

ACEC NEWS

JULY 2026 | VOLUME 29 | ISSUE 06

Surviving the storm

YOUTH TOUR
HIGHLIGHTS

PICNIC
WINNERS

FROZEN
TREATS



PICNIC FUN!

See page 6



A MESSAGE FROM *Your General Manager*

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH STAR ENERGY SERVICES

One of the strengths of the cooperative business model is our ability to work together. Electric cooperatives were built on the idea that people can accomplish more collectively than they can alone. That philosophy continues to guide us today. At Allamakee-Clayton Electric, one of the ways we put principle into practice is through our relationship with STAR Energy Services.

STAR is another company we work with to give our members the service they deserve. Previously, I have shared details of our relationship with Dairyland Power Cooperative, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, the Cooperative Response Center, the National Association of Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation. Today, I'd like to share information on another important resource we collaborate with.

What is STAR?

STAR Energy Services has a long history of serving electric cooperatives and municipal utilities throughout the region. Originally formed to help utilities meet specialized technical and operational needs, STAR has grown into a trusted partner for organizations like ACEC that want to provide safe, reliable and cost-effective services to their members. Over the years, STAR has expanded its capabilities to keep pace with changes in the electric utility industry, including new technology, evolving regulations, increased data needs and the growing importance of system planning and reliability.

Today, STAR Energy Services provides a wide range of services that support electric cooperatives and utilities. These services include engineering, mapping, metering, staking, electrical inspections and other technical support. STAR's

team brings specialized knowledge and experience that can be difficult for a single cooperative to maintain in-house on a full-time basis. Their employees understand the unique needs of rural electric systems and the cooperative commitment to serving members efficiently and responsibly.

Making the right choice

For ACEC, our partnership with STAR is about making sure we have access to the right expertise at the right time. As a local cooperative, we are focused every day on providing dependable electric service to our members. To do that well, we must continually maintain, improve and plan for our aging electric system. That work requires careful engineering, accurate system records, dependable field support and the ability to respond to both routine needs and unexpected challenges. **A-7**

By working with STAR, we are able to strengthen our internal team without adding unnecessary costs. Rather than hiring full-time staff for every specialized function, we can rely on STAR's professionals when their expertise is needed. This allows us to be more efficient with member dollars while still receiving high-quality technical support. It is a practical example of cooperation among cooperatives and utility partners – sharing resources, knowledge and experience for the benefit of the people we serve.

STAR also helps us plan for the future. The electric industry is changing rapidly. New technologies, increased energy demand, distributed generation, electric vehicles and grid modernization are all shaping how cooperatives operate. Having access to experienced engineering, and technical professionals helps ensure that we are making thoughtful, well-informed decisions about system upgrades and long-term investments. These decisions affect reliability, safety and affordability so it is important we

approach them carefully.

Another important benefit of our relationship with STAR is continuity. Because STAR works with cooperatives and utilities across the region, they bring a broad perspective while also understanding the local nature of our work. They know our members aren't just customers; they are owners of ACEC. That distinction matters. Every decision we make is ultimately about serving our membership and preserving the long-term strength of the cooperative.

At ACEC, we are proud of the relationships that help us better serve our members. STAR Energy Services is one of those valued partners. Their technical expertise, cooperative-minded approach and commitment to reliable service align well with our mission. That spirit of collaboration is at the heart of the cooperative difference—and it is one more way we are working every day for you, our member-owners.

A few notes

It's hard to believe it's already July and the summer is half over. This time of year is always a busy and exciting one in our local communities, and we want to wish all of our young members and area youth the very best of luck as they exhibit their projects and livestock at the county fairs. Your hard work, dedication, and pride in your projects are something to be celebrated.

As a reminder, there will not be an August newsletter because of our Annual Report. We encourage all members to take time to read the report and learn more about your cooperative's activities over the past year. We encourage everyone to vote in the director election. These are your representatives on your Board of Directors. We also hope you'll make plans to attend our drive-through annual meeting on **Monday, September 14, from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m.** We look forward to seeing you there.

BOARD BRIEFS June 29 Meeting

- Approved allocation of 2025 net earnings
- Reviewed and approved revisions to Policy 7-7 Maintaining a Drug-Free Workplace & Policy 7-8 Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use and Testing
- Approved Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives 26/27 budget and fees
- Heard updates on Cradlepoint activity
- Approved donation requests to Cooperative Family Fund and NRECA International Fund

A TRIP TO REMEMBER FOR BRYCE AND BEN

For five straight days in mid-June, ACEC youth Bryce Kelly and Ben Gelner traversed Washington D.C. with 34 other students as a part of the National Electric Cooperative Youth, representing the state of Iowa.

Bryce just finished his junior year at Western Dubuque High School. He is the son of Andy and Corey Kelly of Holy Cross. Ben completed his sophomore year at Starmont High School. He is the son of Chris and Meg Gelner of Strawberry Point.

For more than six decades, electric cooperatives have sponsored high school students for Youth Tour, a leadership development program that helps young people discover their voice, build confidence and expand their understanding of civic engagement. While in Washington, D.C., students met with elected officials, explored historic landmarks and even operated their own student-led snack cooperative, gaining hands-on experience in teamwork, responsibility and leadership.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is a collaborative effort supported by locally owned electric cooperatives like ACEC, statewide trade associations and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Bryce said he enjoyed the Washington Monument the most because you could see it from anywhere and could see a lot of D.C. from the Monument.

Ben said he enjoyed meeting students from across Iowa as well as across the nation. "The place I went was obviously amazing but the relationships I made were even better." His favorite thing he experienced was the Iwo Jima monument with a performance by the U.S. Marine Band.

In addition to touring the nation's capital, 2,100 students from across the country gathered for National Youth Day, hosted by NRECA, where they heard from inspiring speakers and public figures. This year's program featured Mike Schlappi, a 4-time



Pictured are Bryce Kelly (middle) and Ben Gelner (right), along with another Iowa delegate on the Youth Tour

paralympic medalist and 2-time world wheelchair basketball champion, who shared a powerful message about perseverance and leadership: "Just because you can't stand up doesn't mean you can't stand out."

Since 1958, Iowa's electric cooperatives have sponsored students through Youth Tour with opportunities to meet members of their U.S. congressional delegation, participate in leadership and advocacy sessions and explore our nation's capital. **487(PV)**

Information about how to apply for ACEC's 2027 Youth Tour program can be found at www.acec.com/youth-tour, or www.iowaYouthTour.com. Applications will be available in late 2026 and will be due on January 31, 2027. You can also find "Iowa Youth Tour" on Facebook or Instagram to see highlights from the 2026 trip.

THROUGH A MEMBER'S LENS

Here's to America's 250th birthday! Laurie Blietz submitted this patriotic photo from the flag raising at Monona Hay Days. She included, "Special note to the girls watching Grandpa raise the flag and the littlest saluting the flag as she sees the Veterans do." Thanks to everyone who submitted a photo!



SAVE THE DATE
ANNUAL MEETING
MONDAY, SEPT. 14



WEATHERING THE STORM

Nothing shows the strength of community quite like a disaster. The Northeast Iowa community came out in full force following an EF-2 tornado that ripped through parts of Allamakee County Wednesday, June 17.

In the days following, it was all hands on deck to clean up the debris from the storm.

At Allamakee-Clayton Electric, it was also a full team effort, with our line crew and support staff showing up day after day to make sure every member was back in power as quickly and safely as possible.

Storm details

After several rain showers earlier in the day, the late afternoon storm cell seemed to come out of nowhere. Shortly before five p.m., the tornado sirens went off in Waukon.

According to the National Weather Service, the tornado touched down at 4:53 p.m. 5 miles east of Waukon near the McNamara farm on Bakkum Road. From there, it cut a path

east-southeast for nearly 33 miles, reaching max wind speeds of 115. The tornado lifted just before reaching Boscobel, Wisconsin. A second tornado touched down east-southeast of Boscobel and traveled 21.1 miles. There were no reported injuries in either tornado.



ACEC's response

When the first outage calls came in, ACEC quickly responded. By the end of the storm, ACEC had nearly 1,500 computer-generated outages. The computer models showed all members served by the Harpers Ferry substation

were without power. Many residents fed off the Waterville substation also showed they were without power.

All crews responded to the calls, which were from homes located along Elon Road east of Waukon, to the Lansing-Harpers Road and then north of Harpers. In addition to using dispatchers at the Cooperative Response Center, who are trained to take calls after-hours and during times of high call volume, two ACEC dispatchers were on hand to take notes and dispatch crews to the most critical calls. ACEC's Hollee McCormick, Jason Troendle and Tim Bauch were in the field directing traffic while crews moved live wires and broken poles out of roadways.

"Following the recent tornado, our crews responded quickly and safely to assess damage, restore power, and support our members through a difficult situation," said ACEC Director of Operations and Engineering Jason Troendle. "We are grateful for the patience and understanding of our members, as well as the dedication of our lineworkers, operations staff, first responders,





and community partners. Events like this remind us how strong our communities are when we work together."

Crews worked getting members back in service until roughly 3:00 Thursday morning. Troendle noted there were a few members who remained without power that first night due to the excessive damage to the infrastructure.

By 9 a.m. Thursday, the crews were back on the road to get the remaining members back in power.

At the end of the storm, Troendle said there were approximately 20 broken poles that needed to be replaced, as well as

damaged crossarms, insulators, damaged wire, and leaning poles to straighten.

Safety notes

A storm of this nature is a good opportunity to remind members of some safety tips:

- **Always assume downed power lines are energized.** Stay at least 35 feet away from downed lines and anything they may be touching, like fences, vehicles, trees, building or water.
- **Report downed lines immediately.** Call 888-788-1551 to report downed lines.
- **Stay clear of broken poles, damaged equipment and substations.** Do not cut, move or tamper with broken poles, guy wires, transformers or other electrical equipment. **3158-X**
- **Do not drive over downed power lines.** If a line falls on your vehicle, stay inside if it is safe to do so and call 911. If you must exit because of fire or another immediate danger, jump clear without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time, then shuffle or hop away with feet together.
- **Be cautious around trees and debris.** Trees can hide downed lines or become energized if they are touching electrical equipment.
- **Stay clear of utility crews and work zones.** Crews need space to work safely and efficiently. Slow down and move over when approaching utility vehicles or road crews.



ACEC bills will be undergoing a bit of a makeover this fall. In preparation for the transition, you will notice a change with the envelopes. Beginning with your July bills, which are mailed out in early August, the mailed envelope will be white instead of canary yellow. The remit envelopes will continue to be yellow. Please make sure you are looking for the white envelope with our logo on it beginning in August.

And be on the lookout for an updated bill coming out in October.



Thank you to everyone who was able to attend our 2026 Member Appreciation Picnic!



A LOVELY DAY FOR A PICNIC



Prize Winners

Car fridge – Jordan Imoehl

Picnic basket – DiAnn
Evenson

Picnic blanket – Angela
Bergan

Electric grill – Paul Trafelet

\$25 bill credit – Jodi Jacobson;
Janice Pleggenkuhle; Sheryl
Struthers; Andy Kelly

Bog bag/beach towel set –
Traci Byrnes; Mary Kruse
Emerson; Molly Neylan

FirstCall First Aid Kit – Linda
Davis

FirstCall Travel Kit – Pat
Baumler

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.

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.

SEPTEMBER – HARVEST SEASON FAVORITES, OCTOBER – CHICKEN



FROZEN BANANA POPS

- 6 large bananas, cut in half
- 2 tsp. coconut oil
- ¼ c. chocolate chips
- 2 Tbsp. peanut butter
- Coconut (optional)

Directions

Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Place a popsicle stick into each banana half and place on pan. Melt chocolate chips and coconut oil together over med-low heat. Place in a small Ziploc bag and seal. Place peanut butter in a second Ziploc bag and soften in hot water. Cut off a tiny corner of each bag and drizzle over bananas. Sprinkle with coconut if desired. Freeze 2-3 hours.

■ **Maranda Knobloch, St. Olaf**

CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM DESSERT

- ½ c. butter
- 2 squares baking chocolate
- 2 c. powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 3 egg yolks
- 3 egg whites
- 1 c. chopped nuts
- Crushed Oreos
- ½ gallon vanilla ice cream

Directions

In a small saucepan, melt the butter and the baking chocolate. Pour over powdered sugar in a large bowl. Add the vanilla and egg yolks, then fold in the egg whites, beaten until stiff. Add in the chopped nuts. Line a 9x13" pan with crushed Oreos. Pour chocolate mixture over the Oreos. Freeze until hardened. Cut ½ gallon vanilla ice cream in slices to fit in pan. Freeze. At Christmas, peppermint ice cream is optional.

■ **Carol Deering, Postville**

FROZEN YOGURT PIE

- 18 oz. container of Cool Whip, thawed
- 2 5 oz. containers of Greek yogurt, use whatever flavor you'd like
- Fruit, as desired
- Graham cracker or granola pie crust

Directions

Mix together the thawed Cool Whip, Greek yogurt and fruit. Pour into the pie crust and freeze. You can customize it with whatever flavor of yogurt and fruit you'd like.

■ **Vickie Roeske, New Albin**

HOMEMADE PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE BOSTONS

- 2-3 pints vanilla ice cream
- 1 scoop peanut powder
- For the hot fudge:
 - 1 ¼ c. hot water
 - 1 c. sugar
 - ½ c. cocoa
 - 2 Tbsp. cornstarch or potato starch
 - 2 Tbsp. butter
 - 1 tsp. vanilla

Directions

First cook all fudge ingredients in a saucepan and whisk until thick. Place half of the ice cream in a stand mixer with the paddle attachment and add in peanut powder. Mix until well beaten, thick and smooth. Place peanut butter ice cream in pint glasses, top with plain vanilla ice cream and drizzle hot fudge over the top.

■ **Kiley Roth, Postville**

Looking for a recipe from a previous newsletter? Wanting to try something new?

Check out the recipe section on our website: <https://acrec.com/member-recipes>.

Every recipe submitted to the newsletter is posted on the website. Be sure to submit your recipe for publication as well – people who submit a published recipe receive a \$5 bill credit!

CYBERSECURITY Tip of the MONTH

Sponsored by



Once your vacation begins, a few mindful habits can help you avoid common risks.

Be thoughtful about location sharing – Only turn on location services when necessary. Many apps request location access, but don't actually need it.

Think before you post – Sharing vacation updates in real time can signal that your home is empty. Consider posting photos after you return. We also recommend limiting who can see your posts.

Use public Wi-Fi wisely – Public Wi-Fi is generally safer than we often give it credit for nowadays and most websites now use encryption. But if something feels off, you can use a mobile hotspot if you have one. Also, you generally don't need a VPN, and VPNs aren't a replacement for antivirus software.

Keep your devices secure – Keep devices with you whenever possible. If you leave them behind, store them in a hotel safe. Even a quick distraction in a public place can lead to theft.

Turn off auto-connect – Disable automatic connections to Wi-Fi and Bluetooth networks. This prevents your device from connecting to unknown or potentially unsafe networks without your knowledge.

Avoid public computers for personal accounts – Try not to log into personal accounts on shared or public computers (like at a hotel or internet café). If you must, log out completely when you're done – closing the browser isn't enough.

~ Courtesy of
staysafeonline.org

FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

Congratulations to Michelle O'Neill and Bertha Burgin. Michelle and Bertha recently found their service numbers in the ACEC Newsletter and each were awarded a \$5.00 bill credit. ACEC has hidden three Service Location numbers within this newsletter. The numbers are from different regions of our service area – **one is worth \$12.50 and two are worth \$10.00**. 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

AL STEFFENS, President, Clermont

BRICE WOOD, Vice President, Lansing

CINDY HEFFERN, Sec./Treas., Harpers Ferry

JEFF BRADLEY, Wadena

NELSON CONVERSE, Postville

GREG FORMANEK, Farmersburg

MICHAEL D. GIBBS, Waterville

RON HARTMAN, Sumner

JERRY KELEHER, Elkader

MANAGEMENT STAFF

HOLLEE McCORMICK, EVP/General Manager

JENNIFER ACHENBACH, Manager,
Marketing & Communications

DAVID DECKER, Director,
Finance & Administrative Services

BRENDA HACKMAN, Manager, Economic
Development & Community Relations

JENI KOLSRUD, Manager, Information
Technology

JASON TROENDLE, Director,
Operations & Engineering

RYAN WAGNER, Manager, Member Services

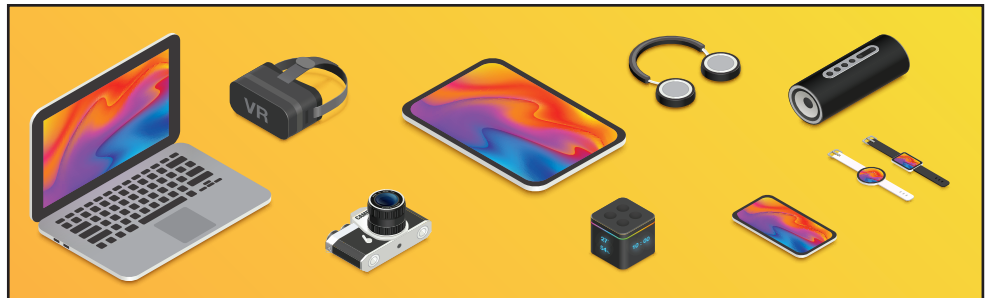


Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative, Inc.
PO Box 715 - Postville, IA 52162-0715

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
DPC



LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY AT HOME

Rechargeable lithium-ion batteries power many everyday devices, including phones, laptops, e-bikes, tools and toys. These batteries store a lot of energy in a small space. Learn how to buy, charge, store and recycle batteries safely to help prevent fires at home.

Use lithium-ion batteries safely

- Buy batteries and chargers with a nationally recognized safety certification mark.
- Only use chargers made for your devices and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Don't leave devices charging for longer than is necessary.
- Charge on hard, flat surfaces. Do not charge on beds, couches or under pillows.
- Store batteries at room temperature and away from anything that can catch fire.
- Have repairs conducted by a qualified professional.

! Stop using a battery if it smells unusual, gets very hot, makes popping sounds or changes in shape or color.

Charge e-bike and e-scooter batteries safely

- Charge your battery outdoors in a flat, dry area away from direct sunlight.
- Do not use a battery or charger that is damaged.
- Store batteries at room temperature, away from hot or cold areas.
- Never charge in areas that may block exits or create tripping hazards.
- Keep batteries away from anything that can catch fire.

What if batteries have been exposed to floodwater?

- Do not charge lithium-ion batteries that have been submerged or show signs of damage.
- Place exposed devices or batteries in noncombustible containers. Store them outside, away from buildings until recycled.

Recycle batteries the right way

- Do not throw lithium-ion batteries in the trash or curbside recycling bins. Doing so can start fires.
- Recycle batteries and devices at an approved battery recycling location.
- Contact your local waste department or visit batterynetwork.org to find a recycling site near you.

! The best way to cool a lithium-ion battery that is overheating or on fire is to flood it with water or submerge it in water.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

To learn more, visit:

Safe
Electricity.org®