

ACEC NEWS

JANUARY 2022 | VOLUME 25 | ISSUE 01

**MAKING DOLLARS
& CENTS WITH
ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

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LAUNCHED**

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GRANT NEWS FOR
ACSKYWAYS**

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MILESTONES**



A MESSAGE FROM Your General Manager

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative Brings Everyday Value

Even though I work in the energy industry, like most people, I still do not think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the switch. We expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. Instead, we only think about electricity when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life and budgets. In recent months, we have heard the news of volatile commodities markets, increasing materials costs, and supply chain woes impacting our economy. What does this mean for our Cooperative and for the members we serve?

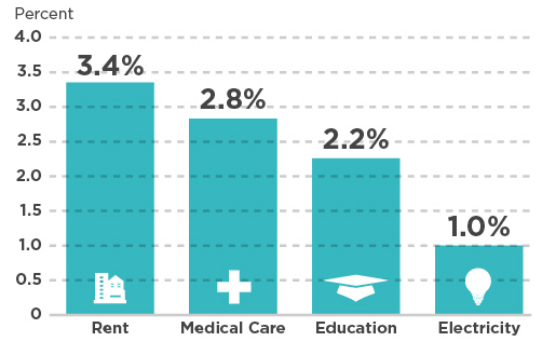
We set our rates, annually, based on the cost to purchase power, the costs associated with transmitting that power, the materials we use to maintain a resilient electric grid, and costs to support a talented and dedicated workforce that provides these services to you, our members, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Unfortunately, our suppliers' costs to purchase materials such as poles, wires, and transformers have risen. For example, just eighteen months ago, the cost to purchase one pound of electric conductor wire was just \$1.37. Today, that same pound of wire costs our co-op \$2.51, an increase of 45 percent. In addition, the price of wood poles has increased 7.1 percent, while the cost to purchase an

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

When you look at price increases of common expenses over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

overhead transformer has risen 32.6 percent in just one year. As we look to set budgets, which impacts our rates, we must consider these increases and adjust accordingly.

Each year closes with a thorough review of our performance and planning for the upcoming year as an organization. In looking back at 2021, the Cooperative completed a successful year and is well-positioned to move into 2022 without a rate increase. The budget reflects that the organization is at the end of a rate cycle that began with the last rate adjustment in May 2020. When the Board approved this rate increase at its February 2020 meeting, they estimated the cycle to last two years. Fortunately, the Cooperative has extended the cycle to 3 years due to sound financial planning. However, it appears that we will likely need to adjust the rates in 2023. **1018**

But the bottom line is this: Electricity remains a good value. ACEC members experience an average of .92 outages lasting 126.56 minutes per outage each year, based on a recent 5-year average. Considering that electricity is something that we all use around the clock, I am very proud of our track record to keep costs low and our level of service high. At the same time, we strive to increase our service reliability, reduce those brief interruptions, and reduce costs. In addition, we are continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued co-op members. And as your trusted energy advisor, we want to help you save energy and money. So, if you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call. ■

When the Board approved the current rate schedule at its February 2020 meeting, they estimated the rate cycle to last two years, but the Cooperative has extended it to three.

BOARD BRIEFS | December 27, 2021, Meeting

- Reviewed delinquent accounts and acted on annual write-offs
- Established Patronage Estate Discount Rate for 2022
- Reviewed Board Governance Policy 422-Director Compensation
- Approved a contractual relationship with HR Solutions to provide HR Services
- Heard marketing and communications updates
- Approved a \$1,250 donation request to Clayton County Development Group



According to the U.S. Department of Energy, ENERGY STAR®-rated appliances can save you 10% to 50% of the energy required for standard models that don't receive the ENERGY STAR® sticker. Photo Credit: Maytag.



MAKING DOLLARS & SENSE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The term “energy efficiency” can confuse people. Some see it as a way to a cleaner environment. Others see extra expense and inconvenience.

Sorting out those views gets even more complicated as technology gives us a dizzying array of choices for using electricity, from smart thermostats to varieties of light bulbs.

The basic idea of energy efficiency is simple—use less energy to do the same amount of work, saving you money on your electric bills.

Here is where it starts getting confusing. Sometimes you have to pay more for something that’s considered energy efficient. It costs more upfront but saves money overall. That may sound illogical at first. Like the old phrase, “You have to spend money to make money.” But it makes sense after you think about it for a minute—most moneymaking projects require an initial upfront investment, whether it is a factory or a lemonade stand.

Pay a little now. Save a lot later.

From computers to major appliances, manufacturers are increasing the energy efficiency of their products. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, ENERGY STAR®-rated appliances can save you 10% to 50% of the energy required for standard models that do not receive the ENERGY STAR® sticker. Considering most major appliances last ten years, those savings can stack up over time.

There are even more savings in-store by replacing older appliances that weren’t built with today’s efficiency standards in mind. For example, improvements in refrigerators are cutting their energy use in half about every 15 years. So, if

your fridge is more than 20 years old, **replacing it with a new high-efficiency model could save you \$300 in operating costs over the next five years.**



Efficiency improvements in refrigerators are cutting their energy use in half about every 15 years. Photo Credit: Whirlpool

“Smart power strips” also show how spending now on efficiency can make money in the future. Keeping your phone charger and other electronic devices plugged in can consume electricity even after they’re fully charged or not in use. A smart power strip cuts off the electricity once charging is complete. A smart strip costs about \$40, and depending on your electric rates, and how much charging you do, it could save as much as \$40 annually on your electric bills, recovering your initial investment almost right away.

Another example of returns on energy efficiency investments comes from the world of real estate. Realtors will be the first to tell you that energy efficiency sells houses. So, if you’re in the market to sell, spending a little extra on insulation and efficient appliances increases resale value.

Save \$200 a year on light bulbs.

Light bulbs offer the most dramatic story of efficiency technology improvements. By spending \$5 to \$10 on an LED bulb (compared to about \$1 for an old incandescent), you get a

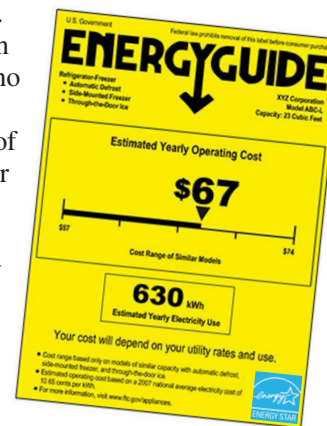
product that uses 75% less electricity and, incidentally, can last 20 years compared to about a year for an incandescent bulb. The Department of Energy estimates the average home could save more than \$200 a year by replacing incandescent bulbs with LEDs.

Maybe the best news of all is that as efficient products improve and gain popularity, they are not always more expensive. Compared with the pricier versions, many cheaper appliance models have similar annual operating costs.

Two essential tips for turning energy efficiency into dollars are to know what you want from your energy use and to do your homework. Products come with a wide range of features that cost extra and may be less efficient—do you want a refrigerator that offers the best efficiency, or do you want to pay more for a less-efficient model that has an ice dispenser in the door?

And ask for help. Allamakee-Clayton has energy staff who can tell you how to make the best use of electricity. Look for the yellow Energy Guide label to compare efficiency among appliances, which shows information like estimated annual operating costs.

Explore the energy.gov website for online calculators and additional resources that can help you turn efficiency data into actual savings on your energy bills. ■



ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TRIP

ACEC will send two students on an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June

ACEC invests in the next generation of rural Iowa leaders by participating in the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program. We are looking for high school sophomores and juniors with a passion for government and public service to apply for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to our nation's capital in June. The Cooperative will select two students from eligible candidates to attend the 2022 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., from June 18-24. **We are accepting Youth Tour applications through Jan. 31, 2022.** You can download our application form at acrec.com/youth-tour. ■



Students can apply now for a trip to our nation's capital from June 18-24!



Area high school students interested in government and public service are encouraged to apply! Learn more at ACREC.com
Education | Youth | Youth Tour

2022 INCENTIVE REBATES

Members receive multiple benefits with energy efficient purchases

REBATES and INCENTIVES

For Energy Efficiency Products and Improvements



SAVE \$\$\$!



Members wanting to save energy and money in the new year should review ACEC's new 2022 rebate forms. Allamakee-Clayton annually publishes a list of energy efficient items that are eligible for a rebate when a member makes a qualifying purchase and submits the required paperwork.

Listed on each form is the eligibility criteria for each category. Rebates begin at \$0.50 up to \$800 for certain items. To receive a rebate, the member must purchase a qualifying item, fill out the appropriate form and return the form and documentation to the Co-op within three months of purchase or installation (clarified on the form). Members must install equipment within the Cooperative's service territory and, in most cases, must be ENERGY STAR® rated. **3768-5**

"In collaboration with Dairyland Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier, Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative offers rebates to members to help them use energy wisely," said Hollee McCormick, general manager. "In modern households, nearly every outlet is being used. Between more efficient equipment and the rebates, it makes economic and environmental sense to go electric."

Changes for the 2022 rebate program include:

- ✓ Smart power strips and flow restrictors for faucets and shower heads removed.
- ✓ Air-source heat pump rebates increased from \$250/ton to \$300/ton.

Rebate forms are available at acrec.com. Please contact Ryan Wagner, member services manager, with questions regarding ACEC's rebate program or general energy efficiency. ■



2021 SERVICE MILESTONES



Josh Mitchell
System Arborist

5 Years



Regan Jacobson
Accountant

15 Years



Josh Abbott
Lead Lineman

20 Years



Sonja Hillman
Sr. Customer Service Rep.

20 Years

2022 ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES

888-788-1551



Agricultural/Commercial/Industrial			
Commercial Vending Machine Controls		\$25	each
Circulation Fan	Fans < 36" must be ≥ 18 pounds force/kW Fans ≥ 36" must be ≥ 21 pounds force/kW	\$1	inch
Exhaust Fan	Fans < 36" must be ≥ 18 cfm/watt @ 0.05" SP Fans ≥ 36" must be ≥ 21 cfm/watt @ 0.05" SP	\$1	inch
Electric Forklift Battery Charger	Must be "controlled" as defined by cooperative	\$200	each
Dairy Plate Cooler / Well Water Pre-Cooler		\$500	each
Dairy Refrigeration Heat Recovery with Electric Backup	Used with controlled electric water heater as defined by coop	\$300	each
Low/Zero Energy Livestock Waterer	≤ 500 watts, insulated tank	\$50	each
Scroll Refrigerant Compressor	\$1,000 cap per compressor	\$30	HP
Variable Frequency Drive (VFD)	\$1,000 cap per drive	\$30	HP
Appliances			
Clothes Dryer	Must be ENERGY STAR, must be electric	\$25	each
Clothes Dryer – Heat Pump	All heat pump clothes dryers qualify	\$50	each
Clothes Washer	Must be ENERGY STAR	\$25	each
Dehumidifier	Must be ENERGY STAR	\$25	each
Dishwasher	Must be ENERGY STAR	\$25	each
Freezer	Must be ENERGY STAR and ≥ 10 cubic ft.	\$25	each
Inductive Range	All inductive ranges qualify	\$25	each
Refrigerator	Must be ENERGY STAR and ≥ 10 cubic ft.	\$25	each
Recycling - Freezer	Must be working appliance	\$25	each
Recycling - Refrigerator	Must be working appliance	\$25	each
Recycling - Room Air Conditioner	Must be working appliance	\$25	each
Audits/Assessments			
Audit Recommended Improvements	\$500 cap	varies	each
Compressed Air Audit	\$500 cap	varies	each
HVAC			
Heat Pump - Air Source & Mini-Split	SEER 14+, HSPF 8.2+, or EER 11+	\$300	ton
Heat Pump - Commercial Air Source & PTHPs	< 20 tons: EER 11+ 20 to < 60 tons: EER 10.5+ ≥ 60 ton: EER 10+	\$300	ton
Heat Pump - Geothermal		\$500	ton
New Furnace with ECM Blower Motor	Variable speed motor (not multi-speed) "or" Eac ≤ 670 kWh/year	\$35	each
Lighting			
LED Lamp (Residential)	5 lamp minimum	\$0.50	lamp
LED Lamp (Non-Residential)	5 lamp minimum	\$0.50	lamp
LED Fixture (Non-Residential)		\$0.50	per 800 lumens
LED Exit Sign		\$5	sign
Occupancy Sensor	Doesn't include motion detector fixtures	\$5	each
Miscellaneous			
Electric Vehicle Smart Charger with integrated metering	Must be "controlled" as defined by cooperative	\$800	each
Touchstone Energy® Home Program			
New Home	Must meet 1 of 5 program/code requirements	\$500	each
Water Heating			
Commercial Water Heater 75-99 gallons		\$150	each
Commercial Water Heater 100+ gallons		\$300	each
Residential Water Heater 75-99 gallons	Uniform Energy Factor 0.88+	\$150	each
Residential Water Heater 100+ gallons	Uniform Energy Factor 0.88+	\$300	each
Heat Pump Water Heater	Integrated (all-in-one) units, Uniform Energy Factor 2.00+	\$300	each
Solar Storage Water Heater w/Electric Auxiliary Tank	75-99 Gallons	\$150	each
Solar Storage Water Heater w/Electric Auxiliary Tank	100+ Gallons	\$300	each

The required documentation listed below must be submitted no later than 3 months after purchase or installation:

- ✓ Incentive form (found at www.acrec.com).
- ✓ A copy of your receipt or invoice for each item with purchase price(s) circled.
- ✓ ENERGY STAR label for each item, if applicable.
- ✓ Documentation showing appliance was in working order prior to recycling, if applicable.
Incentive not to exceed equipment cost.



Rebate forms available at acrec.com

ARE PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS EFFICIENT FOR MY HOME?

As their name says, small space heaters heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

Suppose you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system. In that case, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you are on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a significant next step.

Loose-fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient, but you are cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. Members can similarly use a space heater during the winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to

heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is the proper size for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm, like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth. **5568**

We know it's cold out there but remember that space heaters can significantly increase your energy bills if misused. If you are looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, contact us. We're here to help you manage your energy use! ■

THANK YOU LAMBORN FAMILY!



The Co-op was saddened to learn of the unexpected death of director Larry Lamborn last year. His family graciously made a monetary donation to ACEC and simply requested that employees choose something they would use in Larry's memory. The Lamborn family was happy to hear employees selected a popcorn machine, as popcorn was one of Larry's favorites!

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 almost 11 years. He was a valued part of the ACEC team. Larry's wise, intuitive, calm, and rational demeanor was a staple in the boardroom and beyond. We thank Larry for his service and dedication, and we sure miss him.



ACEC AWARDED ADDITIONAL \$3M TO DEPLOY FIBER IN RURAL ALLAMAKEE COUNTY

Gov. Reynolds and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) recently announced recipients of the latest Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grants Program. Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative was one of 160 applicants awarded two grants totaling over \$3 million for new broadband infrastructure in rural Allamakee County.

With the help of Upper Explorerland, this grant is the fourth OCIO grant awarded to the Cooperative. “We know increasing access and usage of broadband infrastructure in our rural areas lead to higher property values, increased job and population growth, higher rates of new business formation, improved health, increased socialization through social networks, educational opportunities, and lower unemployment rates,” said Rachele Howe, Executive Director of Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission. “We are more than excited to partner with Allamakee Clayton Electric Cooperative on these two OCIO broadband awards again.”

ACEC believes that having full internet access in rural Iowa will remove barriers for people who struggle to participate in today’s economy and education system due to poor connectivity. “The State of

Iowa is committed to high-speed, reliable broadband for Iowans, and we’re happy to see the progress connecting rural Iowa,” said Hollee McCormick, general manager. “We are constantly hearing from members and non-members alike that they need better internet. Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative is making every effort to fill the gaps.”

Last year, the \$4.5 million OCIO-5 grant awarded to the Cooperative helped us to deploy fiber in northern Allamakee County but came with a tight deadline. “We had six months to get all the fiber bored and place the fiber drops to the homes,” said McCormick, “This was especially challenging because materials were taking longer to get, and contractors’ schedules were filling up fast.” Nevertheless, our Skyways division and contractors worked hard to meet the grant deadline through the fall and winter. As a result, the northern fiber project in Allamakee County is now complete, and we plan to begin activating a potential 600 customers this spring. We anticipate the connection to start sometime in late spring/early summer for fiber customers along the Rural Waukon route.

This new OCIO-7 grant will partially fund the fiber deployment project in portions of rural Dorchester and southwest



Erich Gamm, owner of West Union Trenching, describes the fiber boring and connection process to Hollee McCormick during a visit to Allamakee County in December 2020.

Allamakee County, with four years to complete the project. This grant has a potential of about 440 passings, which will offer more families and businesses in rural areas access to fiber internet. “The deadline for this project is much more manageable with a project deadline of 2026, but we are already in the planning phases and will begin the process as soon as contractors’ schedules and supplies are available, but it’ll likely be closer to 2023,” said McCormick. ■



Please visit [ACSKYWAYS.com](https://www.acskyways.com) to see a map of fiber projects. 

MEMBER RECIPES

START THE NEW YEAR OUT RIGHT!

Southern tradition says that if you eat Hoppin’ John on New Year’s Day, you will have good luck and prosperity in the New Year. Legend is that the black-eyed peas represent coins and that green collards represent cash.

- 1 c. black-eyed peas dried, OR 2-3 c. canned black-eyed peas
- 4 c water (for dried peas only)
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 c. raw rice
- 1 - 2 c. ham, roughly chopped
- ½ or whole onion, chopped, divided (for garnishing)
- Rice and/or cornbread

Boil dried black-eyed peas in salted water (enough to cover as they will expand) until tender. Make rice or corn bread. Drain the peas of most of the liquid. Sauté onion and ham. Mix peas, onion, and ham to re-warm and serve over rice and/or corn bread. Chop more raw onion for garnishing on top, if desired. We serve cooked spinach collards as a side.

Martha Bartenhagen, Elgin

Send your favorite recipes and/or recipe topics to Jenny McIntyre, ACEC, PO Box 715, Postville, IA 52162 or email jmcintyre@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 intended publication.

February–CHOCOLATE March–MUFFINS April–RHUBARB



FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

ACEC has hidden **three** Service Location numbers in the text of this newsletter. The numbers are from three different regions of our service area – each is worth a **\$5 bill credit** if found. The Service Location number must be yours to claim the bill 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

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Many members have commented that they didn't like the new way we were hiding the service numbers next to graphics and photos, so we reverted to hiding the numbers within the newsletter's text.

ACEC has hidden three Service Location numbers within the text of this newsletter. The numbers are from three different regions of our service area – all three are worth a \$5 bill credit each if found. The Service Location number must be yours to claim the bill credit, and you need to notify us when you find it.



WATCH FOR HIDDEN DANGERS

Zippering over glistening snow is always a thrill but beware of hidden dangers while snowmobiling!

Guy wires that help anchor power poles may be difficult to see. Drifting snow can hide underground utilities. To stay safe, we recommend staying on marked snowmobiling trails.

