


ACEC NEWS

November 2021 | Volume 24 | Issue 10

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

YOUTH Co-op
Career Day

Iowa YOUTH
Leadership Academy

YOUTH Scholarships

**YOUTH Tour
IS BACK!**

Understanding the
ELECTRIC GRID

ELECTRIC
Gift Ideas

WINTERIZE
For Savings



YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES!



A MESSAGE FROM *Your General Manager*

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

IT'S A MATTER OF (CO-OP!) PRINCIPLES

This is a time of year for reflection. One of the top items on my list of things I'm grateful for is our wonderful community. I know I speak for Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative employees when I say that we are thankful to be in such an incredible place. In addition, we are fortunate to live in the same place where we work, which makes our ties to this community that much stronger.

Last month, you may recall that my column touched on the first three Cooperative Principles, so I'm going to continue that conversation and tell you about the remaining four principles this month. The Cooperative Principles are essential to the co-op business model and benefit all members of the co-op. ■

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AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

The fourth principle, Autonomy, and Independence means that the Co-op operates in an autonomous way that is solely directed and guided by its members, reflecting the values and needs of our local community. This principle means the co-op is not being influenced by leaders or shareholders several states away. Instead, the local members the co-op serves are elected to our board and help lead the co-op.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The fifth principle, Education and Training, focuses on enhancing the knowledge of co-op employees and board members, enabling them to contribute to the co-op's development.

By investing in continuous learning for our employees and board members, our co-op is committing not just to individual professional and personal growth but also to the future of the co-op and the high quality of service our members expect and deserve. It's a win-win situation.

We strive to inform members (that's you!) and the public about the mission and operations of the co-op. That's why you receive this newsletter every month so that we can share the latest co-op news and updates, as well as energy efficiency and safety tips. Additionally, we have an active social medial presence. Follow us there too!

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperation among cooperatives is the sixth principle and fosters how co-ops work together to address more significant challenges. While this principle applies to all types of cooperatives, it is especially relevant in the energy industry. In our case, we put this principle in action after major storms and disasters that cause widespread power outages. When this happens, we call on nearby co-ops to come to our aid and assist with restoration efforts—and we, of course, extend the same help to them when they need us. I can't think of a better example of cooperation among cooperatives.

In addition, because we are part of the national electric co-op network, we can connect and collaborate with other electric co-ops to tackle industry-related challenges, like cybersecurity and an everchanging energy landscape. Something unique is that there are roughly 900 electric co-ops across the nation, and we love to help each other. I have co-op colleagues all over the country that I frequently visit with regarding industry trends, topics, and best practices. As a matter of fact, I was just on a call with a colleague from Tennessee last week!

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

The seventh principle, Concern for Community, is essential to who we are as cooperatives. We serve our community not only by being an essential service but by helping to empower our local economy. Whether through economic development, volunteerism, or donations to local causes, we invest in this community because it's our home too. We have held school supply drives benefiting the Postville School District and Personal Care Drives, collecting donations for the Allamakee County Relief Office and Northeast Community Action for Allamakee, Clayton, and Fayette counties. Those are just a couple of examples, but we genuinely interact with the communities in our area in countless ways.

I think you'll find that most cooperatives bring good people together to make good things happen in a community.

On behalf of everyone at Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative, we're thankful for your membership, and we hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving! ■

BOARD BRIEFS | October 25, 2021, Meeting

- Josh Mitchell, utility forester, presented an overview of ACEC's Vegetation Management Program
- Jeni Kolsrud, IT manager, provided an update to ACEC's Cybersecurity practices and response plan
- Board received an update on the Co-op's fiber grant progress and potential new opportunities
- Approved a CFC Broadband Loan
- Approved 2020 Tax Returns
- Approved Patronage Capital Retirement of \$592,354
- 2021-2024 Strategic Plan was presented to the board
- Approved a \$250 donation to the Postville Fire Department

WINTERIZE FOR SAVINGS AND SAFETY



The coats have been cleaned, the mittens and scarves found, and the sweaters pulled out. Old Man Winter is about to settle in across Iowa. Your wardrobe is ready, but what about your house—is it ready for winter? A small investment of time to review your home for safety and efficiency weak spots can pay big dividends toward making your home safer and more energy efficient and ultimately reduce electric bills this winter.

Time spent checking and winterizing heating equipment now can be a worthy investment, saving you money on your monthly bill and ensuring your home is safe. It's important to have a professional inspect and service your furnace to make sure it's in good working order before turning the heat on this winter. An efficient heating system means greater comfort at a lower cost.

Clean or replace furnace filters monthly during winter use, and check ducts, flues and chimneys. Ensure the chimney is clean, clear of wildlife nests, and that there is no blockage in high-

efficiency furnaces that vent through the wall. Keeping heating equipment clean and in good repair will ensure peak efficiency and safety.

Consider installing a programmable thermostat to automatically raise and lower home temperatures for energy savings day and night. Set your thermostat to lower temperatures while you're asleep or away from home.

Make sure attics and flooring, especially above unheated spaces such as crawlspaces and garages, are properly insulated. A quick rule of thumb in the attic is to look for the ceiling joists: If you can see the joists, you don't have enough insulation. Ceiling joists are typically 10–11 inches high, at most, and insulation should be a minimum of 12 inches deep. Find air leaks in homes by moistening your fingertips and running them around doors and window frames to feel for drafts. Check around outlets and look for gaps near the dryer vent, chimneys and faucet pipes. Seal them all

with caulk or weatherstripping.

Another way to save energy is by replacing screens with storm windows and doors. Double-pane windows with low-e coatings can reduce heating bills by 34% in cold climates compared to uncoated, single-pane windows. If you have older or leaky windows that you can't replace, consider temporary fixes, such as plastic film kits that approximate the effect of an interior storm window.

Consider replacing incandescent lightbulbs with energy-efficient LEDs, which use one-fifth of the energy consumed by a regular bulb and can last 25 times as long or longer. ■

Source: SafeElectricity.org

D25

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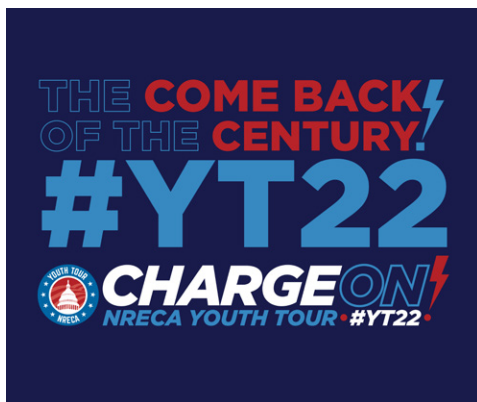
Contact Sonja at **888-788-1551** with questions or to set up an installation time.

YOUTH

Opportunities

YOUTH TOUR IS BACK!

Students should apply now for the trip of a lifetime



JUNE 18–24, 2022

We're planning for a Washington, D.C. special opportunity in 2022!



The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives plan to welcome cooperative sponsored students to the nation's capital city in June for an all-expenses-paid week of leadership and educational training, historical perspectives, tours of the city sites, and experiences in the heart of the federal government.

Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative will sponsor two area high school students, currently in their sophomore or junior year, to participate in this experience. Parents or legal guardians must be ACEC members.

If you know a high school sophomore or junior, who is curious about how

our government works and wants to learn more about cooperatives and the democratic process, encourage them to apply for the 2022 Youth Tour! This week-long trip to Washington, D.C. is a wonderful opportunity to make new friends, see how our government works, and learn the importance of electric cooperatives.

For more information and to download the application go to acrec.com | [News and Education](#) | [Youth](#)

Applications must be received by January 31, 2022. All applicants will complete an open-book exam. The Co-op will interview the students with the top five scores and will choose two finalists.

HAUSCHILD SCHOLARSHIP

Graduating high school seniors entering a course of study in the electric field are encouraged to apply for a cooperative scholarship. Students' parents or guardians are not required to be ACEC members but must reside within the boundaries of our service area.

ABOUT THE HAUSCHILD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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.

Since the Cooperative established the fund in 1995, the Co-op has awarded 44 scholarships totaling \$18,800.



IOWA YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

A virtual learning opportunity

133 Iowa High School Students representing 23 Iowa Electric Co-ops participated in the IYLA Zoom sessions.

"I'm very excited to see if I get into Youth Tour. These past few sessions have been amazing!" – O. M., Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative.

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives launched a new online program in 2021 for rural high school students. Iowa Youth Leadership Academy gears towards high school students with a passion for leadership. The program opens their eyes to how cooperatives impact our daily lives and opportunities through cooperative careers and Youth Tour. Students learn how to advocate for important issues and hear from dynamic speakers.

In 2021, participating students received a cool swag box, and at the end of each session, the IYLA gave away a pair of Apple Air Pods. The IYLA entered the names of students who attended all three sessions into a drawing for a \$1,000 college scholarship!

The Co-op will provide more information on the IYLA as it becomes available.



WANTED: Rural Iowa high school students who have a passion for leadership

Watch for more information in 2022!

CO-OP CAREER DAY

Numerous career opportunities available at an electric cooperative

Area high school juniors and seniors from Kee High School, North Fayette Valley High School, and Postville Jr/Sr joined together at the Cooperative in Postville on Oct. 19 to participate in Co-op Career Day. Northeast Iowa Community College coordinated the event through ACEC for students to learn more about electric co-op career opportunities.



The students began the day with a tour of the Co-op's headquarter offices including a walk-through of the 34,000 square-foot garage that houses the electric car, bucket trucks, digger trucks and other cooperative vehicles. Next, ACEC employees representing a variety of departments described their background and current job duties and discussed what led them down their career paths.

"Youth play such an important role in our country and especially in northeast

Iowa," said Brenda Hackman, ACEC's manager of economic development and community relations. "Educating and engaging students allows them to see many workforce opportunities in rural areas. They are our future partners and leaders in the development of our communities."

All the students participated in NICC's College and Career Connection, which is a program that exposes students to high-demand career areas and sets them on the pathway to career and educational success beyond high school.

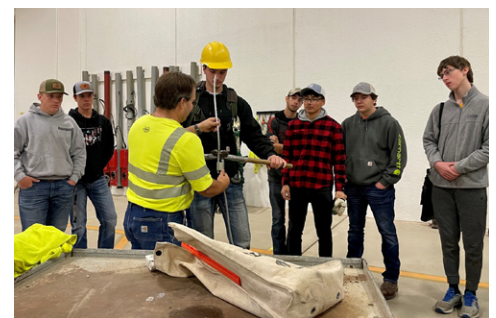
Check out the CAREER opportunities at an Electric Cooperative!

- Accounting
- Arboriculture
- Billing
- Communications
- Community Relations
- Custodial Services
- Customer Service
- Economic Development
- Engineering
- Fleet Services
- Information Technology
- Inventory Control
- Power Line worker
- Management



17 high school juniors and seniors participated in Co-op Career Day at ACEC last month

- Marketing
- Member Services
- Metering
- Operations
- Safety
- Staking
- Technician



POWERFUL FUN: Five cool uses to power your yuletide

By Paul Wesslund

At the end of the year, thoughts of gifts dance in our heads, whether for others or just treating ourselves to the achievement of being able to turn the page on 2021.

Electricity offers one way to brighten the choices as inventors and innovators keep coming up with new gadgets and gizmos to power our lives with efficiency and fun. Here are five electric ideas to add pizzazz to your holiday shopping list.

Healthy French fries?

Electric air fryers have been around since 2010, but their popularity started taking off about five years ago. As health-consciousness increased, people liked the idea of these



cookers that could prepare traditional fried favorites with much less oil. Sales bumped up even more as the pandemic kept people at home and paying more attention to their cooking. Air fryers aren't really fryers but high-heat convection devices that simulate traditional recipes like chicken tenders, egg rolls, potato chips, fried vegetables and apple fritters. A friend of mine calls his electric air fryer "the greatest invention of all time."

Hit the road

"Electric vehicles" doesn't mean just cars and trucks anymore. The sidewalks of college campuses and downtowns are now shared with electric scooters. And if you're having trouble keeping up with a bicycle-fanatic, an electric bike might help you scale those steep hills. You can go off-road with an electric All-Terrain Vehicle. If that doesn't sound like it fits the idea of zooming through the woods, consider that electrics are a lot quieter, whether you're out for hunting or bird watching. Wear a helmet and drive carefully—ATV safety applies to both gas and electric motors. And if you were born to be wild, you can head out on the highway on a battery-powered motorcycle—an electric Harley boasts instant 100% torque, electronic safety features and the ability to use your smartphone for checking battery status

and stolen-vehicle tracking.

Walk the talk

Walkie-talkies are one of those old technologies for staying in touch that still work great for businesses, conference coordination, or hiking and camping. They can help keep a caravan of cars and trailers together. Let the kids figure out games like hide-and-seek or scavenger hunts.

There are even walkie-talkies in the shape of cartoon-character heads, and they can be as inexpensive as \$50 for a set of four. Shop carefully and know what you'll use them for—the range can vary from a half mile to 20 miles depending on the type of model, and whether they'll be used indoors or outdoors.

Easy reader

If being bent over a computer keyboard seems too much like work and you're tired of squinting at the little screen on your phone, take a look at tablets. They come in a variety of screen sizes that make it easier to enjoy that magazine, detective novel, streaming movie or TV show or your computer game of choice. Most models come with the ability for you to write or draw on them.

Packing power

A portable charger may be one of the least-exciting gifts you can give or get, but you'll change that thinking when your phone's about to die as you hike over a hill and see a sunset vista to photograph, or you're at a concert and they play that song you wanted to record. A word of advice—charge it up the day before; the smallest ones for your purse or pocket tend not to hold a charge for the several weeks they sit in a drawer waiting for the next event.

Shop carefully and know how you want to use the device—they all come with a variety of features and prices. And be cyber-safe: anything connected to the internet can be hacked, so set a strong password. Then focus on having a blast. ■

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



The 2021-2022 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters to pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season.

The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) reminds consumers that limited financial heating assistance is available to income-eligible utility customers through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The annual application period runs from Nov. 1, 2021, through April 30, 2022. The application period for homes with elderly or disabled residents began October 1.

The LIHEAP program is designed to help low-income homeowners and renters pay a portion of their primary home heating costs through a one-time payment made directly to the utility or heating fuel vendor. Under LIHEAP or the weatherization assistance program, Iowa law protects qualified applicants who are the head of a household from being disconnected from natural gas or electric service from Nov. 1 through April 1. Although qualified applicants cannot be disconnected during the annual winter moratorium, the IUB urges all LIHEAP-certified customers to continue paying toward their energy bills through the winter to avoid accumulating high debt and facing potential utility service disconnection in the spring.

Eligibility for the federally funded LIHEAP program is based on household size and income, type of fuel, and type of housing. Interested applicants should review the federal income guidelines then apply at the community action agency serving their area. Heating assistance dollars for LIHEAP and the weatherization assistance program are limited.

For assistance, utility customers may contact their local utility company or contact the IUB Customer Service staff at 877-565-4450 or customer@iub.iowa.gov.

Learn more on the IUB's LIHEAP webpage, or through the Iowa Department of Human Rights online at humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/liheap or call 515-281-3861.

FOUR KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING THE ELECTRIC GRID

By Paul Wesslund

With thousands of miles of power lines, nearly 200,000 utility employees and 7,300 power plants, America's electric grid and all its parts must work together to keep power flowing smoothly.

America's electric grid is often called the most complex machine in the world. That's not a stretch when you think about what it does: it runs your refrigerator and charges your phone, all from a ray of sunshine, a pile of coal, falling water or a prairie breeze.

In between those starting and ending points are 160,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines, millions of miles of low-voltage power lines, 7,300 power plants, nearly 200,000 electric utility employees, thousands of electrical substations and transformers that adjust voltage for the cross-country trip along transmission lines, then back down before it enters your house – and all these parts must work together to keep power flowing safely. In addition, this complex network is adapting to weather patterns, increasing cybersecurity threats, consumer expectations and additional decentralized power sources like rooftop solar panels.

Those are big changes for such a vast and intricate system. “But the silver lining is that technology is available to help address the changes,” says Venkat Banunarayanan, vice president of Integrated Grid Business & Technology Strategies with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

For all its complexity, the electric grid can be described in three major parts: a power source (like a natural gas plant or wind turbine); the wires and equipment that deliver power; and a home or business that receives the power.

To understand the modern grid more deeply, here are four ways it's adapting to the world's new realities.

Resilience in the face of more severe weather

Last year was the busiest recorded hurricane season along the Atlantic Coast. Wildfires are increasingly intense, especially in the West, and ice storms and cold weather surprised the South this winter.

These changes call for new ways to make sure the lights stay on. Electric utilities are increasing grid resilience by integrating weather forecasting with other smart technologies that monitor electric current and analyze how to respond. NRECA's Banunarayanan calls this “predictive technology.”

By knowing how weather will affect power equipment, he says, “an electric co-op can preposition work crews so they can quickly respond to the outage, and they can redirect the flow of electricity to take an alternate route to

The power of human connections

minimize the duration of a power outage.”

Strengthening Cyber Safety

Cybersecurity measures have become standard operating procedure for utilities to protect against cyberattacks. Electric co-ops and other utilities work closely with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to monitor and strengthen defenses.

“Utilities are constantly improving to make sure they are more cyber-resilient,” says Banunarayanan.

Electric co-ops also urge consumer-members at home to protect themselves from hackers. When devices like printers and smart TVs connect to the internet, that actually makes them part of the electric grid.

More power to consumers

Many utilities have voluntary programs that manage electric loads by turning off water heaters or air conditioners for short periods of time. Those programs add another layer of coordination. Additionally, homeowners are installing solar panels on their roofs or in their backyards, with some even selling excess electricity back to the utility – over the electric grid.

Utilities Keeping up with the Change

Large fields of wind turbine farms and solar power arrays require building transmission lines to new locations. They also involve planning for a kind of power that might only operate when the sun shines or the wind blows. These changes are necessary and helpful, but they are also expensive.

Annual spending on the U.S. transmission system has increased from \$9 billion a year in 2002, to \$40 billion in 2019.

But that spending is paying off. In 2017, Americans experienced about eight hours of power interruptions, according to the Energy Information Administration. By 2019, that was down to five hours.

“Power outages have been going down because there's investment being made to increase the robustness of the grid,” says Banunarayanan. “I expect the reliability of the grid to increase.” ■

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Last year was the busiest recorded hurricane season

RECIPES

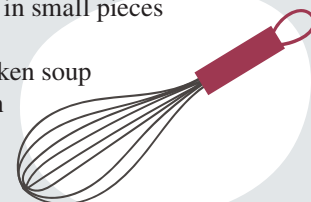
FRIDGE CLEARING

Thanksgiving Leftover Meals

ESCALLOPED TURKEY

(OR CHICKEN)

1 sm. onion, chopped
¾ c. celery, finely chopped
1 c. water
3 c. chicken or turkey pieces
10 – 12 slices bread in small pieces
1 egg
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 ½ c. chicken broth
1 ½ t. sage
dash pepper
½ t. salt, optional



Cook onion and celery in water until tender. Drain onion and celery and keep water. Add remaining ingredients. Mix well and pour into a 9"x 13" pan. May need to add some of the water if the breadcrumbs are very dry. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

June Swenson, Clermont

TURKEY (OR CHICKEN) CASSEROLE

My husband loves this dish and says 'Excellent!!!' every time he has it!

12 oz. bag of sage and onion cubed stuffing
1 ½ c. celery
½ c. onion, chopped
½ c. green pepper, chopped
2 c. Miracle Whip or Hellmann's (whichever you like best)
5 cups cooked turkey (or chicken), cubed
3 eggs
2 c. milk
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 can cream of mushroom soup

Brown onion and celery lightly, add green pepper; sauté. Combine with turkey and mayo in large bowl. In a 9"x12" greased pan, add half of the stuffing, cover with filling, cover with mixture you just created and add the remaining stuffing on top.

Beat eggs and milk together; pour over stuffing cubes. Cover well with foil and refrigerate 12 or more hours. Mix soups and pour over casserole. Bake at 325° for 40-45 minutes. Serves 12.

Vickie Lee Roeske, New Albin

DECEMBER: Give us your favorite soup recipes!

JANUARY: What recipes start your new year?

FEBRUARY: CHOCOLATE!

FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

ACEC has hidden **three** Service Location numbers in this newsletter. The numbers are from three different regions of our service area – one is worth a **\$10** bill credit, and two are each 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.



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Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative employees & board of directors wish our members a safe and enjoyable holiday!

"We would like to thank Allamakee Clayton REC for the \$20 credit we received from the annual meeting. The meal was delicious that we received during the drive-through event." Dennis and Nancy Turner— Postville

"What a surprise when we received a letter from ACREC stating our name was drawn at the annual meeting for a \$20 bill credit! Thank you!"

Michael & Janice Koenig—Castalia

We love hearing from our members!

Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

THANK YOU!

"Enjoyed meeting and visiting with REC employees during the drive-through Annual Meeting. Thank you for the meal, and bill credit for the solar panel subscription we received in the drawing. We appreciate the prompt services REC gives!" Don and Mary Treloar—Hawkeye

"I was happy to hear I won \$20 off my bill – greatly appreciate your kindness and you served a good meal at the annual meeting drive-through. You're all hard workers, whether in the offices, or men out to help with the power. The farmers thank you! Thanks again!" Vicky Ney—West Union