

# ACEC NEWS

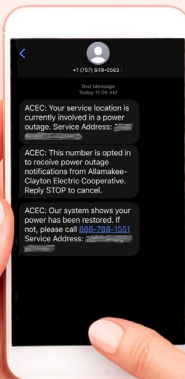
FEBRUARY 2023 | VOLUME 26 | ISSUE 02

WINTER SAFETY  
TIPS

HOW SAFETY  
EDUCATION  
SAVED A LIFE

ENERGY AUDITS  
AVAILABLE

**NEW OUTAGE  
NOTIFICATION  
SYSTEM  
DEBUTS**







## A MESSAGE FROM *Your General Manager*

**Hollie McCormick**  
**EVP/General Manager**

## SMALL CHANGES CAN MAKE A BIG IMPACT

If you look around your home, you likely have more devices and equipment that require electricity than ever before. Our connected lives are increasingly dependent on more electricity to function. At the same time, as demand for electricity rises, Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative must deliver an uninterrupted 24/7 power supply—regardless of market conditions or other circumstances.

As you would expect based on your family's habits, electricity use fluctuates throughout the day based on consumer demand. ACEC must be able to provide enough electricity to meet the energy needs of all members during times of highest energy use or "peak hours." These peak times are typically in the morning as people start their day and in the evening as people return to their homes.

What you may not know is that electric utilities, including ACEC, typically pay more for electricity—either from a power plant or from another utility with excess power—during those morning and evening "energy rush hours." In addition, the demand for electricity is even higher when it's especially cold outside, when heating systems must run longer to warm our homes.

If the "peak times" concept is a bit puzzling, here's an easy way to think about it, and it's similar to a major concert. We know costs go up when there is strong demand for tickets (or electricity), and both are subject to the basic economic laws of supply and demand. When a lot of people want the same thing,

## 10 EASY WAYS TO \$AVE

Here are 10 habits you can tweak to save energy:

1. Use cold water to wash your clothes.
2. Unplug battery chargers when not in use.
3. Skip the heat-dry setting on your dishwasher.
4. Unplug appliances and electronics not in use.
5. Run full loads of laundry instead of several smaller ones.



6. When drying clothes, include a dry towel for the first 20 minutes.
7. Keep your refrigerator at 35° to 38°F and your freezer at 0°F.
8. Reduce the setting on your hot water heater.
9. Use smart power strips that shut off power to items not in use.
10. When buying new appliances, consider ENERGY STAR versions.

Learn more at:

**Safe  
Electricity.org®**

it's more expensive. When they don't, it's cheaper—like a bargain matinee or an "early bird" special at a restaurant.

During peak periods when the cost to produce and purchase power is higher, we encourage you to take simple steps to save energy, such as turning your thermostat down a few notches, turning off unnecessary lights and waiting to use large appliances until off-peak times.

You can also save energy by plugging electronics and equipment such as computers, printers and TVs into a power strip, then turn it off at the switch during peak hours. If you have a programmable thermostat, adjust the settings to sync with off-peak periods. When we all work together to reduce energy use during periods of high electricity demand, we can relieve pressure on the grid and save a little money along the way.

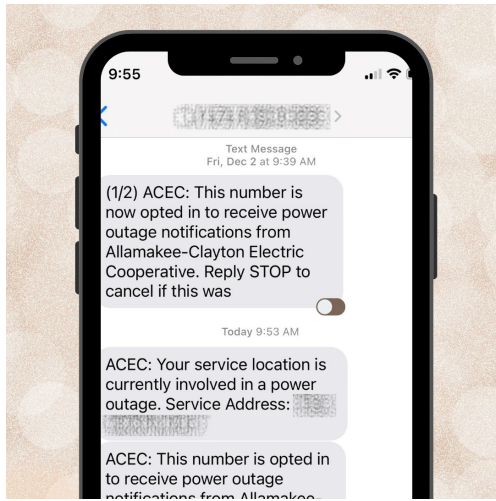
Another benefit of this time-of-use approach to electricity use allows greater control over your bill. Reducing the peak impacts the power-supply cost to every Co-op member. This is particularly noticeable as energy costs have risen across the U.S. Collectively, everyone conserving energy and making small changes can truly make a difference.

Remember, taking simple steps to save energy throughout the day and shifting energy-intensive chores to off-peak hours is a smart choice for you and our community. ■

### BOARD BRIEFS

#### January 31 Meeting

- Reviewed and approved Board Policy 407 "Conflict of Interest"
- Reviewed and approved Board Policy 410 "Standards of Conduct"
- Reviewed and discussed future plans for the building's heat pumps
- Approved 2023 Capital Expenditure Budget
- Approved the following donations:
  - ♦ \$500 to Hawkeye Fire and Rescue
  - ♦ \$1,250 to Clayton County Development Group
  - ♦ \$1,000 to linemen sponsored Annual Bow Shoot Fundraiser (all proceeds will go to the Luke Hackman family)



# ACEC ROLLS OUT OUTAGE TEXTING NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

*Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative now offers power outage notification via text message to its members.*

Any member can choose to opt-in to the text message program to be notified of outages and when power is expected to be restored. When there is a power outage, members will be notified of the outage and at what location. If a member has multiple locations, they will be notified of all locations that are affected. Members will also be notified of the estimated time to restore power, as well as a final message when power has been restored.

“Having the text notification service is another way to keep our members informed, especially during periods of hazardous weather. We believe this will be a great tool to let members know we are aware of an outage and that our crews are on the way,” said ACEC Executive VP/General Manager Hollee McCormick. “As always, when you do experience an outage, please report it to us by calling 888-788-1551. Don’t assume it’s already been reported by someone else.”

To register for the notifications, visit the Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative website at [www.acrec.com](http://www.acrec.com). Click on outages in the top right portion of the website. From there, click on “Sign Up For Text Notifications” icon on the screen. This will take you to our power outage notification webpage. Click on “Get Started.” #1030-6-XX

You will need your account number for this step. You can find your account number in the upper-right hand corner of your monthly billing statement. If you need help finding the correct number, please call 563-864-7611. You’ll then be asked to confirm your account type, either residential or business, and the last name on the account.

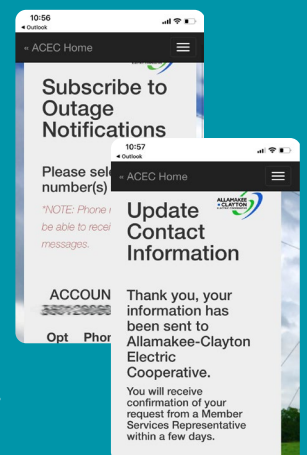
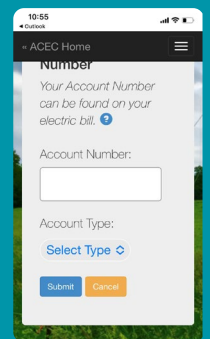
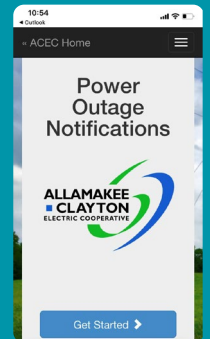
Once confirmed, you’ll be asked to select what phone number you’d like to receive the notifications. If the phone number you prefer isn’t listed, please select “Update My Numbers.” From here, you’ll be able to confirm the best number to contact you. A representative from member services will follow up with you in a few days to confirm we have the best way to reach you.

If your preferred number is listed, you will select that number and confirm your choice. Shortly after confirming your choice, you will receive a text notifying you that you are now enrolled in outage messages.

For questions about setting up outage notifications, please contact ACEC at 563-864-7611. ■

## How to Register

1. Visit [www.acrec.com](http://www.acrec.com). Click on outages in the upper right-hand corner.
2. Click on the Outage Text Notification box.
3. Click on the Sign up for Text Notifications box
4. Click on the Get Started button
5. Fill in your account number, account type (residential or business) and your last name. Your account number can be found on the upper right-hand corner of your monthly billing statement.
6. Select the phone number(s) to opt in. If your cell phone number is not connected to your account, please click “Update My Numbers” and fill in the number you want to be reached at to update your contact information. You will receive confirmation of your request within a few days.
7. Once you’ve selected the number(s) where you’d like to receive the notifications, you’ll receive a text that your request has been received. You are now opted into the program.







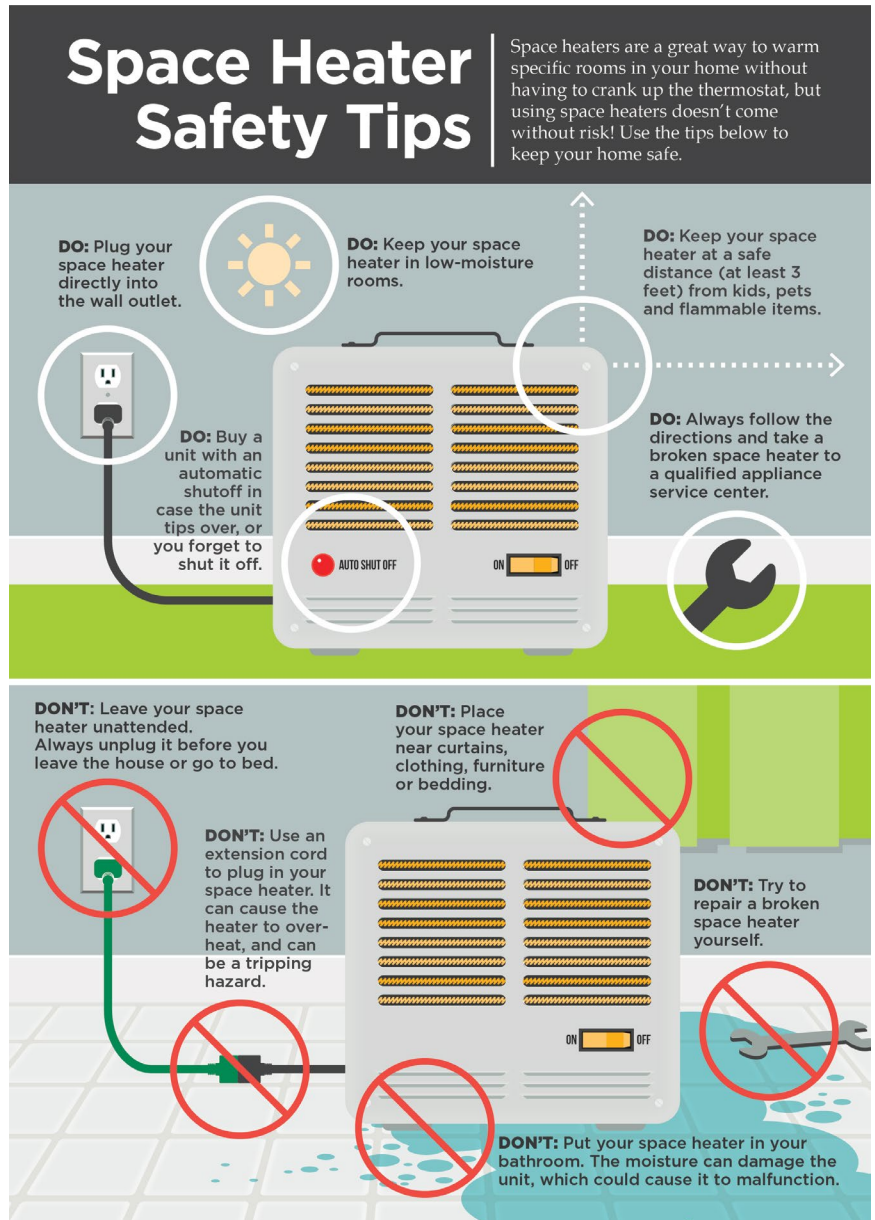
# FOUR TIPS FOR WINTER SAFETY

By Abby Berry

It's no surprise that winter months bring increased potential for fire risks and electrical safety hazards. This makes sense because during the coldest months, consumers are using additional electrical devices and appliances, like space heaters, electric blankets and portable generators.

The National Fire Protection Association estimates that 47,700 home fires occur each year in the U.S. due to electrical failure or malfunction. These fires result in 418 deaths, 1,570 injuries and \$1.4 billion in property damage annually. This winter, safeguard your loved ones and your home with these electrical safety tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

1. **Don't Overload Outlets.** Overloaded outlets are a major cause of residential fires. Avoid using extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliance connections – they should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. If you're relying heavily on extension cords in general, you may need additional outlets to address your needs. Contact a qualified electrician to inspect your home and add new outlets.
2. **Never Leave Space Heaters Unattended.** If you're using a space heater, turn it off before leaving the room. Make sure heaters are placed at least three feet away from flammable items. It should also be noted that space heaters take a toll on your energy bills. If you're using them throughout your home, it may be time to upgrade your home heating system.
3. **Inspect Heating Pads and Electric Blankets.** These items cause nearly 500 fires every year. Electric blankets that are more than 10 years old create additional risks for a fire hazard. Inspect your electric blankets and heating pads – look for dark, charred or frayed spots, and make sure the electrical cord is not damaged. Do not place any items on top of a heating pad or electric blanket, and never fold them when in use. #2734
4. **Use Portable Generators Safely.** Unfortunately, winter storms can cause prolonged power outages, which means many consumers will use portable generators to power their homes. Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. For portable generators, plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator. Start the generator first, before you plug in appliances. Run it in a well-ventilated area outside your home. The carbon monoxide it generates is deadly, so keep it away from your garage, doors, windows and vents. ■



Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.

# KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

## How safety education helped save a life

By Colten Bradford

Illinois Country Living Magazine

“Dad, we’ve got a problem.”

Those five words cut through the CB radio and brought the workday to a standstill on the family farm after 15-year-old Lain Burgener clipped a utility pole with farm equipment. The pole snapped in half and brought down energized power lines.

Those words could have been the last his parents Matt and Stacy heard from him if he hadn’t known what to do. Amid the flying sparks caused by the power line’s contact with the equipment and the slowly spreading ditch and field fire, Lain kept his cool. He called for help and stayed in the cab of the tractor — a tip he learned years earlier from his local co-op Norris Electric Cooperative.

On Nov. 4, 2022, all hands were on deck at the fourth-generation Burgener family farm, located south of Newton. Lain, who describes himself as a typical high schooler who loves to fish, farm and hang out with friends, was tilling a recently harvested field. **#6320**

“This could be bad,” Lain remembers thinking after hitting the pole. “There was some adrenaline going on there.” He quickly radioed his dad, which was broadcasted throughout the farm.

Two miles away, Stacy heard her son’s voice from the combine. “As soon as he came across the radio and said, ‘Dad,’ I knew something was wrong,” Stacy recalls. She immediately dialed 911, which in turn contacted Norris Electric. She and Matt dropped everything and went to their son.

“As soon as I turned the corner, I could see smoke,” Matt remembers. Luckily, a strong south wind was blowing the fire to the road, away from the tractor and field.

Lain remembers the smell of fire and the growing heat as the ditch burned next to him. “For the first couple of minutes, I was pretty hyped up. Then I figured there was nothing I could do, so I might as well not get worked up.” He then settled in for what would be an hour and 45 minutes for the power lines to be de-energized.

“It was a helpless situation for him sitting in the tractor and us standing outside,” Stacy says. “I didn’t settle down until Norris got

there and got the power shut off.”

Matt remembers the feeling when he first spotted the Norris Electric truck coming to the rescue. “It was just a sigh of relief knowing the truck was there and the power would be shut off soon. At that point, I knew that everything would be OK.”



Norris Electric Cooperative lineworkers arrived to de-energize the power lines.

“This could have been a different story,” says Doug Klier, engineering technician for Norris Electric Cooperative. “Had he gotten out, [Lain] would have been electrocuted. The day could have ended in disaster. Small decisions can make a big impact.” Because the power lines were live, he explains that if Lain would have stepped off the tractor, he would have become electricity’s path to ground and could have been killed.

Klier has traveled to the counties in the co-op’s service territory to teach grade-school students safety around electricity with a tabletop display. Klier believes Lain must have participated in one of his first courses.

Lain wants to tell Klier that some kids do listen. “I’m thankful I remembered and that everything worked out.”

“I am usually pleasantly surprised by some of the questions kids ask,” Klier says. “It’s nice to have a little validation that the kids are actually paying attention and really absorbing what I’m telling them.”

Norris Electric isn’t the only co-op teaching safety in their community. Across the nation, electric cooperatives host and



Lain Burgener clipped a utility pole with his farm equipment, bringing down energized power lines. He survived by using knowledge he learned from a Co-op safety course. (Photos courtesy Illinois Country Living Magazine)

participate in live line demonstrations and safety fairs to help keep everyone safe. After all, one of the core principles electric cooperatives abide by is education and training.

On a day that could have ended in tragedy, the only damage left behind were small burn marks on the farming equipment where the energized power lines fell. Because of the lessons he learned, Lain was able to celebrate his 16th birthday a month later, get his driver’s license and share his story in hopes of helping someone else.



Burn marks were left behind on the farming equipment where the power lines fell.

“If you’re in elementary school and you have a safety day, pay attention. You may not be interested at the time, but it could play a big part in your life eventually,” Lain advises. “If you’re any other age and you’re in an accident like this, don’t get out unless you really have to.”

If you must exit, it is recommended that the individual leaps from the tractor or vehicle with both feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then they must bunny hop away toward safety.

“Getting out of the tractor, the smell of fresh air was relieving,” Lain recalls. To the Norris Electric lineworkers who answered the call that day, he says, “Thank you. Thanks for getting me out.” ■





Volunteers from Green Iowa AmeriCorps are ready to offer energy assessments to help save homeowners money on their utility bills.

## ENERGY AUDITS AVAILABLE

Green Iowa AmeriCorps is offering residential energy assessments, energy education and community outreach services to people in Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek Counties.

Winneshiek Energy District hosts the Green Iowa AmeriCorps. Throughout the duration of the program, over 1,000 homes have been assessed in Northeast Iowa, saving the average homeowner over \$120 annually on utility bills.

During the free assessment, members of the Green Iowa AmeriCorps evaluate your home for potential savings. They'll complete a carbon monoxide and gas leak test to ensure the environment is safe. They'll also conduct a blower door test, which measures the level of air infiltration to the home. This identifies air leak locations and areas that could benefit from more insulation. Participants will also receive an energy performance report, which details the results and includes recommendations for the future.

Another part of the assessment is exchanging incandescent and compact fluorescent lights for LED light bulbs. According to the Green Iowa AmeriCorps, LED light bulbs use 20-70% less energy than non-LED bulbs. The volunteers will also install low-flow faucets.

This program is available at no cost to low-to-moderate income households, those who are 65 and older, veterans and those with disabilities.

To schedule an appointment or see if your home is eligible for the program, call (563) 382-4207, ext. 2. ■



## STAY TOASTY AND WARM WHILE TURNING DOWN THE THERMOSTAT



When the winter winds blow, it is tempting to adjust the thermostat up a few degrees to stay toasty and warm. However, turning to other (FREE!) ways to help keep you warm could help reduce your energy bills.



Each degree you reduce your thermostat saves 1% on your heating bill. No one home during the day? Adjust your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting to save up to 10% annually.

Source: Department of Energy



### HERE ARE WAYS TO HELP YOU STAY WARM WHEN IT IS COLD OUTSIDE:



Bundle up by wearing layers and heavy socks

Get your body moving and stay active

Use blankets while sitting still

Caulk windows and door frames that leak air



Replace or update old or ineffective door seals



Make sure your home's heating system is working properly

Keep your furnace clean and change the filter monthly



Let the sun shine in during the day and close window coverings at night



Reduce how long you use ventilation fans (they transfer warm air outside)



Keep a fireplace damper closed when not in use

Humidify your home to make the air feel warmer



If you use a portable space heater, use it safely and for short amounts of time. Using one for extended periods can cause your energy bill to spike since it draws a lot of power.

Learn more at:

**Safe Electricity.org**

# MEMBER RECIPES

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

You'll receive a \$5 bill credit if your recipe is printed. Please note – recipes must be received by the 25th day of the month before the intended publication.

March – **BREAD**, April – **CASSEROLES**



## OLIVE OIL MASHED POTATOES

- 1 ½ lbs. small Yukon Gold potatoes, halved or cut into 2 in. pieces
- 6 medium garlic cloves
- ¼ c. olive oil (extra virgin is preferred)
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 c. chopped green onion

### Directions

1. Put the potatoes, garlic and salt in a large saucepan. Pour in enough water to cover the potatoes. Bring to a boil over high heat. Boil for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are soft. Transfer the potatoes and garlic to a colander. Drain well. Return them to the pan.
2. Using the tines of a fork, mash the potatoes and garlic, being sure to crush each piece of potato and each garlic clove.
3. Add the green onions, oil, and pepper, stirring until well combined.

## SIMPLE PERSIAN SALAD

- 2 medium cucumbers, unpeeled, seeded, and diced
- 4 medium tomatoes, seeded and diced
- 1 medium red onion, diced
- 2 tbsp. fat-free feta cheese, crumbled
- ¼ c. chopped fresh mint or parsley OR
- 1 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. dried mint or parsley, crumbled
- Juice of 2 medium limes
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp. pepper

### Directions

1. In a small bowl, stir together the cucumber, tomatoes, onion, feta and mint. Refrigerate, covered, for 20 minutes
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the lime juice, oil and pepper.
3. Pour over the cucumber mixture, tossing to coat.

## APPLE PEAR CRISP

### Topping Ingredients

- ¼ c. uncooked rolled oats
- ¼ c. all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp. trans-fat-free tub margarine, chilled in freezer for 15 minutes
- 1 tbsp. unsweetened applesauce
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. Stevia sugar blend

### Crisp Ingredients

- 1 large pear, such as Anjou or Bartlett, peeled and diced
- 1 tsp. cornstarch
- ½ tsp. Stevia sweetener OR
- 1 Stevia sweetener packet
- ⅛ tsp. ground ginger
- ⅛ tsp. ground cloves
- ⅛ tsp. ground cardamom (optional)
- 1 large apple, such as Granny Smith or Gala, peeled and diced

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a medium bowl, stir together the crisp ingredients. Spoon ½ cup of the apple-pear mixture into four 6-ounce ovenproof glass custard cups or porcelain ramekins.
3. In a small bowl, stir together the topping ingredients until well blended. Sprinkle the topping over the fruit mixture in each custard cup.
4. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until the fruit mixture is bubbly and the topping is golden brown.

*All recipes courtesy of the American Heart Association*



## PLUGGED IN: Electric Vehicle Update

### JANUARY

Number of miles driven: **110 miles**

kWh's Charged: **134**

Cost to Charge: **.123 x 134 kWh = \$16.48**



*This month, Manager of Member Services Ryan Wagner noticed the Tesla's energy usage has been high related to the amount of miles driven. Upon investigation, he realized the "Sentry Mode" had been activated, either by accident by an employee or through a software update, during December and into January. This resulted in approximately 4 kWh's daily usage, even when the car wasn't driven. The Sentry Mode enables the vehicle's cameras and sensors to remain powered on and ready to record suspicious activity around the vehicle. #6254*



## FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

ACEC has hidden four Service Location numbers within this newsletter. The numbers are from different regions of our service area – **one is worth a \$12.50 bill credit, and three are worth a \$5 bill credit if found.** The service location number must be yours to claim the credit, 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

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

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**GREG FORMANEK**, Farmersburg

**JERRY KELEHER**, Elkader

**AL STEFFENS**, Clermont

**BRICE WOOD**, Lansing

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

**RYAN WAGNER**, Manager, Member Services



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## SCHOLARSHIPS FOR AREA SENIORS

Do you know a high school senior who is interested in pursuing a career in the electrical field? Encourage them to apply for a cooperative scholarship, designed to help local students interested in pursuing a course of study in the electrical industry.

Students' parents or guardians do not need to be ACEC members but must reside within the boundaries of our service area.

The scholarship fund was established in 1995 in memory of Robert Hauschild by his wife and family. This annual scholarship(s) recognizes Bill's dedication and service as a director of the Cooperative from his election September 10, 1988 until his death March 17, 1993.

*For any questions, please call (563) 864-7611.*



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.



**STAY CONNECTED**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

