

# acec NEWS

May 2021  
Volume 23 / Issue 5



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## RUSTIC CHIC EVENT CENTER

NE Iowa's newest venue that can satisfy all of your event needs



CO-OP LOSES  
ESTEEMED DIRECTOR

SAFETY DAY

SEN. GRASSLEY RECEIVES  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD



## A MESSAGE FROM *Your General Manager*

**Hollie McCormick**  
EVP/General Manager

# WE'RE READY FOR STORM SEASON. ARE YOU?

Now that summer is in full swing; I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather like many of you. Summertime brings many of my favorite activities like ball games (Go Cubs!), cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the water, seeing the crops grow, and countless other things.

But summer months also make conditions suitable for dangerous storms. These potential weather events can cause destruction to our electrical system. Still, I want you to know that Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When significant storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you also to practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water, and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies, including towelettes, soap, and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages, and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside essential household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener, and a portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies, so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers, and other sensitive electronics. These actions will help avert damage from a power surge and help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, *do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.* If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it is rated to handle the energy you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check ACEC's website for power restoration updates. **480**

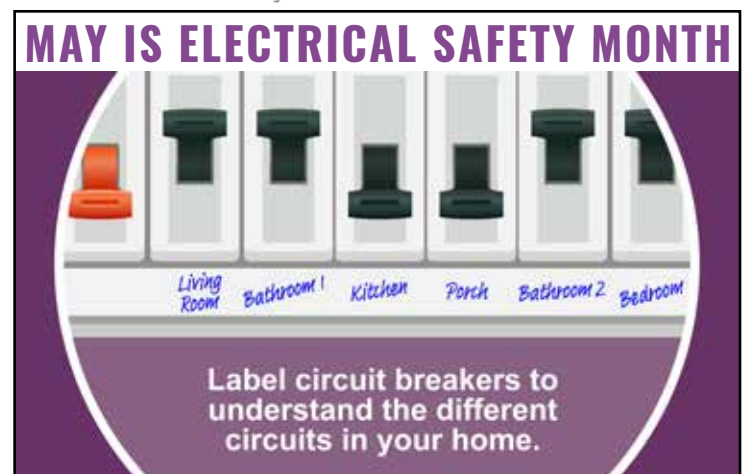
After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to perform their jobs, including on your property, safely.

I hope we do not experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Allamakee-Clayton Electric, we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.

*Hollie McCormick*

### BOARD BRIEFS | April 26, 2021

- Approved the re-pricing of three CFC loans
- Approved line of credit increase with CFC
- Approved patronage allocation of \$872,811.54 to ACEC membership
- Approved revisions of Board Policy #8-1; Workweek, Workdays, Working Hours, and Compensation
- Selected and approved Jeff Bradley as ACEC's DPC Delegate, with Jerry Keleher as the Cooperative's alternate
- Reviewed and approved the composition of Director Districts
- Completed initial selection of nominating committee lists
- Approved donations to the following DPC cost-share applications: Waukon Chamber of Commerce, and Clayton County Development Group



## WITH SYMPATHY —

The Cooperative extends sympathy to the family of **Larry Lamborn**. Larry Patrick Lamborn, 72, of Luana, died Friday, April 2021, peacefully in his sleep at his home in Luana.

“Larry served as a director of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative for nearly 25 years, and he served as Allamakee-Clayton’s representative on the Dairyland Board for nearly 11 years. He was a valued part of the ACEC team. Larry’s wise, intuitive, calm, and rational demeanor has been a staple in the boardroom and beyond. We thank Larry for his service and dedication, and we sure will miss him.”

—Hollie McCormick, General Manager



## ACEC RECOGNIZES ITS ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS APRIL 21

Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative recognized its administrative professionals for their outstanding service to ACEC, our employees, directors, and our electric cooperative owners. Administrative roles are incredibly diverse — and these professionals often go above and beyond their regular duties. Each of these ladies makes this place a better place to work every day. **THANK YOU!**



On Wed., Apr. 21, 2021, they enjoyed lunch with our General Manager, Hollie McCormick (second from left) at the Tri-City Golf Club in Luana. l-r around the table: Jo Suckow, data processing clerk (Hollie McCormick); Jessica Deering, member accounts clerk; Genette Halverson, staff services/accounting assistant; Sonja Hillman, senior customer representative; Donna Schultz, cashier/collections representative; and Carol Griebenow, Skyways member services representative. (missing on this day was Stacy Stock, operations and engineering coordinator/inventory clerk)

## GRASSLEY RECEIVES NRECA'S DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Ahead of NRECA’s Legislative Conference last month, Sen. Chuck Grassley was presented with NRECA’s Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes a lawmaker’s outstanding contribution to the progress of electric cooperatives and the public power program in the United States.

Grassley was recognized for his unwavering support for America’s electric cooperatives throughout his six decades of public service, including his hometown co-op, Butler County REC. He played a leading role in advancing key electric co-op policy priorities, including enactment in 2019 of the RURAL Act, which saved co-ops from losing their tax-exempt status if they received government grants surpassing 15% of their non-member income. This legislation saved electric co-ops millions of dollars in federal taxes that now go directly toward serving co-op consumers.

Grassley also championed legislation to repeal the “Cadillac Tax” imposed on health care benefits that cooperatives provide for their employees. NRECA estimated that its member cooperatives would save more than \$30 million a year in pension insurance premiums because of this legislation.

“Butler County REC is proud to be Sen. Grassley’s hometown cooperative,” said Craig Codner, the co-op’s CEO. “We appreciate his advocacy for cooperatives. From his support of legislation to his morning run with Iowa Youth Tour participants, his dedication is evident. We congratulate Sen. Grassley on his much-deserved Distinguished Service Award.”

“We are honored that NRECA has recognized Sen. Grassley with this important award,” said Chuck Soderberg, executive vice president, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. “Throughout his decades of public service, Sen. Grassley has gone above and beyond to fight for co-ops, their employees, their communities, and the cooperative business model. We are incredibly grateful to have Sen. Grassley serving the state of Iowa and especially grateful that we can call him a true friend of America’s electric cooperatives.” **5545**

“Sen. Grassley is an exemplary friend to electric co-ops and understands well the important role they play across the nation,” said NRECA CEO Jim Matheson. “He has helped pave the way for co-op priorities on Capitol Hill, always with the goal of improving the quality of life in rural communities. I commend Sen. Grassley for his unwavering focus on the needs of his constituents and his commitment to ensuring the continued availability of affordable and reliable power.”

Source: NRECA news release



*Pictured at award presentation held earlier at Heartland Power Cooperative: Heartland Power Cooperative Director and IAEC Board Officer Roger Solomonson, IAEC EVP and GM Chuck Soderberg, Sen. Grassley, and Prairie Energy Cooperative Board President and NRECA Director Marion Denger. Photo courtesy of Jessica Marzen, Heartland Power Cooperative.*

# RUSTIC CHIC EVENT CENTER

## “IT’S ALL ABOUT FAMILY”

Over 15 years ago, 2 best friends dreamt up the crazy idea to have the best wedding and event center in Northeast Iowa. Their journey finally began in March of 2020. They started by renovating an 80-year-old, 5500 sq. foot barn from the ground up.

Audrey Gibbs and Connie Reiersen have been friends for 20 years. Both have raised families and have their own professions. Audrey is a massage therapist, Connie farms. With the drop in family commitments and both wanting to have a little more “me” time, they started looking for some type of project that could be a joint effort, and maybe eventually even be something lucrative. They started to throw ideas at one another.

Audrey was searching her brain to come up with something, then her gaze fixed on the wooden barn sitting in front of her house. For some reason, the thought of barn dances came to her.... then dances are usually held as celebration, celebration as in wedding. Suddenly they had their idea.

“Both of us have always been into weddings. I make silk flowers for people for decorations and we’ve both got other decorations we’ve collected over the years,” Audrey said.

The idea caught Connie’s imagination as well. She has been someone who’s learned lots of different skills over the years as she helped manage a working farm.

It also helped that Audrey’s daughter, Jessica, was already making plans for a future wedding to Jamie Hummel.

The two flew into the old barn with hammers and saws in hand. They called in a structural engineer to make the sure the barn which had a 1941 date branded into one of the support beams, could be made safe for human inhabitation. The engineer did find a split in one of the wooden beams that had to be filled. The two then started sanding



all of the cedar beams in the upper level down for a natural look. The oak beams in the lower level were also ground and sanded down but this was an even more labor-intensive job because hogs that were once housed there had chewed around the beams bases, making some uneven surfaces.

They purchased pine boards to line the walls. “We sanded and stained every board,” Connie related.

Despite the work, the two could see this was going to be a project that would really give them a sense of pride and accomplishment.

“It was fun, we enjoyed each step,” Connie said.

“Little by little we took out all of the stalls and calf pens,” Audrey added.

D&H Construction came in and helped with some of the remodeling work. Holthaus Electric of Festina did the electrical work. Sewer and water were installed.



*Photos by: Muggshot  
Photography by  
Kaylin Muggler*

They were set to have their first wedding at what is now known as Rustic Chic Event Center on Sept. 15, 2019.

Four hours before that wedding, the pair realized that they were missing a door.

“We just ripped a door off in my house and put it there,” Audrey said. Her house is only a few feet away from the barn. Both are located north of West Union on the west side of Highway 150. Audrey’s house has the distinction of being constructed for an episode of the Extreme Makeover television show.

Only doing weddings and no receptions, they hosted two ceremonies last fall.

Those were both held in the lower level while things progressed on the top floor, including the installation of a large cathedral window on the south wall.

“Covid actually worked with us instead of against us because everything was smaller,” Audrey said.

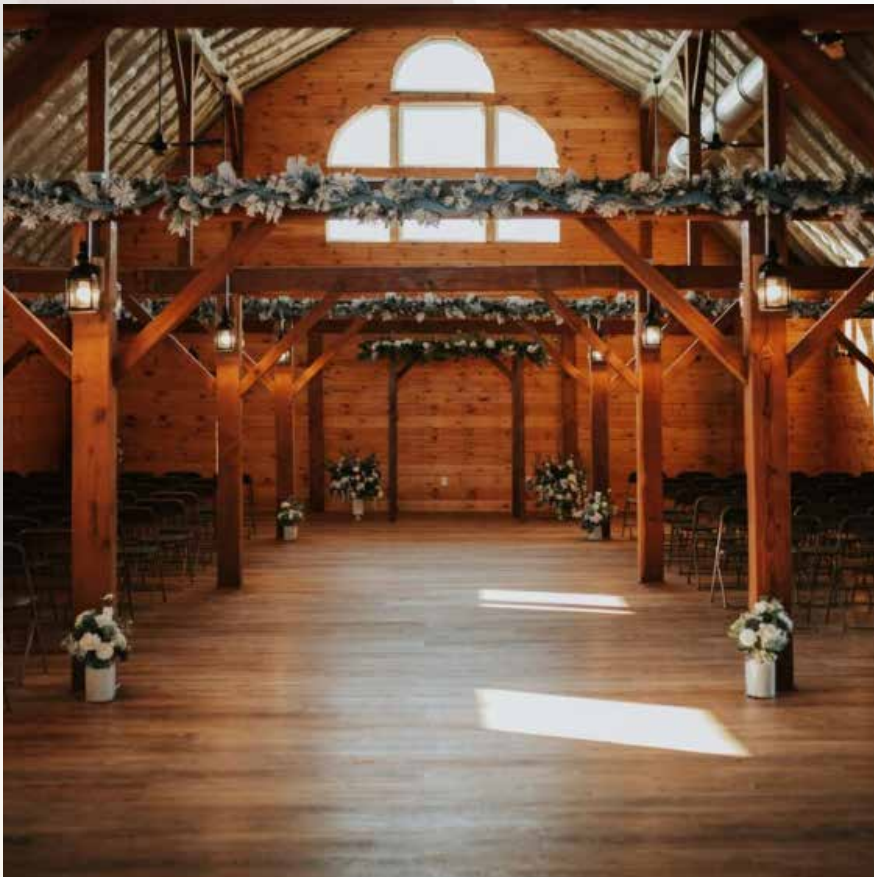
With both levels being assessable the venue has a capacity of 200.

Their first wedding reception of the year was held on March 6, 2021, for none other than Audrey’s daughter, Jessica.

She said the word is out that they will be open, “It’s filling up fast. May is already gone.”

*Reprinted with permission from The Union, Jack Swanson*

*Audrey and Connie are both Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative members.*



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A sincere thank you to **LeAnn Popenhagen, Wadena**, who brought in muffins and donuts, and **Diane Regan, Waukon**, who brought in cookies in appreciation for the linecrews and all the hard work they do. What thoughtful members ACEC has! Good work linecrews!

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“I want to thank you for considering and choosing myself and my kids for the donations from the REC Archery Shoot this year. The donation will help alleviate the burden of finances put on me upon Jon’s illness and death. We are grateful. Thank you.”  
—**Krista Steffens**, Clermont

The 8th Annual Archery Shoot took place on Sat., Feb. 27, at the Fayette Fairgrounds. Proceeds raised this year **\$2,770** that benefited the Steffen's family of Clermont. Jonathan Steffens, 30, passed away on Dec. 1, 2020, with his wife and parents by his side following a year-long battle against cancer that he was sure he could conquer. The Cooperative thanks all sponsors and donors for this event.

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“Thank you so much for coming last week in the horrible wind and snowstorm to restore my power. It sure meant a lot! Thanks!”  
— **Helen Duwe**, Garnavillo

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“I wanted to say thanks to all you folks for keeping our power on. Stay safe.”  
—**Lyle Butikofer**, Elgin

# SAFETY DAY

211 4th and 5th graders from Clayton Ridge, Central, Edgewood-Colesburg, and MFL Mar-Mac attended Safety Day at the Clayton County Fairgrounds on May 6. One safety station included electrical safety learning from ACEC's Steve Gehling (equipment technician) and Ryan Wagner (member service manager). They demonstrated the dangers of electricity and how easily it can be to get hurt. The students were reminded to always call 811 before a family member digs, stay away from power lines, and what to do if they are ever in a vehicle that crashes into a utility pole.



**Energy Efficiency**  
Tip of the Month

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

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

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

In addition to the Cooperative's routine construction of new services, lineworkers will be focusing on several larger overhead line replacement projects this year. Allamakee-Clayton uses data from construction work plans and long-range plans to prioritize the projects, taking into consideration the load requirements and the age and condition of the existing line.

## OPERATIONS UPDATE



### NINE projects in 2021

#### UNDERWAY

1. 4.6-mile, 3-phase line replacement project in French Creek Township along Mays Prairie Rd North of Waukon.
2. 8-mile, 3-phase line replacement project in Franklin Township along Forest Mills Rd and Jackson Hollow Dr East of Postville.

#### PLANNED

3. 8.2-mile, single-phase line replacement project in Elk and Mallory Townships along Wayman Rd, Igloo Rd and 348th St South of Garber.
4. 5.4-mile, single-phase line replacement project in Union City and Iowa Townships along Iowa River Dr S.W. of New Albin.
5. 1.3-mile, single-phase line replacement project in Jefferson Township along State Hwy 52 South of Guttenberg.

6. 2.9-mile, single-phase line replacement project in Cass Township along Mission Rd and Cedar Ave east of Strawberry Point.
7. 1.5-mile, two-phase line replacement project in Jefferson Township along Garber Rd and Osterdock Rd S.W. of Guttenberg.

#### CONTRACTED

8. 6.3-mile, single-phase line replacement project in Millville and Buena Vista Townships along Orange Ave, Great River Rd, and Errthum Rd South of Millville.
9. 1.9-mile, single-phase line replacement project in Jefferson Township along Garber Rd West of Guttenberg.



**Have an idea for a recipe topic?  
Send it our way!**

Send your favorite recipes and/or recipe topics to Jenny McIntyre, ACEC, PO Box 715, Postville, IA 52162 or [jmcintyre@acrec.coop](mailto:jmcintyre@acrec.coop).

You'll receive a \$5 bill credit if your recipe is printed.

Please note – recipes must be received by the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month before intended publication.

**June — ASPARAGUS**  
**July — OUTDOOR GRILLING RECIPES**  
**September — CROCK POT DIPS**

**BARBACOA BEEF**

- 2½ - 3 lb. chuck roast beef
- 1 onion, cut into chunks
- 1-3 canned chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 4-6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2-3 T. lime juice
- 3 T. apple cider vinegar
- ¾ c. water or beef broth
- 1 T. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. black pepper

- Toppings:*
- Rice
  - Lettuce
  - Salsa
  - Cheddar cheese
  - Sour cream
  - Guacamole
  - Black beans
  - Corn chips

Place beef in crockpot. Put remaining ingredients in blender and blend well. Pour over beef. Cover and cook on low 7-8 hours. Pull beef apart before serving. Serve like haystacks with desired toppings.

*Heidi Schmidgall, Elgin*

**PLANNING A YARD PROJECT? DON'T JUST DIG IN**

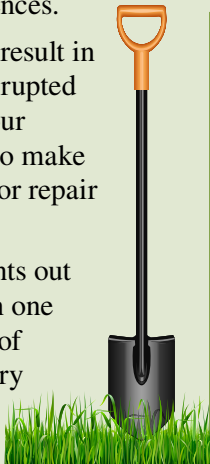
As we're beautifying our yards this spring, we shouldn't just dig in. According to 811, the "Call Before You Dig" national hotline, an underground utility is damaged every nine minutes because someone didn't call before digging.

Whether it is a do-it-yourself project or you are hiring a professional, contact Iowa One Call by dialing 811 at least 48 hours (not including weekends and holidays) before starting any digging project to request that all underground utilities be marked. The service is free. **4076**

You may think it won't hurt anything to dig in an unmarked yard when landscaping, installing a fence, deck or mailbox, or even "just" planting a small flower bed or bush, but damaging an underground cable can have serious consequences.

Hitting a line could result in severe injuries and disrupted service for you and your neighbors. It could also make a dent in your wallet for repair fees or other fines.

The 811 hotline points out that there is more than one football field's length of buried utilities for every man, woman, and child in the U.S.



**BEFORE DIGGING**

- Call 811 at least 48 hours before starting any digging project.
- Wait the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.
- Confirm that all affected utility operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities.
- Dig carefully around the marks with care.



Remember that location flaggers will NOT mark privately-owned underground lines. Examples of private lines/equipment include well and septic, underground sprinkler systems, invisible fencing, gas, or electric lines that serve a detached building, as well as any lines (electric, water, sewer) from the meter to your home.

## FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

Congratulations to Robert and Lisa Kies, Colesburg, who found their service numbers in the April newsletter; they were awarded a bill credit.

Three *Service Location* numbers are hidden within the text of this newsletter. The numbers are from three different

regions of our service area – all three are worth a **\$10 bill credit** if found. To claim the credit, the number must be yours and you need to notify us when you find it.



## CONTACT ACEC

### HEADQUARTERS

229 Highway 51 • PO Box 715  
Postville, IA 52162

### PHONE NUMBERS

**LOCAL** 563-864-7611

**TOLL-FREE** 888-788-1551

**PAYMENT LINE 24/7** 833-284-5051

**UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATING** 811

**SKYWAYS INTERNET SOLUTIONS**

800-864-1611

### WEBSITE

acrec.com

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### OUTAGES

888-788-1551 or 563-864-7611

### IOWA STATE ONE CALL

811

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**JEFF BRADLEY**, President, Wadena

**MICHAEL D. GIBBS**, Vice President, Waterville

**CINDY HEFFERN**, Sec./Treas., Harpers Ferry

**ROGER ARTHUR**, Sumner

**ARLYN R. FOSSUM**, Waterville

**JERRY KELEHER**, Elkader

**DONALD E. McCORMICK**, Harpers Ferry

**ALAN STEFFENS**, Clermont

### MANAGEMENT STAFF

**HOLLEE McCORMICK**, EVP/General Manager

**DAVID DECKER**, Director, Finance & Administrative Services

**BRENDA HACKMAN**, Manager, Economic Development & Community Relations

**JENI KOLSRUD**, Manager, Information Technology

**JENNY McINTYRE**, Manager, Marketing & Communications

**JASON TROENDLE**, Director, Operations & Engineering


**RYAN WAGNER**, Manager, Member Services



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CLAYTON  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

PO Box 715 - Postville, IA 52162-0715

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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DPC

## THE CO-OP'S EV IS HERE!



Jason Troendle and Ryan Wagner picked the Tesla electric vehicle up in Minneapolis on Friday, April 30, 2021. We intend to share frequent details about our Co-op's EV journey, so please watch for more information in upcoming newsletters.



Pictured above are Hollee McCormick, general manager, Ryan Wagner, member services manager, and Jason Troendle, director of operations and engineering.



STAY CONNECTED

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 