a director or hold a position of trust in the cooperative unless both shall meet the qualifications herein above set forth.

# PROPERTY TAXES PAID

Property taxes are used to help fund important things such as education and city and county government. Even though Access Energy Cooperative is a not-for-profit organization, your cooperative pays property taxes for the poles, wires and transformers on our lines, plus another tax bill for the office and warehouse. Your cooperative pays taxes in all 10 counties we serve.

The chart (below) is a breakdown of the property taxes paid in 2022.

County	Amount
Davis	\$240
Des Moines	\$7,596
Henry	\$267,951
Jefferson	\$59,918
Keokuk	\$27
Lee	\$35,277
Louisa	\$25
Van Buren	\$28,103
Wapello	\$7,921
Washington	\$5,077
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$412,135</b>

# THANK YOU, MEMBER ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Access Energy Cooperative held its bi-annual member advisory committee meeting on Dec. 5. This committee provides the board and staff with valuable feedback regarding programs and decisions important to the cooperative. The time these members dedicate to serving the cooperative is very much appreciated! If you are a member who is interested in serving on the Member Advisory Committee, please call our office or email [contactus@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:contactus@accessenergycoop.com).



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine  
for members of  
Iowa's electric  
cooperatives.

January 2023

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

[TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM](http://TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM)

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Some deliver electricity. Others deliver information. All must deliver on the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives mission: to provide you with service that's just as dependable as the energy you count on us for every day. Learn more about your locally owned and operated Touchstone Energy cooperative at [TouchstoneEnergy.com](http://TouchstoneEnergy.com).

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