

ACEC NEWS

APRIL 2024 | VOLUME 27 | ISSUE 04

30 YEARS

OF ACEC's
FIRSTCALL®
Emergency
Response
System

HEADED TO
GUATEMALA

CONGRATULATIONS
SCHOLARSHIP
WINNERS!

ACEC PICNIC
SAVE THE DATE



A MESSAGE FROM *Your General Manager*

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

PLEASE MAKE ROOM FOR ROADSIDE CREWS

Here at Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative, we are gearing up for our busy "Construction Season". During the warmer months, we rebuild existing line and build completely new lines as well. And of course, as you know, when the power goes out, so do ACES's line crews.

Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the members we serve.

If you're traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you slow down and move over (if possible) and give them a little extra space to work. We care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that. You would be astounded by the amount of drivers who do neither and will blow by a working crew at very high speeds! All of our crews have reported some very close calls.

If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, we simply ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we ask that you move over a bit and give them a little extra space.

Actually, moving over or slowing down is a state law in Iowa. In accordance with Iowa state law, motorists must move over or slow down when approaching ANY

PLEASE MOVE OVER FOR EMERGENCY AND UTILITY CREWS

If you see police, firefighters, utility crews or other emergency personnel on the side of the road, please slow down and move over when possible.

Together, we can keep our crews safe.



vehicle stopped on the side of the road with its flashing lights activated, including passenger cars with hazard lights. Those who fail to obey the law could receive a traffic ticket or even lose their driver's license.

Utility crews aren't the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways. We ask that you follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep these crews safe.

There's plenty of room for all. Let's work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways. Our goal is to send every employee home safely, every night. Please help us do so. ■

BOARD BRIEFS | April 30 Meeting

- Approved September 9, 2024, as our Annual Meeting date
- Approved allocation of 2023 margins: \$581,360.25 to ACEC Members; \$100,000 retained by ACEC
- Approved CFC future financing
- Approved Jeff Bradley as Dairyland board delegate and Jerry Keleher as alternate
- Reviewed and approved the composition of our Director Districts
- Reviewed and approved Board Governance Policy 413 "Qualifications for Eligibility to Serve on the Board of Directors"
- Approved Voting Delegates for the Dairyland Power Annual Meeting
- Approved Cost Share Application with Clayton County Economic Development
- Approved RLF Loan to Sumner Daycare
- Reviewed Teeple Creek Solar Project information
- Discussed recent Board Self-Evaluation results
- Approved donation request to Waterville's Country on the Creek Summer Music Festival

ON THE COVER: *Darla Dewitte was ACEC's FirstCall representative for years. Now, she's a happy customer of the emergency response system.*

POWERING A BRIGHTER FUTURE:

Local lineman to help electrify rural Guatemalan villages in June

In June, 14 lineworkers from Iowa and Minnesota electric cooperatives, including ACEC's Jason Donnelly, will embark on a 2,800-mile journey that will improve the quality of life for a rural Guatemalan community for generations. The trip is part of the International Program affiliated with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), which has been coordinating electric co-op volunteers to electrify villages and communities in impoverished countries around the world since 1962.

Donnelly will join six others from Iowa cooperatives, including East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative, Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, Midland Power Cooperative, North West Rural Electric Cooperative and Prairie Energy Cooperative. They will work with seven linemen from Minnesota electric co-ops and together the team will string lines and wire homes for electricity in the remote community of La Hortiga.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime learning experience. It will be hard work but rewarding to be able to provide power to homes. I'm proud to be able to represent Allamakee-Clayton REC," said Donnelly. **#H39**

The linemen will leave for Guatemala on June 5 and return home on June 21. The remote community is about an hour from San Marcos, situated in the mountains at about 10,000 feet of elevation. The team will build out about 3 miles of line that will be connected to the local municipal power company, which will take over the service of the lines once completed. After framing pre-set poles and building out conductor, they will install wires and circuits in approximately 15 homes.

The leads for this trip are journeyman lineworkers Mike Berkenpas from North West REC in Iowa and Eric Dessner from People's Energy Cooperative in Minnesota. The men traveled to the location in February to scout the work and determine resources and inventory needed to construct the line. For everyone but Berkenpas, this will be their first time volunteering for this life-changing trip.

NRECA started the International Program to bring prosperity to those less fortunate around the world. Since that time, the organization has powered the lives of more than 160 million people in 48 countries on the continents of Africa, South America, Central America and Asia. Teams assist with all stages of planning and executing electrification projects, promoting electric cooperative development and empowering communities around the world.

"We are mission-driven to power lives and empower communities. We are proud to support Jason Donnelly and this project in Guatemala because we know how access to electricity improves quality of life through better education, economic opportunity, safety and health care," said ACEC General Manager/Executive Vice President Hollee McCormick.

The linemen will also provide each household with a water filtration kit to help them access clean water.

Follow the journey on social media by joining the Facebook group "2024 Powering a Brighter Future in Guatemala." ■



Jason Donnelly,
Lineworker

3RD ANNUAL MEMBER APPRECIATION PICNIC

Thursday, June 27
3:30-6:30 PM
Postville Big Four Fairgrounds

SAVE THE DATE



COMING FULL CIRCLE WITH ACEC'S FIRSTCALL®



For 12 years, Darla Dewitte helped area residents feel more secure in their homes by providing them with an ACEC MainStreet Messenger emergency

response system, later rebranded and currently known as FirstCall.

Recently, Darla herself became a customer of the FirstCall Emergency Response System.

Darla joined the Co-op staff in 1991 when she applied for a part-time position writing the employee newsletter and monthly member newsletter.

"I told (General Manager Larry Reed) that I was sure he had people apply for the job who were much more qualified for the job and he said yes, but something to the effect that he needed someone who knew the difference between a heifer and a sow," Darla joked. "He said he needed someone who could go out and talk to the farmers and relate to their problems. I was a farm wife so I could do that."

Soon, her position in communications expanded to full time. During her career, she also took on member service and economic development duties as the manager of communications and area development. She served on a housing committee for the city of Postville, met hundreds of members at various county fairs, provided dozens of high school students with the opportunity to attend the annual Washington D.C. Youth Tour trip, served on the Clayton County Development board of directors as the utilities representative, and more.

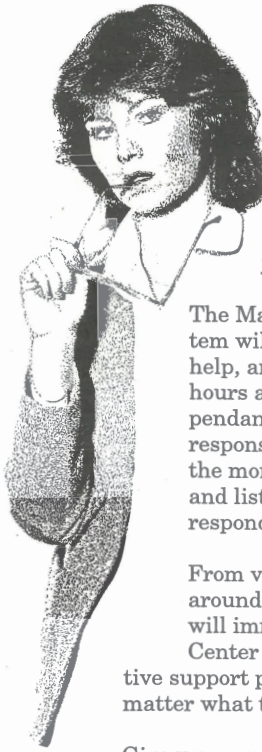
The MainStreet Messenger became a focus for Darla. She explained several RECs banded together to create a division of response operators at the Cooperative Response Center (CRC) in Austin, Minnesota, in 1992. Those operators are specifically trained to handle calls from FirstCall units.

The concept of the system has remained unchanged. Customers of the response system wear a pendant around their necks or on their wrist. With a push of a button, they can summon someone at CRC. When a call is received at CRC, the operators check in with the customer. If it is a non-emergency situation, the operator contacts the list of responders

the client has approved. In an emergency, they'll contact 911.

In his March 1994 ACEC News column, Larry Reed said "A MainStreet Messenger client recently requested Cooperative Response Center assistance when he experienced difficulty breathing. EMTs arrived to find his home filled with gas fumes from a leaking kitchen range. Another client awoke to find a house guest in a weakened condition from a case of overnight flu. She used her Messenger to summon help for her friend. Several others regularly experience mobility problems, and the Messenger service brings a helping hand to their side."

Darla said a challenge in the early years of MainStreet Messenger was getting information to the public. Since its inception, the messaging system has been available to members and non-members, as long as they live in the ACEC service territory. Darla said she marketed the system as a way to help customers stay home comfortably and safely.



If you worry about your parents living alone...

talk to us about our new personal security service.

The best way to keep an accident, an illness, or a fall from turning into an emergency is to get help fast. And the REC's fast response service does just that.

The MainStreet Messenger telephone/personal security system will instantly connect your parents to someone who can help, anytime of the day or night. Seven days a week, 24 hours a day, by pressing the alert button on the portable pendant your parents are placed in direct voice contact with a response center support person. The computer data bank at the monitoring center automatically identifies your parents and lists all their important medical information and their responders.

From virtually anywhere in their home, from the garage or around the house yard, a press of the pendant alert button will immediately place a call to the Cooperative Response Center via a toll-free "800" emergency number. The Cooperative support person will be able to summon appropriate help - no matter what the need may be.

Give your parents the gift of security and independence - the Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative's personal security service.

Your parents get the extra ordinary life-saving service. You get the peace of mind.



MainStreet Messenger ad from 1994

ACEC retiree Darla Dewitte shares her story with the FirstCall Emergency Response System

"The first unit I ever put in, I told the customer that this unit will help you stay in your home 11 years longer than if you didn't put one in. He was able to stay in his home and not move into the nursing home for 11 years," she said.

Darla said she enjoyed balancing her communications duties with her FirstCall work. She happily recalled featuring the Luster Heights Facility, as well as several farm businesses during her time. **#4452**

She also enjoyed meeting the many people who used the FirstCall system. She said she was always happy to help someone maintain their independence in their home.

After 12 years at the Co-op, Darla retired at the end of 2003. She later moved from Postville to her current home in Elgin.

Recently, she called the REC once again, this time to get a FirstCall pendant for herself. While she has a support system with her children, she said she wanted to make sure she'd be able to access help with the press of a button should she need it.

In a column in the Co-op newsletter from 1996, she said "People I visit with across our service area usually tell me two things about our emergency response services. First they tell me the Cooperative is providing a wonderful service and that our FirstCall emergency response phone is truly a wonder of modern technology. Then they tell me they don't need it...yet.

"Sometimes I suggest to them 'If you need it, it's too late.' The trick is to have the ability to get help before you need it."

If you have questions about the FirstCall Emergency Response System, call Kim at 563-864-7611. ■



Every customer of the Cooperative is someone special, whether they are Cooperative members or subscribers to television programming or emergency response services like Dorothy Whittenbaugh, Elgin. "The MainStreet Messenger provides as much peace of mind for me as it does for my mom," says Darla DeWitte, (left above) manager, communications and area development. "Everybody and their mom (and dad) should enjoy the peace of mind offered by the Cooperative's MainStreet Messenger emergency response telephone.



RAINBOW QUARRY LLC. RECEIVES REVOLVING LOAN

The ACEC Board of Directors recently approved a USDA Revolving Loan to assist Rainbow Quarry LLC. outside of Rossville to purchase new equipment.

MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

It can be easy to overlook things we see every day, including overhead power lines. However, failure to notice overhead lines can be deadly. If you or an object you are touching contacts or gets too close to a power line, you could be seriously injured or killed.

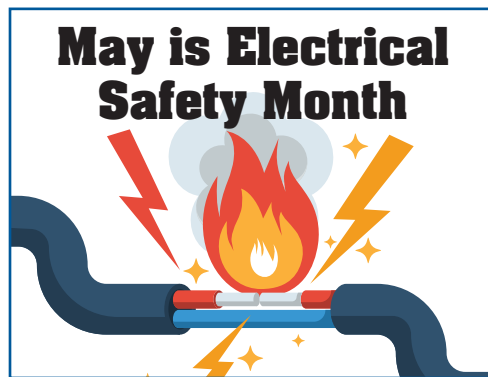
Overhead power lines require 10 feet of clearance in all directions. This distance rule applies to the power lines draped from pole to pole that line roads (distribution lines), as well as the drop-down lines that service homes or other structures. **#6201-5-XX**

If your job requires you to operate equipment in the vicinity of large transmission lines and towers, they require even more clearance than distribution and drop-down lines. That clearance is determined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA mandates line clearance distances for all types of power lines.

Be mindful of overhead power lines when completing home maintenance, yard work, farming or while on the job site. See more helpful tips at safeelectricity.org. ■



ACEC's lineworkers were on location in April, practicing switch training at the Hawkeye substation with the help of Dairyland Power Cooperative. The crews trained on DPC's switch trailer, then put their new skills to use in the Hawkeye sub. Pictured is apprentice lineworker Ryan Jaster.



PLUGGED IN: Electric Vehicle Update



APRIL

of miles driven: **271 miles**

kWh's charged: **140 kWh**

Total cost to charge
 $.13 \times 140\text{kWh} =$ **\$18.20**



CYBER SECURITY Tip of the MONTH

Audit your digital life.

Every few months, take stock of your digital presence. Do you have apps on your smartphone that you don't use anymore? What permissions have you granted? Don't hesitate to delete apps you no longer use or trust. If you want to use an account or app in the future, you can always start a new account or download it again. ■

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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.

June – [BLUEBERRIES/RASPBERRIES](#);
July – [ON THE GRILL](#)

VEGETABLE BARS

- 2 tubes (8 count) refrigerated crescent rolls
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. salad dressing
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. sour cream
- 2 8oz. packages softened cream cheese
- 1 envelop Hidden Valley ranch dressing
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. chopped green pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. sliced green onions
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. diced tomatoes
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. chopped broccoli
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. shredded carrots
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. sliced cauliflower
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. shredded cheddar cheese

Directions

Cover bottom of a 15 x 10" baking sheet with the sheets of crescent roll dough, patting and stretching to fit. Bake at 350° for about 10 minutes or until lightly brown. In a mixing bowl, combine salad dressing, sour cream, cream cheese and dressing mix. Spread over crust in pan. Combine all vegetables, tossing to mix and put over cheese mixture. Push vegetables into cheese mixture with a spoon. Sprinkle shredded cheese over top. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 3 to 4 hours before serving. Cut into bars and serve. * This recipe can be cut in half and can be made in 9x13" pan.

■ Elaine Stocks, St. Olaf

FAST AND EASY FRUIT SALAD

- 1 can cherry pie filling
- 1 can (29 oz.) peaches
- 1 can pineapple chunks
- 1 (10 oz.) bag mini marshmallows
- 2 bananas, sliced

Directions

Mix all together in a large bowl. Refrigerate for 1 hour or serve right away

■ Charlotte Waldbeser, Elgin

THREE-BEAN BURGER BAKE

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 4 slices diced bacon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. chopped onion

- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. ketchup
- 1 Tbsp. vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. mustard
- 15 oz. wax beans
- 15 oz. kidney beans
- 15 oz. lima beans

Directions

Brown hamburger with onion and drain. Cook bacon. Add in remaining ingredients and pour into a greased casserole dish. Cover and bake at 325° for 60 minutes (can be heated in a crock pot). Can use any kind of beans.

■ Charlotte Waldbeser, Elgin

BLT PASTA SALAD

- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. Italian dressing
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. ranch dressing
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. pasta
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 4 slices bacon
- 1 c. fresh spinach, chopped
- 4 oz. feta, crumbled

Directions

Cook bacon, cool and chop into bits. Meanwhile, cook pasta in medium pot according to package directions. Drain. Mix together cooked pasta, bacon, dressings and tomato. Cool in refrigerator. Add spinach and feta prior to serving.

■ Kiley Roth, Postville

SKINNY POOL-SIDE DIP

- 1 red pepper, diced
- 2 jalapenos (unseeded)
- 1 can of whole kernel corn, drained
- $\frac{1}{2}$ can diced olives, drained
- 16 oz. fat-free cream cheese, softened
- 1 packet Hidden Valley ranch dip seasoning mix

Directions

Mix together. Chill and serve with chips or crackers

■ Becky Engelhardt, Postville

OREO S'MORES

- 12 Double Stuf OREO cookies
- 12 marshmallows
- Hershey Bar

Directions

Preheat your oven to 350°F or preheat your grill to medium heat. Carefully twist apart the OREO cookies, separating the halves with the cream filling intact. Set them aside. Place one marshmallow on top of each OREO cream filling. Arrange the OREO marshmallow sandwiches on a baking sheet or grill pan, ensuring they are spaced apart for even heating. Place the baking sheet or grill pan in the preheated oven or grill. Bake or grill for approximately 3-4 minutes, or until the marshmallows are puffed and golden brown. Keep a close eye on them to prevent burning. Once the marshmallows are toasted, remove the baking sheet or grill pan from the oven or grill. Immediately place one thin square of Hershey's chocolate bar on top of each toasted marshmallow. Take the remaining OREO cookie halves and press them gently on top of the melted chocolate, creating a sandwich with the marshmallow and chocolate in the center. Allow the OREO S'mores to cool slightly before serving. The chocolate and marshmallow will remain delightfully warm and gooey. Serve these irresistible OREO S'mores to your eager guests and enjoy the perfect combination of crunchy cookies, melted chocolate and gooey marshmallow goodness.

■ Nancy Einck, Waukon

CORN SALAD

- 3 c. corn (fresh or frozen)
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 c. minced red onion
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. diced tomato
- 3 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

In a saute pan, warm olive oil over medium heat. Add onion, chili powder, cumin and saute for 1 minute. In a bowl, combine corn, peppers, tomato and cooled onions. Toss. Add vinegar, toss well. Best when served at room temperature.

Note: If you like cilantro, add 4 Tbsp. cilantro

■ Kathy Ender, Colesburg

FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

Congratulations to **Darlene Kuhrkopf** of Sumner for finding her service number in a past newsletter. The Cooperative awarded her 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 \$5.00**. 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

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STAY CONNECTED



Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

PO Box 715 - Postville, IA 52162-0715

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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Congratulations ACEC Scholarship Recipients!



Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative recently recognized three local students by awarding them a scholarship to continue their education in the electrical field.

Honored this year were Isaac Erickson, Shawn Martin and Hannah Nielsen.

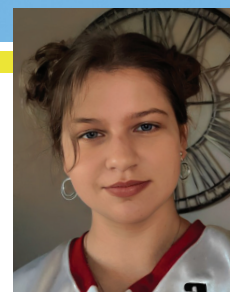
The Hauschild Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1995 in memory of Robert "Bill" Hauschild by his wife and family. This scholarship is provided in recognition of Bill's service as a board member from his election in 1988 until his death on March 17, 1993. Scholarships are open to graduating high school seniors in Allamakee-Clayton Electric's service area and are available to students who are entering a course of study within the electric field. ■



Isaac Erickson, the son of Dave and Joanne Erickson, is a Waukon High School graduate. He plans to attend Hawkeye Community College to study sustainable construction design, with an electrical apprenticeship.



Shawn Martin is a Waukon High School graduate, and is the son of Dave and Renee Martin. His plans are to continue his education to become an electrical lineman.



Hannah Nielson is the daughter of John Nielsen and Shannon Nielsen. The Postville High School graduate plans to attend Central College to study physics and engineering.