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NOVEMBER 2024

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Morgan Spykerboer, a Lyon REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

THE POWER OF FACE-TO-FACE ADVOCACY

BY ETHAN HOHENADEL



It's not just what you say, but how you say it. Delivering a message in person, rather than by phone or email, can have a profound

impact on how the message is received. One way the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) achieves this goal is by coordinating legislative fly-ins to Washington, D.C., twice a year.

Each spring and fall, a group of directors and senior staff from Iowa's electric cooperatives journey to our nation's capital to meet with Iowa's congressional delegation and their staff. These face-to-face meetings provide us with valuable opportunities to discuss priorities and issues facing the rural Iowa members and communities we serve.

Fly-in facilitates important conversations

During our recent September fly-in, our group of 20 Iowa co-op advocates met with all six members of Iowa's congressional delegation. We voiced our concerns about recent cuts to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant (REDLG) program and how vital these funds are to retaining and creating jobs in rural Iowa.

Iowa's electric co-ops lead the nation in utilizing the REDLG program to spur economic development in the small towns and rural areas we serve. We encouraged our senators and representatives to support efforts to restore REDLG funding in 2025 with intentions to maintain optimal funding levels in 2026.

We also asked our elected officials to support reasonable permitting reform to allow utilities to build sorely needed electric transmission

capacity more quickly. Finally, we shared our objections to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new power plant rules, which threaten the reliability and affordability of electricity for the Iowans we serve. We join America's electric cooperatives in opposing the EPA's power plant rules on the grounds that they are unlawful, unrealistic and unachievable.

In-person meetings make a powerful impact

Investing time and resources to meet with our elected officials in person makes a powerful impact. They appreciate face time with constituents, and we value the opportunity to talk with them and their staff in-depth about energy and economic issues. As the trade association for Iowa's electric cooperatives, IAEC is actively involved in educating our state and federal legislators on energy issues.

How you can join our grassroots efforts

We also engage with our legislators and policymakers on the grassroots level through our Iowa Rural Power advocacy efforts. As a member-consumer of an Iowa electric cooperative, we invite you to join this group and receive updates on rural Iowa energy and economic issues that may impact your community. Learn more at www.IARuralPower.org or search for "Iowa Rural Power" on social media.

Iowa's locally owned and governed electric cooperatives are committed to our mission of powering lives and communities. Maintaining positive relationships with our elected officials and policymakers is just one way we work hard to ensure safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity.

Ethan Hohenadel is the director of policy and advocacy for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN AN iROBOT ROOMBA VAC!

Your chore list just got shorter. The Roomba Vac Essential robot is a vacuum loaded with cleaning essentials and powered by iRobot OS. Its cleaning system has three levels of powerful suction for a custom clean on carpets and hard floors.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than Nov. 30. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win.

There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified.

The winner of the Toro Leaf Blower from the September issue was **Norman Harrison**, a **Consumers Energy** member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY NOV. 30!

LIHEAP APPLICATION PERIOD IS OPEN

The 2024-2025 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel and type of housing.

Besides meeting the income guidelines, you must furnish the Social Security numbers of all household members and a copy of recent heating and electric bills. You also must show proof of income for all household members age 18 and older. If you receive alimony or child support, it will need to be verified too.

If you're a wage earner, you should bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period before the date of application or a copy of your federal income tax return. If you're self-employed or a farmer, provide a copy of your most recent federal income tax return. And if you're on a fixed income – Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program (FIP), Veterans Assistance, Unemployment Insurance and pensions – take copies of check stubs from the last 30 days. For FIP recipients, bring your current DHS Notice of Decision or contact your local office for acceptable document information.

In Iowa, applications for the program will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis from Nov. 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025. The start date is Oct. 1, 2024, for elderly (60 and over) and/or disabled applicants. If you're not sure where to apply, visit <https://bit.ly/2024-25liheap>. To contact your local community action agency, call 211 or write: LIHEAP, Iowa Department of Health & Human Services, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, IA 50319.

STATE OF IOWA AWARDS \$190,000 TO STRENGTHEN RURAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS IOWA

Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Economic Development Authority recently announced that \$190,000 in grants have been awarded to 10 rural Iowa communities through three Empower Rural Iowa Grant programs. The grant awards will support rural initiatives, including housing, child care and business/community growth.

“Rural communities are at the heart of who we are as a state, and we're committed to ensuring they continue to grow and prosper,” Gov. Reynolds says. “These grant opportunities will provide the tools that leaders and innovators need to build vibrant communities in all corners of the state, making Iowa an even better place to live, work and raise a family.”

Five cities – Denison, Durant, Hampton, Jefferson and Iowa Falls – each received a \$20,000 Rural Housing Readiness Assessment Grant to study housing needs through a partnership with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

The Rural Child Care Planning Grant was awarded to four recipients



(Cities of Holy Cross and Spencer, Rock Rapids Kids Club and Hardin County Conservation) to support the use of data and analysis – in partnership with the national nonprofit organization First Children's Finance – to determine the specific needs and solutions for their area.

In addition, a \$10,000 grant was awarded to Keokuk County Economic Development through the Building Ownership & Organization by Strengthening Teams program. The grant aims to assist passionate community and business leaders in developing intentional plans for next-step growth.

ENTER TO WIN

WIN \$100 FOR A PUBLISHED COVER PHOTO





We're always looking for stunning images for the cover of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine. If we select your photo for a cover, we'll award you with \$100. The photos must be clear, of an Iowa place served by an electric cooperative and in high resolution. To be considered, email photos to editor@ieclmagazine.com with “Cover Submission” in the subject line.





CHRISTMAS TREE PET SAFETY



As fun and festive as the holiday season may be, it can be a confusing and dangerous time for our pets. Decorations pose unique risks and that includes Christmas trees. If your celebration includes setting up a tree, take precautions to keep pets safe.

8 ways to pet proof your Christmas tree

-  Opt for plastic or wooden ornaments instead of glass, which can break and cause injury.
-  Toss out the tinsel – it can cause severe damage to your pet's intestinal tract if ingested.
-  String lights and power cords can cause oral burns and electric shock if chewed. Hang them near the top of the tree or skip them altogether.
-  Sweep up pine needles, which can cause gastrointestinal issues or a foreign body obstruction if too many are swallowed.



-  Cover up the tree stand to prevent pets from drinking the water, which can contain pesticides, fertilizer or bacteria.
-  Anchor your tree to the wall or ceiling to prevent pets from knocking it over.

-  Avoid using edible decorations to reduce temptation.
-  Don't put wrapped gifts under the tree, especially if there's food inside. Keep presents in a safe place until it's time to open them.

Source: Schwarzman Animal Medical Center

DID YOU KNOW?

STATEWIDE OUTAGE MAP

 www.iowarec.org/outages

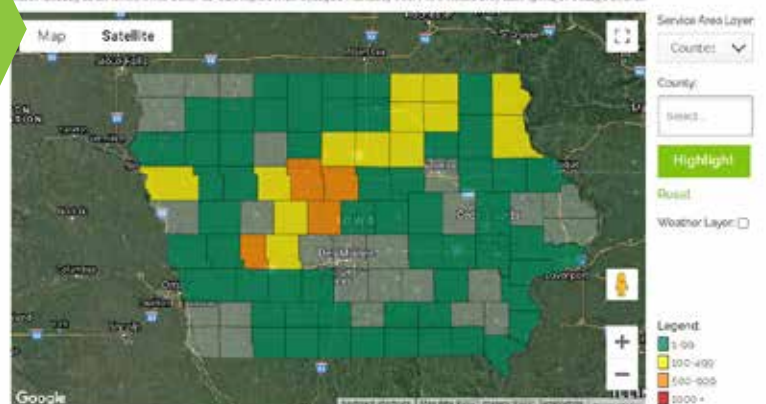
The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) maintains a statewide outage map. The map refreshes automatically every 15 minutes and shows outage data that is reported by IAEC member cooperatives. Most electric co-ops report outages automatically while a few co-ops report outages manually every few hours only during major outage events.

For information regarding specific outages or to report your outage, always contact your local electric co-op directly. It's also important that your local co-op is notified if your phone number or other contact information changes.

OUTAGE MAP

7276 Electric Cooperative Member-Consumers Without Power

This map refreshes automatically every 15 minutes. For information regarding specific outages or to report your outage, contact your local electric cooperative. This map simply shows outage data that is reported by IAEC member cooperatives. Some electric co-ops report outages automatically at all times, while other co-ops report their outages manually every few hours only during major outage events.



Outage map the morning after a historic weather event, which included tornadoes and excessively high winds.

If you see downed power lines, stay away from the lines and poles. Always assume the lines are energized and report any damage to your local electric cooperative.

ANSWERING THE CALL

IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES SUPPORT HURRICANE HELENE RESTORATION EFFORTS

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN

Photo Source: Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative

In the wake of Hurricane Helene, which devastated parts of the southeastern U.S., Iowa's electric cooperatives answered the call for assistance, demonstrating the true spirit of the co-op principle of Cooperation Among Cooperatives. This massive Category 4 storm left an estimated 1.25 million electric cooperative members without power, with the Carolinas suffering the most severe damage. Hurricane Helene has been the deadliest hurricane in the Atlantic so far this year, killing at least 228 people. Amid the destruction, Iowa's electric cooperatives quickly mobilized to support their fellow cooperatives in South Carolina, bringing manpower and essential equipment to help restore power in the hardest-hit areas.

Iowa's mutual aid response

Hurricane Helene was one of the most destructive storms ever to hit the co-op community, particularly in South Carolina, where more than 425,000 cooperative members lost power. Responding to an urgent

request for help, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) coordinated the deployment of 10 crews made up of 40 linemen, 10 bucket trucks and 10 digger trucks from 11 Iowa co-ops. These crews were crucial to the restoration efforts in the Palmetto State.

On Sept. 29, as power outages spread across South Carolina, the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina reached out to Scott Meinecke, IAEC's director of safety and loss control, for help. Six Iowa electric cooperatives – **Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative, Farmers Electric Cooperative (Greenfield), Linn County Rural Electric Cooperative, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative** and **T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative** – responded immediately by sending five full crews to assist Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative.

"In Southern storm terms, a crew is four to five men, one digger

with pole trailer and one bucket truck," Meinecke explains.

The next day, with the scope of the damage becoming clearer, South Carolina issued a second request for more assistance. In response, four more Iowa co-ops – **Clarke Electric Cooperative, Consumers Energy, Midland Power Cooperative** and **Western Iowa Power Cooperative** – deployed an additional 16 linemen, four bucket trucks, four diggers and four pole trailers to assist Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative.

Meeting unprecedented challenges

The damage caused by Hurricane Helene was described as one of the most catastrophic in South Carolina's history. The storm snapped more than 5,000 power poles, downed thousands of power lines, and left many areas inaccessible due to fallen trees and flooding. In the hardest-hit regions, particularly those served by Little River Electric Cooperative, 99% of members

lost power. Restoring service in these areas posed significant challenges, with some regions facing weeks of outages.

Despite these challenges, Iowa's electric cooperatives continued to send help. **Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative** and **Midland Power Cooperative** dispatched crews to assist Little River Electric Cooperative in restoring power to the approximately 10,000 meters still without service.

The cooperative spirit in action

The work Iowa's electric cooperatives undertook in South Carolina is part of a broader, nationwide effort to assist regions hit by natural disasters. The response to Hurricane Helene was no different. Crews from 23 states were involved in the restoration effort in South Carolina alone, with more than 3,200 lineworkers working around the clock.

MiEnergy Cooperative, an electric co-op serving members in Iowa and Minnesota, also sent a team of linemen and a bucket truck through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, extending Iowa's reach beyond direct coordination with South Carolina.

This vast mobilization of resources was instrumental in restoring power to over 363,000 consumers in South Carolina, with only 7% of the cooperative members still without power by the end of the first week of recovery efforts.

The restoration work included clearing debris, replacing snapped poles and repairing broken lines – often



Photo Source: Linn County REC



Photo Source: Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative



Photo Source: Midland Power Cooperative



Photo Source: Western Iowa Power Cooperative

dangerous and grueling work. Crews operated in flooded areas, navigated around downed trees and worked long hours in harsh conditions.

Support and gratitude

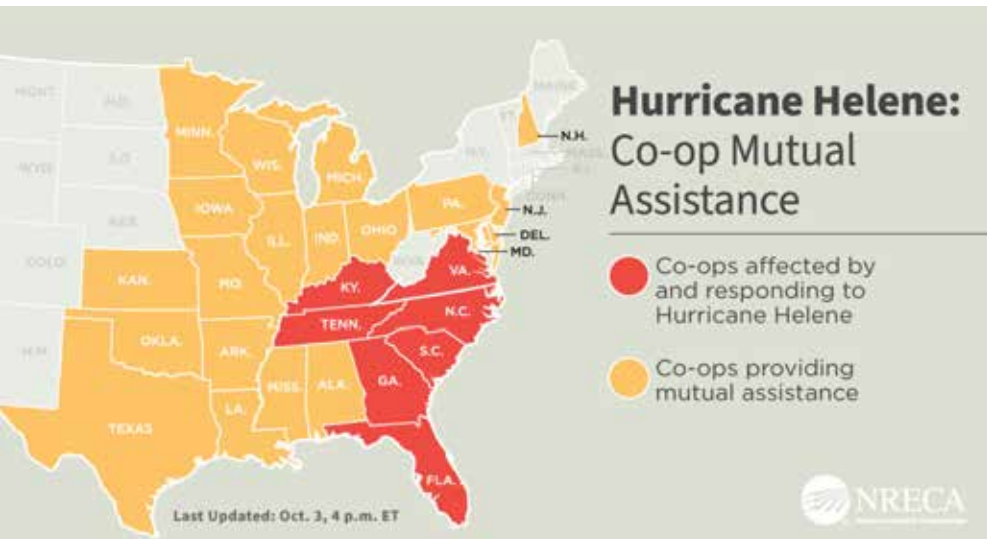
These efforts were not unnoticed. South Carolina's co-op leaders expressed deep gratitude for the help they received from Iowa and

other states. Mike Couick, CEO of the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the lineworkers, stating, "Our folks are doing everything they can to help by restoring power as quickly as possible to the communities that remain out. Our work won't stop until the very last light is back on."

Back in Iowa, IAEC and its member co-ops kept their communities informed through updates on social media and encouraged their followers to keep the linemen in their thoughts and prayers as they worked to restore power to South Carolina's residents.

Iowa's linemen, alongside thousands of others from across the country, have shown that when disaster strikes, the cooperative network stands ready to help – no matter how far they have to go to lend a hand.

Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.



THANKSGIVING

SIDE DISHES



APPLES & YAMS

- 2 large yams
- 2 apples
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon corn starch
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ cup orange juice
- 3 tablespoons pecans or walnuts, chopped water

Fill a large saucepan with water and boil unpeeled yams for 30 minutes, until tender but firm. Cool yams enough to handle, then peel and slice crosswise, ¼-inch thick. Core and slice apples ¼-inch thick. In a shallow 1-quart baking dish, overlap the apple and yam slices. In saucepan, combine brown sugar, corn starch and cloves. Add orange juice and blend. Cook over low heat, stirring until sugar dissolves and sauce thickens. Pour sauce over apples and yams. Sprinkle with nuts and bake at 375 degrees F for 20 minutes.

Karen Caldwell • Albia
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

CORNBREAD BAKE

- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 can cream style corn
- 1 can whole corn, undrained
- 8 ounces sour cream
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 small box cornbread mix

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Pour mixture into a lightly greased 9x9-inch pan or baking dish. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees F for 55-60 minutes. Serve warm. Serves 8

Kristine Frakes • Melrose
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

SCALLOPED CHICKEN DISH

- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 13 ounces evaporated milk
- 1 quart chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 chicken, cooked and boned
- 2 cups celery, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 4 cups croutons
- 2 teaspoons sage
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Mix eggs, soup, milk, broth and butter. Add chicken, celery, onions, croutons and seasonings. Bake covered at 375 degrees F for 1½ hours. Serves 15

Jana Overholtzer • Russell
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

CREAM CHEESE MASHED POTATOES

- 5 pounds potatoes
- 1-2 cups sour cream
- 6-8 ounces cream cheese
- 2 teaspoons onion salt
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter
- shredded cheese, optional

Peel, cube and cook potatoes. Mash potatoes and add remaining ingredients, mix well. If potatoes are too stiff, add a little milk. Shredded cheese can be mixed in or put on top. Freezes well. Serves 8

Ranita Gehman • North English
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE WITH PRALINES

- 6 cups sweet potatoes
- 1½ cups sugar
- 3 teaspoons vanilla, divided
- 2 sticks butter, softened, divided
- 2 eggs
- 1¾ cups brown sugar
- 2 cups pecans, chopped
- 1 cup flour

Cook, drain and mash sweet potatoes. Mix with sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 1 stick butter and eggs. Spread in greased 9x13-inch pan. Mix brown sugar, 2 teaspoons vanilla, pecans, 1 stick butter and flour. Sprinkle on top of casserole. Cover with foil and bake at 350 degrees F for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 15-25 minutes, until heated through and topping is browned. *Serves 12-24*

Amber Wetzel • Linden
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

SWEET POTATO CRANBERRY CASSEROLE

- ½ cup flour
- ½ cup oatmeal
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 2 17-ounce cans yams, drained
or 4 cups sweet potatoes, peeled, cut and cooked
- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- mini marshmallows, optional

Combine flour, oatmeal, brown sugar and cinnamon. Cut in butter (can substitute margarine). In a large bowl, combine yams (or sweet potatoes) with 1 cup of the crumb mixture and cranberries. Place in 2-quart casserole dish. Top with remaining crumb mixture. Bake covered at 350 degrees F for 35 minutes. If desired, uncover and top with marshmallows and cook an additional 5 minutes or until marshmallows are browned.

Laurie Thompson • Parnell
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

BEANS ROYALE

- 1 21-ounce can pork and beans
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon dry mustard
- ¼ teaspoon chili powder
- ⅛ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon minced onion
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 14.5-ounce can chopped tomatoes

Combine all ingredients in a 2-quart casserole dish. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20 minutes. For more tang, substitute dry mustard with liquid mustard. *Serves 6-8*

Joanne Fox • Sioux City
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

SCALLOPED POTATOES WITH MUSHROOMS

- 1 can coconut milk
- 1 can water (using coconut milk can)
- 1 cup raw cashews
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon Maggi seasoning sauce
- ½ cup nutritional yeast
- 6 potatoes, peeled, thinly sliced
- 1 can mushrooms, chopped small
- 1 medium sweet onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon parsley flakes

In a blender, add the first seven ingredients and blend until smooth, creating a sauce. Pour ⅓ of the sauce in bottom of a 9x11-inch pan. Layer half the potatoes, mushrooms and onions in pan. Cover with ⅓ of the sauce. Layer remaining potatoes, mushrooms and onions. Cover with remaining ⅓ of the sauce. Sprinkle parsley flakes on top. Bake covered at 350 degrees F for 1 hour, until potatoes are tender. The thinner the slices, the quicker they will cook. Uncover and bake for an additional 15 minutes or until the top is light golden brown. *Serves 6*

Jacque Minikus • Pisgah
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

WANTED:

SEAFOOD RECIPES

THE REWARD:
\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is Nov. 30

Submit your **favorite recipes using seafood**. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.



EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com
(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

MAIL: Recipes
Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48
Des Moines, IA 50322



BEST SMART HOME TECH ON A BUDGET

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

With all the buzz around smart technology, you may be asking yourself how to get the most bang for your buck. Smart technology can make it easier to save energy by simplifying or automating tasks. It can also optimize energy use to reduce waste and improve efficiency.

When upgrading to smart technology at home, consider the purchase cost and long-term savings. For example, you may pay a little more for a product with the latest technology, but it could result in significant savings each year and over the lifetime of the appliance.

Consider these smart devices that will take the work out of saving energy.



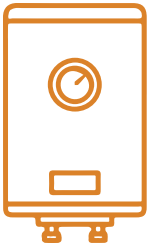
Smart thermostats

Smart thermostats save energy by automatically adjusting

your heating or cooling system. For example, you can save as much as 10% a year on heating and cooling costs by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for eight

hours a day, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

You can program a smart thermostat to change the temperature while asleep or away or use a smartphone app to adjust the settings. Some models use artificial intelligence to maximize efficiency by learning your patterns and preferences. Prices range from \$80 to \$250, depending on features. Smart thermostats do not work with all heating and cooling systems, so check compatibility before you buy.



Water heaters

Your water heater can also be controlled for energy savings. According to the DOE, installing a timer on your electric water heater can

save 5% to 12% of the energy it uses by turning it off at night and when you don't need to use hot water.

If you are already planning to replace your electric storage water heater with a heat pump water heater, consider a model equipped with smart technology features, including Wi-Fi capabilities for controlling it remotely or during peak demand times, viewing the amount of hot water available and tracking energy use. There are a variety of modes, including vacation, efficiency, and high demand, which produces more hot water. Some models can notify you or shut off if a leak is detected. Depending on the manufacturer and size of the unit, a smart heat pump water heater may only cost a few hundred dollars more than a standard heat pump water heater.



Smart lights, switches and plugs

Smart lighting gives you the power to remotely control lights in your home or set a lighting schedule

that fits your lifestyle. This can be beneficial for energy savings and provide home security benefits. If you or other household members are notorious for leaving lights on, smart lighting can help. Numerous features are available, including dimmable bulbs and color-changing effects.

Smart light switches are another budget-friendly way to control lighting. They're priced from about \$10 to \$50. Smart switches with dimmable options are available and can also control ceiling fans. Some have occupancy sensors that turn lights off when no movement is detected in a room.

A smart plug fits into any outlet to control whatever is plugged into it. Set it to automatically turn off and

on or control it using a smartphone app. Prices range from \$8 to \$25.



Smart controls

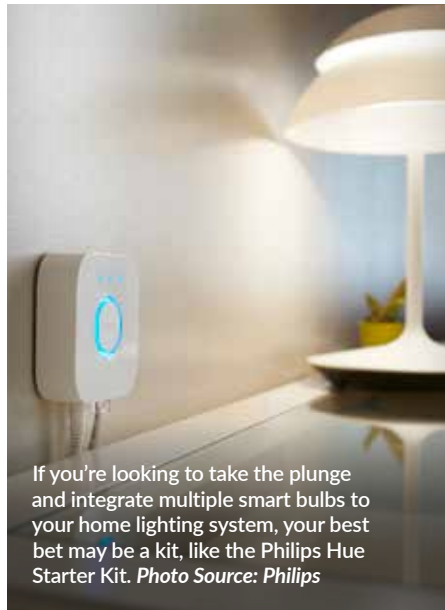
A wide variety of smart shades, curtains and blinds are available, including styles with integrated controls. You can also

add smart controls to your existing blinds or curtains. Both options allow you to adjust the tilt of blinds and open or close curtains. Set a schedule, control them remotely or use a voice command paired with a voice

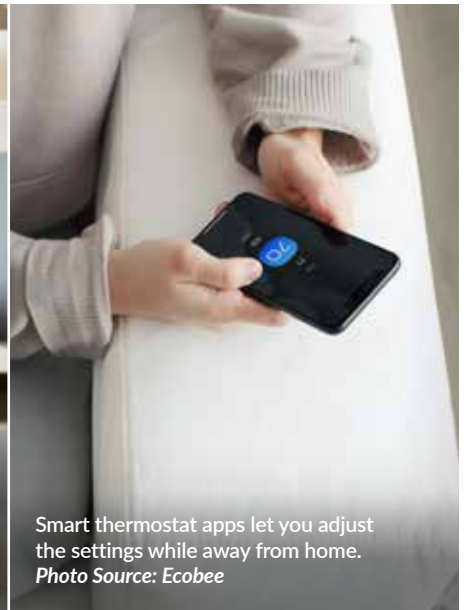
assistant, such as Alexa or Google Home. This allows you to reduce cooling needs in the summer and heating needs in the winter. Smart controls start at around \$70. To save the most energy, prioritize windows with the most incoming light.

Upgrading to smart home technologies can make using less energy at home easy. Choose options that make the most sense for your lifestyle to optimize savings.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



If you're looking to take the plunge and integrate multiple smart bulbs to your home lighting system, your best bet may be a kit, like the Philips Hue Starter Kit. *Photo Source: Philips*



Smart thermostat apps let you adjust the settings while away from home. *Photo Source: Ecobee*



Smart heat pump water heaters have automation features that help you use less energy. *Photo Source: Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance*

FIND HIDDEN ENERGY SAVINGS AND EXTRA STORAGE IN YOUR ATTIC

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

If you're looking for hidden energy savings in your home, start at the top. A common hiding spot for energy savings is the attic. It is also a common location for storing holiday decorations and sentimental items that aren't frequently used.

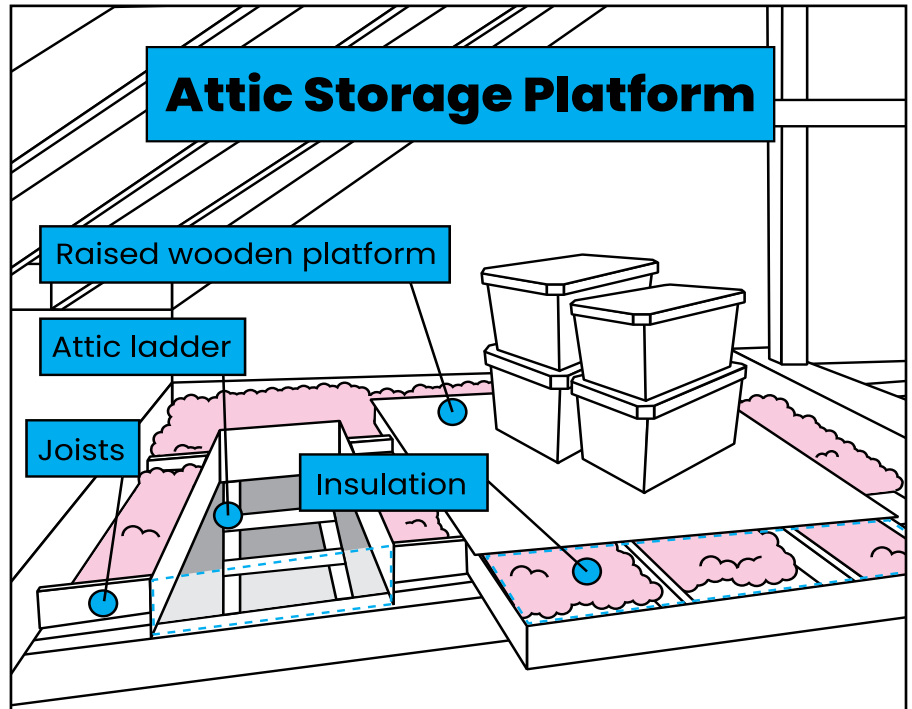
Yet, using your attic for storage can be problematic when trying to maximize your home's energy efficiency. Let's explore how you can improve insulation levels and properly store items in your attic.

Year-round benefits

Attic insulation is one of the best low-cost ways to make your home efficient. People often associate insulation with keeping your home warmer in the winter, but it also provides benefits in the summer. Insulation reduces heat transfer from the attic to the house, which lowers energy bills for air conditioning and makes your home more comfortable.

Attic insulation is measured in R-value, which is a measurement of how well a material resists the flow of heat. For attic insulation, thicker is better. The recommended R-value is typically between R-38 and R-60, depending on your climate. For attics without insulation, R-60 is recommended for Iowa. If you already have 3 to 4 inches of insulation, then R-49 is recommended. In most homes, the ceiling joists are buried in insulation to achieve the recommended R-value.

The problem with attic storage is it typically doesn't offer enough space for the recommended R-value. Often, plywood or boards are placed directly on top of the ceiling joists, which doesn't allow enough space for the insulation. Insulation can get compacted by people moving items in or out, reducing the effective R-value.



Ideas for attic storage without comprising insulation

Ideally, the attic would not be used for storage so that it can be properly insulated, but that's not feasible for everyone. Here are some strategies for maintaining attic storage and recommended insulation levels.

The best location for attic storage is over an unconditioned area of your home, such as the garage. You don't need insulation in attic spaces over a garage or unconditioned area because you are not heating or cooling the space below. This makes it the perfect spot to tuck away items for storage.

If that isn't an option, consider minimizing the number of stored items or the storage area's footprint. A great way to do this is by building an attic storage platform. A raised platform allows the space underneath it to be fully insulated.

These platforms are available in ready-to-install kits, or you can buy materials and build them yourself.

Allow enough space underneath the platform to achieve the proper R-value. Use lumber to build a frame perpendicular to the existing joists and cover it with plywood or oriented strand board. Once your storage area is set up, add insulation inside the platform to bring the R-value up to the proper level.

Your attic might also have trusses that allow you to build shelves and maximize space by storing items vertically.

Always wear a dust mask or respirator when working in the attic. Don't forget to weatherstrip the attic hatch to ensure a tight seal.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

WELCOME HOME SOLDIER HONORS ALL VETERANS

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN

“Amidst the uncertainties of war, every soldier is entitled to one certainty. That he or she will not be forgotten or abandoned.” - Unknown

The sacrifice of all veterans has shaped America into the greatest nation on Earth. Each has selflessly served to protect the freedom and values our nation’s flag represents. Veterans deserve recognition every single day, which is the goal of the awe-inspiring Welcome Home Soldier memorial.

Located just outside the city limits of Albia, it is a peaceful and honorable place where all soldiers are welcomed home. It is carefully designed to represent the ideals and values of the nation and create a setting where friends, family and visitors can honor veterans for their service.

“The healing that goes on here is unbelievable. We hear stories every day of people visiting and being moved by the experience,” says Jim Keller, who originated the project in 2005 and remains involved on the Welcome Home Soldier board.

The seven-acre outdoor monument is of national magnitude. It includes a variety of incredible monuments and statues, such as a Wall of Honor with the names of veterans etched into granite, Humble Hero Hill with 100 American flags, a bronze Iwo Jima statue, a bronze Vietnam War statue, a Korean War statue, a statue of a soldier playing taps and three white marble battlefield crosses. In 2025, a women’s monument will be established.

“The three battlefield crosses are especially meaningful. They represent the 21-gun salute, which is the highest honor you can bestow upon a soldier,” Keller explains. “They are also in honor of the 125,000 soldiers buried overseas that we will never get to be welcomed home.”



Inspired by a simple thanks

Keller is an Albia native who served a tour of duty in the Vietnam War.

About 30 years after returning from the war, Keller read a book by Gerald Coffee, an American Prisoner of War in Vietnam. The book compelled him to reach out to the author, which led to a face-to-face meeting. Upon introductions, Coffee said: “Thank you for your service and welcome home, soldier.”

Keller later realized it was the first time someone had thanked him for his service. That powerful moment inspired him to create a monument where all veterans – living and deceased – would be recognized and welcomed home.

To bring the idea to life, Keller worked with a group of local veterans and an architect to draw up plans for the monument. Monroe County offered the land for the project at

no cost under a 28E agreement, which established an honored place in the heart of Iowa and the nation.

“You’ve got to have a commitment and love for it; everything else falls into place,” Keller says.

Welcome Home Soldier has raised more than \$3.7 million in donations to date. As a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, all donations are tax deductible and the lifeline of the monument. The community has embraced it and it is led by a board of veterans, supported by a diverse advisory board, and professional legal and financial consultants.

Vision for ongoing community involvement

Currently, organizers ask everyone to consider honoring a veteran by adding names to the granite “Wall of Honor” for a \$200 donation.

Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.

From volunteering to fundraising, individuals can support the monument in various ways. To learn how to get involved, visit www.welcomehomesoldiermonument.com.

CONFERENCE PROVIDES ENERGY EFFICIENCY RESOURCES TO TRADE PROS

In today's world, sustainability and energy efficiency have become paramount in the construction industry. Iowa's electric cooperatives invite building trades professionals to the **2025 Momentum is Building (MIB) conference**, scheduled for Feb. 20-21, 2025, at the Sheraton West Des Moines. The annual conference aims to equip contractors and their staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to excel in a rapidly changing construction landscape.

According to the 2023 National Association of REALTORS® Sustainability Report, 63% of real estate professionals recognize the value of promoting energy efficiency in property listings. Homebuyers increasingly prioritize features that reduce carbon footprints and lead to long-term utility savings.

Iowa's electric cooperatives serve as a source of information and provide expertise to help members save energy and lower their electric bills. Educating Iowa home builders and contractors about the latest energy-efficiency innovations is another way electric co-ops assist members in reaching their energy goals. For more than 30 years, the annual conference, sponsored and organized by the Iowa Cooperatives for Energy Efficiency, has connected Iowa's construction industry with the local services and resources available from Iowa-based electric cooperatives, which serve nearly 650,000 Iowans across 99 counties.

MIB serves as a resource to provide the information area contractors need to design and improve homes that are energy-efficient, healthy, comfortable and affordable.

For more information about the conference or to register, visit www.momentumisbuilding.com or contact your local electric cooperative.



Momentum is Building conference

Feb. 20-21, 2025
Sheraton West Des Moines



MIB ALLOWS ATTENDEES TO:

- **Stay ahead of the curve.** Get the latest insights on industry trends, green building best practices and innovative construction technologies. Earn valuable Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for electricians, plumbers and HVAC professionals.
- **Gain insights.** MIB keynote speaker Bill McAnally, a long-time friend and energy-efficiency expert in Iowa, will look back at energy-efficient homebuilding and the lessons learned.
- **Learn about sustainability.** Discover energy-efficient products and practices and chat with the experts who market and sell products and services that can save money, attract more clients and contribute to a greener future.
- **Network.** Connect with fellow contractors, builders, energy-efficient product specialists and industry experts. Share experiences and foster valuable partnerships.

LEADERS' VISION HONORS VETERANS

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

I always enjoy hearing from *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* readers. One reader, Carolyn, asked if I could share more information about the history of the renovated Community Memorial Building in my hometown of Lake City.

The idea for this exceptional building took root in the wake of World War I. The Community Memorial Building was built in 1919-1920 to honor local military members and provide a multipurpose facility for the community's use.

The philosophy of project supporters was: "That the dead not be forgotten, and that the living be honored, was the purpose of this memorial. Not cold, gray marble shafts, but a place where all may meet and enjoy the blessings saved for us by the boys in blue and khaki."

Local women spearheaded this ambitious project. The Lake City Civic Improvement Society led the campaign to build the \$85,000 structure. That equates to more than \$1.5 million in 2024 dollars!

I chuckle whenever I read this comment from a 1921 edition of the *Dearborn (Michigan) Independent* newspaper, which ran a feature story on Lake City's Community Memorial Building. "The Lake City Civic Improvement Society is the peppiest organization in town.

There are nearly 250 members of this society from the town and surrounding country. The strange part of it is, they are all women."

Hiring the best of the best

The Community Memorial Building was no ordinary place. Des Moines-based Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, Iowa's foremost architectural firm at the time, designed the two-story, brick structure. This firm also designed the Memorial Union at Iowa State University (ISU), and courthouses in Polk County and Greene County.

Neumann Brothers Inc., which is still in business today, built the Community Memorial Building. Neumann Brothers also built the Equitable Building in Des Moines (the first skyscraper in Iowa), the Cowles Library at Drake University, and ISU's Memorial Union, which honors students and alumni who died during World War I.

Lake City's Community Memorial Building opened to the public on Armistice Day in November 1920. The gala celebration included speeches, building tours, a three-act musical comedy called "Miss Bob White," and a football game between the Lake City and Rockwell City American Legions.

Through the years, local veterans' groups have met at the Community Memorial Building. Countless events have also been hosted in this iconic building.



Major renovations transformed the Community Memorial Building in 2020-21.

Vision: the difference between success, failure

About five years ago, a group of community leaders led a fundraising campaign to support an extensive renovation of the Community Memorial Building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. I was fortunate to attend the November 2021 re-dedication of this architectural gem and community center as it continues to honor members of the military and veterans.

Today, you can rent this elegant venue for wedding receptions, meetings and other events. Each time I step inside, I'm reminded of the wisdom of Sir Winston Churchill, who noted, "We shape our buildings; thereafter, they shape us."

Those women who proposed the idea for the Community Memorial Building so long ago knew this. So did the writer of "Community Building: A Great Necessity," which appeared in the May 1, 1919, edition of the *Lake City Graphic*: "The difference between success and failure is often a difference in vision. To accomplish any material thing, an insight into the future is essential. People must have a vision to gain inspiration. Communities grow in proportion to their vision."

Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at www.darcymaulsby.com.



Lake City's Community Memorial Building opened to the public on Armistice Day in November 1920.



For more than a century, the Community Memorial Building has been a centerpiece of the community.

Visit our website at www.ieclmagazine.com



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