

ACEC NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2023 | VOLUME 26 | ISSUE 09

YOUTH
LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY

BE A CO-OP VOTER

CRYPTOCURRENCY
DATA MINING



**ANOTHER
WONDERFUL FAIR
SEASON HAS ENDED.**

See page 4 for story



A MESSAGE FROM Your General Manager

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

WHAT MAKES CO-OPS UNIQUE

A co-op operates a little differently than other utilities. Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative's decisions are made locally, by directors who also live right here in our community. Everyone who pays to receive electricity from the co-op is a member. When you pay your electric bill each month, your money stays here – to pay for the electricity used, or to make improvements to our local system to strengthen service reliability. The money you pay the co-op doesn't line the pockets of shareholders five states away. We're a co-op, and we exist to provide a service to you, our local members.

You may notice that throughout the year, we schedule opportunities for you to attend co-op events, like our Drive-Thru Annual Meeting (Monday, September 11) and our Member Appreciation Picnic (in June of each year) so we can hear from you. We also offer many social media postings on several channels to keep folks informed about what's going on at the co-op, electrical safety and money savings tips. We conduct occasional surveys to gather your feedback on co-op programs and services so that we can plan and adjust for the future. We take the time to read and evaluate every survey submitted and we've actually put many suggestions to work! Our success lies in your satisfaction, which is why we offer these opportunities to engage and listen to what you have to say.

Because you're part of an electric cooperative, you can count on our team

to maintain local jobs, at-cost electricity, minimal outages, technological advancements (like fiber optic internet) and first-class service, no matter what the economy and supply chain issues throw at us.

ACEC is striving to keep our costs as low as possible so we can keep more money in your pocket. We want to help you maximize the value you can get from our services and offerings.

For example, we can help you save on energy bills through our energy use consultation and efficiency rebates.

If you want to receive important information from ACEC such as power restoration updates, sign up for our text message notifications at <https://www.acrec.com/outage-notifications>. You can also stay in the know with social media alerts and our monthly newsletter.

Please know that you--the members of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative--are at the heart of everything we do. Co-ops adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service.

We exist to serve you and provide the quality, reliable, affordable service you expect and deserve. We hope to see or hear from you soon. This co-op was created for you, the members in 1938 and while we've grown and changed over the years, we're still driven by the same guiding principles to serve our community. ■



ON THE COVER: Sarah Stock, 16, of Waukon, appreciated our cooling towel on a hot night at the Allamakee County Fair.

BOARD BRIEFS | July 31 Meeting

- Received updates on OCIO #8 Grant projects, as well as potential PACE Projects
- Received updates on website modernizations and cybersecurity
- Watched a Governance Video on "Communicating During a Cybersecurity Crisis"
- Received updates on upcoming facility maintenance projects
- Approved re-pricing of an existed CFC Loan
- Approved Cost-Sharing Application for new brochures for the Allamakee Historical Society

BOARD BRIEFS | August 28 Meeting

- Discussed Annual Meeting preparations
- Watched Board Governance Video: "Risk Management"
- Reviewed Billing Cycle
- Discussed Dairyland Power's recent Strategic Planning event
- Approved a donation request to WHS Partners in Vocational Education

YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY REGISTRATION OPEN

High schoolers who attend have a chance to win AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, ACEC has a long history of supporting students in the communities we serve through scholarships and leadership opportunities. We've also sent deserving high school students to our nation's capital every summer for years as part of the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

ACEC and Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities and the cooperative business model with a three-part webinar series in October. The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is open to any high school student in our service area. They are invited to register at www.IowaYouthTour.com by October 1.

"This program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, leadership or government," remarked Hollee McCormick. "We want to raise students' awareness of how local electric co-ops power people's lives and empower communities. We also

want to talk about exciting cooperative career paths that are available in smaller communities."

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their own computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- Tuesday, Oct. 3, 7 p.m. – Cooperative Business Model
- Thursday, Oct. 19, 7 p.m. – Rural Iowa Advocacy
- Thursday, Oct. 26, 7 p.m. – Civic Involvement and Leadership

At the end of each live session, one lucky attendee will be selected at random to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random drawing for a \$1,000 college scholarship. All students who register online by October 1 will receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail. #889

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by the lineup of speakers

and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a motivational speaker. Attendees also will hear about the Iowa Youth Tour. Students with an interest in government and public service are encouraged to apply for this weeklong trip to Washington, D.C. The 2024 Youth Tour is slated for June 15-21.

Learn more at www.IowaYouthTour.com or contact Jennifer Achenbach at (888) 788-1551. ■

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

IOWA
YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Attend our webinar series in October for a chance to win Apple AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship! Learn more at IowaYouthTour.com



PLUGGED IN: Electric Vehicle Update

JULY

of miles driven: 191 miles

kWh's Charged: 69 kWh

Cost to Charge: .13 x 69 kWh = \$8.97

AUGUST

of miles driven: 323 miles

kWh's Charged: 87 kWh

Cost to Charge: .13 x 87 kWh = \$11.31

Rural communities
depend on Co-op Voters.

Learn about the issues.
Find your polling place.
Talk to your family and friends.

Be an active participant in our democracy. Be a Co-op Voter.

www.vote.coop

FUN AT THE FAIRS

Enjoying another season at our county fairs



Hundreds of people enjoyed the community meal at the Clayton County Fair.



Kade Meyer, 16 of West Union, gets ready to show in the dairy competition at the Fayette County Fair.



Bob and Joyce Saacke of Farmersburg braved the heat at the Clayton County Fair.



Dave and Connie Sanger of Monona, with daughter Angela Sanger and grandsons Marc and Franklin Rossi, learn more about EVs at the Clayton County Fair



ACEC members Jillian Miller and son Maverick get some swag during the Fayette County Fair.



Tanner, 13, and Tucker, 15, Burrichter of Waukon get ready for weigh-in at the Allamakee County Fair.



Ryan Dornath, 4, of Waukon, was a fan of our coloring books.



Miss Westgate GraceLyn Neumann-Birchard and Miss Waucoma Bailey Poor pose with the Tesla.

Teaching Your Kids Well

Educating kids on energy use and costs can help engage them in your family's goal to use less electricity. They can be electric conservation champions if you ask them to help. Here are some ways you can teach kids to use less electricity.

A real-life math lesson

Show your kids how to read the electric bill. Focus on what you can control: kilowatt-hour use. If they are old enough, teach them how to do the math. You can calculate (kWh) use by multiplying wattage by hours used and dividing by 1,000. Multiply this by the kWh rate on your electric bill to estimate how much you spend on power for each household appliance.

For example, if you have a space heater that uses 1,500 watts and is on for four hours a day for a month, it uses 180 kWh. With an average kWh rate of \$0.137 in the U.S., the space heater costs about \$25 a month to operate. That same space heater costs about \$74 a month if it is on for 12 hours per day. Your kWh rate may be lower or higher depending on where you live.

For household appliance wattage, look for the amount stamped on the bottom, back or nameplate. If the nameplate does not include wattage, it can be calculated by multiplying the voltage by the amperage.

Behavior changes add up

To teach children the impact of saving energy, have them help you conserve with the household's most significant energy-consuming appliances: heating and cooling. Teach kids to dress appropriately for the seasons, even indoors, which allows you to set the thermostat to balance comfort and savings.

You can also leave the house during the hottest times of the day to go for a swim or play outside. Before you go, nudge the thermostat up a few degrees to avoid wasted energy cooling an empty house. Turn off fans when you leave a room.

The second-highest use of electricity is typically the electric water heater. Use a shower timer so kids can monitor how long they are in the shower. Teach them to wash their clothes in cold water. #3715

Other ways to save include turning off the lights when you leave the room. Powering down gaming stations and computers is another way to save. In the kitchen, keep the refrigerator door shut. Teach kids to take a quick peek and shut the door while they think about their snack options.

A family conservation challenge

After teaching your kids about electric bills and showing them how to save electricity, make a game out of your family's energy conservation efforts. Challenge the family to use less energy than last month or the same month the previous year. Use the savings to reward them with a treat or let the winner pick the game night activity or film for family movie night. ■

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 electric co-ops.

Doing Good in the Community

Three awards presented at the Clayton County Developmental Group Annual Meeting had ties to ACEC. K9 Country (ACEC RLF loan) received the New Business of the Year Award. River Town Family Dentistry (ACEC RLF loan) received the Entrepreneur of the Year. Project of the Year went to the Clayton County Best STEM (drone housing project partially funded with a cost share application with ACEC/Dairyland). Congratulations to all area winners! ■



Pictured from the awards ceremony are, from left – K9 Country owners Mindy and Laura Meyers; Brenda Hackman, ACEC; River Town Family Dentistry's Dr. Alicia Walke.



Representative Anne Osmundson with Darla Kelchen, executive director for the Clayton County Development Group, and ACEC's Brenda Hackman.



September 22 - October 1

DRIVE ELECTRIC WEEK

Follow ACEC on social media for more information on Drive Electric Week

THE STRANGE NEW WORLD OF CRYPTOCURRENCY DATA MINING

By Paul Wesslund

There's a new industry you may have heard of that uses huge amounts of electricity—as much as all the refrigerators in the United States. And it may be coming to a town near you.

Cryptocurrency has been around less than 15 years, so if you're not familiar with Bitcoin and other forms of digital currency, what you're about to read will likely sound strange.

Cryptocurrency is a form of money that exists only in the virtual world of the Internet, and the annual amount of electricity required to support cryptocurrency already compares to the amount of electricity used in Finland. The Department of Energy compares its electricity use to 19 coal-fired power plants and foresees that increasing by at least 40% annually.

A new kind of mining industry

Cryptocurrency has created a new class of companies known as Bitcoin miners. It's also created controversy. At least one state has restricted Bitcoin mining as a drain on local resources, while others are creating incentives to attract cryptocurrency jobs.

There are several cryptocurrencies, but Bitcoin is the first and largest. An anonymous founder launched it in 2009 as a way to create an online currency that wasn't part of any government or financial institution. Today, there are some 200,000 Bitcoin transactions a day, and about 420 million users of cryptocurrency worldwide.

Of course, the people exchanging all that currency want a guarantee of security—and that's what creates the heavy electricity use.

Bitcoin devised a method of ensuring the safety of its virtual money called “proof-of-work.” It's a decentralized way of verifying a transaction by creating a complicated mathematical puzzle for people on the Internet to solve. The reward is a valuable Bitcoin. The idea behind proof-of-work is that with so many experts throwing so much

computing power into competing to be the first to solve the puzzle, there's no room for fraud or security breaches.

The impact of cryptocurrency data centers on electric utilities

That idea might seem outlandish, but it's worked well enough that the proof-of-work market is valued at more than \$10 billion and is expected to grow to more than \$67 billion in the next three years.

With the popularity of cryptocurrency, the proof-of-work technique calls for tons of electrically-powered computing capacity. Bitcoin miners often try to locate their data centers near a water supply to use as a coolant to keep the computers from overheating. Miners are also flocking to areas where electricity rates are low, and regulation is likely to be less burdensome.

Critics say Bitcoin mining could strain water resources, raise local electric rates and harm the environment with massive energy use.

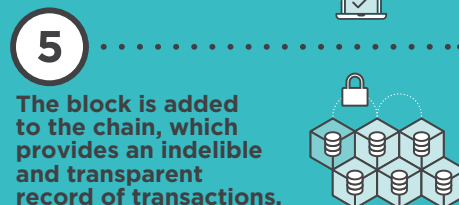
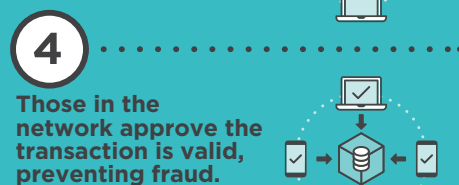
But Bitcoin defenders cite the economic development benefits to a local economy. They also say data miners try to locate data centers where green energy is available—near hydroelectric dams or solar and wind power sites.

Bitcoin mining could potentially benefit electric utilities by making more efficient use of electricity. Data centers use power 24/7, including at night when excess electricity is available. And since the data centers aren't supplying a life-or-death service, Bitcoin miners might be willing to accept a lower electric rate in return for having their power interrupted during times of peak electricity use.

The controversy over data mining's use of electricity could be resolved another way. Bitcoin's biggest competitor, Ethereum, has changed its verification system from proof-of-work to something called “proof-of-stake.” It's a similar technique that doesn't require solving a puzzle, which reduces energy use by more than 90%.

#5792

VALIDATION PROCESS OF CRYPTOCURRENCY



Source: “Blockchain and Transactive Energy” report, NRUFCF

Some analysts predict proof-of-stake will eventually replace proof-of-work in the industry, all but eliminating the debate over electricity use. Others see proof-of-work sticking around, citing its greater security advantages as well as the fact that a lot of well-established Bitcoin miners won't want to abandon a system that's working for them.

Whether cryptocurrency continues to use enormous electricity or finds less energy-intensive techniques will determine the future of a very young and very strange data mining industry. ■

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.

October – **THANKSGIVING FAMILY FAVORITES**;
November – **CHRISTMAS TREATS**; December – **SOUPS**

CHEESY ZUCCHINI SPAGHETTI

For the crust:

- 4 c. packed, shredded zucchini (about 3-4 small/medium zucchini)
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 large eggs
- ½ c. freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese

Sauce + cheese:

- 1 to 1 ⅓ lbs. lean ground beef or ground turkey
- ½ c. finely chopped onion
- ½ tsp. salt
- Pinch black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 tsp. dried basil
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 28 oz. can crushed tomatoes
- 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place the zucchini in a colander, set in the sink or on a plate and sprinkle with salt. Toss. Let the zucchini stand for 10-20 minutes. Using your hands, get right in there in the colander and squeeze handfuls of shredded zucchini until the excess moisture is wrung out (basically, until it doesn't drip like crazy when you squeeze handfuls together). You should have about 2 c. (345 grams) of shredded zucchini when you're done. Place the shredded zucchini in a medium bowl. Add the eggs, Parmesan and mozzarella cheeses and stir with a rubber spatula until well combined. Lightly grease a 9x13-in. (or slightly smaller) baking dish with cooking spray. Press the zucchini mixture firmly and evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake for 20 minutes. While the zucchini bakes, heat a 12-in. nonstick skillet over medium heat and add the ground beef, onion, salt and pepper. Cook the ground beef, breaking into smaller pieces, until no longer pink. Drain excess grease. Add the tomato paste, basil and oregano. Stir and cook over medium heat for 30 seconds or so until sizzling. Stir in the crushed tomatoes and simmer for 5-6 minutes. Remove the casserole from the oven. Pour the meat sauce over the top. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese and return to the oven and bake for 15-20 minutes until bubbling. Let rest for 5-10 minutes before serving.

■ *Abby Edminster, Postville*

CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI BREAD

- 2 c. sugar
- 3 eggs
- 3 c. shredded zucchini
- 2 ½ c. flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 c. oil
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla
- ½ c. cocoa
- ¼ tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon
- 1 12 oz. bag semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 c. pecans (optional)

Directions

In a large mixing bowl, beat together the sugar and oil. Add eggs and vanilla and mix well. Add dry ingredients that have been sifted together and stir until moist. Stir in zucchini. Add nuts and chocolate chips just before pouring into bread pans so they don't settle to the bottom. Pour into greased loaf pans and bake for 1 hour or more at 350°. Check bread with a toothpick. Remove from pan and cool.

Note: I use 2 large loaf pans and also have enough batter for about 6 muffins. Bake muffins for a shorter time. Can also use mini chocolate chips if you prefer.

■ *Nancy Moon, Monona*

CUCUMBER SALSA

- 3-4 c. peeled and diced cucumbers (remove seeds if too large)
- 1 can Rotel
- ¼ c. apple cider vinegar
- 1 pkg. ranch
- 1 medium red onion
- A little sugar (optional)

Directions

Combine all ingredients together to taste. Serve cold with Scoop chips.

■ *Nancy Strauser, Harpers Ferry*

BATCH SALSA

- 20 c. chopped red ripe tomatoes
- 10 c. seeded chopped green peppers
- 10 c. chopped onion
- 2 12-oz. cans of tomato paste
- 1 ½ c. seeded hot peppers (mild to medium salsa)
- 1 ½ c. white 5% vinegar

- 6 Tbsp. minced garlic from the jar
- 6 Tbsp. cilantro
- 6 Tbsp. canning salt

Directions

Combine all ingredients in large sauce pot and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer. Add 2 (12 oz.) cans of tomato paste to thicken. Pour into hot jars, leaving ¼ in. headspace. Makes about 14 pint jars.

■ *Jeanne Kruckenberg, Postville*

BROCCOLI-CAULIFLOWER SALAD

- 1 bunch broccoli
- 1 head cauliflower
- ½ c. green onions, chopped
- 10 slices bacon, fried and crumbled
- ½ c. raisins
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 c. mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. vinegar

Directions

Chop broccoli and cauliflower into small pieces. In a small bowl, mix sugar, vinegar and mayonnaise. Pour over vegetables. Add remaining ingredients. Best if refrigerated overnight.

■ *Jeanne Kruckenberg, Postville*

BACKYARD BBQ SAUCE

- 20 c. chopped, cored, peeled tomatoes
- 2 c. finely chopped onions
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp. hot pepper flakes
- 1 Tbsp. celery seeds
- 1 ½ c. lightly packed brown sugar
- 1 c. white vinegar
- 1/3 c. lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. ground mace
- 1 Tbsp. dry mustard
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon

Directions

Combine tomatoes, onions, garlic, pepper flakes and celery seeds in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, stir constantly. Reduce heat, cover and boil gently until vegetables are soft, about 30 minutes. Working in batches, press mixture through a large-hole sieve or food mill, or coarsely puree in a food processor. Discard seeds. Return mixture to saucepan and boil, stirring occasionally, until cooked down by one-quarter. Add brown sugar, vinegar, lemon juice, salt, mace, mustard, ginger and cinnamon. Return to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat and stir frequently, until mixture is thickened to the desired consistency, about 30 minutes. Prepare stockpot/canner and jars in the meantime, as directed in step-by-step instructions. Ladle hot sauce into jars, leaving ½ in. headspace. Remove air bubbles; re-measure headspace. If needed, add more sauce to meet recommended headspace. Wipe rim; center lid on jar. Screw band until fingertip-tight. Process filled jars in boiling water for 20 minutes. Remove stockpot lid. Wait 5 minutes, then remove jars, cool and store.

■ *Angela Winters, Nashua*

FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

ACEC has hidden three Service Location numbers within this newsletter. The numbers are from different regions of our service area – **one is worth a \$10 bill credit, and two are worth a \$5 bill credit if found.** The service location number must be yours to claim the credit, and you need to notify us when you find it.



CONTACT ACEC

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229 Highway 51 • PO Box 715
Postville, IA 52162

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LOCAL 563-864-7611

TOLL-FREE 888-788-1551

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In an effort to help Postville elementary students start the academic year strong, ACEC recently collected and donated school supplies to Cora B. Darling Elementary School. The donation helped area students prepare for the first day of school on August 23.

Pictured are, from left, front row – Tonya Vagts, kindergarten; Meghan Brincks, third grade; Lisa Acevedo, first grade; Susan Goodman, ACEC; Sandy Williams, ACEC; back row – Karen Miller, special education; LaRae Schutte, Title I; Jennifer Schutte, Principal; Kennedy McShane, fourth grade; Steve Gehling, ACEC; Brenda Hackman, ACEC; Marissa Davis, fourth grade.