

DEC. 2024



# ILEC NEWS

IOWA LAKES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

We wish you a joyous holiday season and a happy New Year! Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative will be closed Dec. 24-25 and Jan. 1 in celebration of the holidays.



## DEFINED ELECTRIC SERVICE AREAS PROTECT RURAL IOWANS

BY LESLIE KAUFMAN, executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), we are constantly monitoring issues that could impact the people and rural communities served by Iowa's electric cooperatives. Our state's 2025 Legislative Session will begin on January 13 and IAEC will prioritize efforts to ensure Iowa's law regarding defined service areas is not undermined. I'd like to explain why this law has been so crucial to our mission to serve cooperative member owners.

### WHAT ARE DEFINED SERVICE AREAS?

In Iowa, your location determines which electric utility will serve you. This regulatory protection is called defined electric service territory and the State of Iowa wrote Senate File 1258 into law almost 50 years ago to efficiently ensure that every square foot of our state has an electric utility obligated to provide service upon request.

### WHY DO IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES SUPPORT DEFINED SERVICE AREAS?

Electric cooperatives are committed to safeguarding defined service areas because they protect rural Iowans by supporting affordable electric rates, fostering a resilient electric grid and encouraging economic development.

Defined service areas provide a high degree of certainty to Iowa's electric cooperatives which allows us to confidently make long-term investments in power generation to maintain affordable rates, finance major grid upgrades to ensure resiliency and utilize new technologies to enhance service. Electric cooperatives can also be proactive in maintenance and vegetation management to improve reliability for the homes, farms and businesses we power every day.

Additionally, defined service areas allow electric cooperatives to robustly support economic development efforts in the communities we serve, which retain and create local jobs and provide needed services and tax revenue.

Any efforts to remove or weaken Iowa's defined service areas could result in higher electric bills and decreased reliability for Iowans. This issue is non-negotiable for Iowa's not-for-profit electric cooperatives, which are mission driven to power lives and empower communities by providing electricity that is safe, reliable and affordable.

Since the 1990s, several states have deregulated their electric utilities, but the hopes that competition would result in lower rates and improved reliability have not materialized. In fact, according to a 2023 New York Times investigation, "Deregulation has resulted in increased rates/fees in every state where it has been introduced." The report goes on to conclude that "On average, residents living in a deregulated market pay \$40 more per month for electricity." This outcome is unacceptable for the Iowans we serve.

We invite you to learn more about this issue at [www.ProtectRuralIowa.com](http://www.ProtectRuralIowa.com) where you will also find links to research and studies on deregulation. Your locally owned electric cooperatives are working hard to safeguard defined service area protections that have benefitted Iowans since 1976.



SCAN QR CODE TO LEARN MORE OR VISIT [PROTECTRURALIOWA.COM](http://PROTECTRURALIOWA.COM)

## \$1,000 BASIN ELECTRIC SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

Dependents of members of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship to be provided by Basin Electric Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative, wholesale power suppliers of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative.

The scholarship program is designed to encourage and recognize the achievements of a student living on electric cooperative lines.

The scholarship must be used for educational costs and the student must enter college in the fall of the school year for which the scholarship is given. The applicant must be a student who is enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

### APPLY NOW

For an application, contact Bobbi Jo at 800-225-4532, ext. 6729, [bobbijor@ilec.coop](mailto:bobbijor@ilec.coop) or visit [www.ilec.coop](http://www.ilec.coop). Application deadline is January 31, 2025.

# Simple Ways to Save in the Kitchen



**Q:** How can I save in the kitchen during the most expensive time of the year?

**A:** The holiday season brings opportunities to enjoy meals with friends and family, leading to spending more time in the kitchen.

Whether hosting a few or a crowd, consider making new energy efficiency traditions this year with these tips to manage your energy use.

Let's start with cooking your meal. Your electric oven is typically the highest-wattage appliance in the kitchen. Yet, people usually don't turn their ovens on for long periods of time. Assuming an average oven wattage of 3,000 and an average cost of \$0.16 per kilowatt-hour, according to the United States Energy Information Administration, it costs \$0.48 an hour. Let's say you use your oven for four hours to make a special meal. That's less than \$2 of electricity. While that may not seem like a big deal now, operating your oven for four hours every day is \$700 a year.

Using smaller appliances instead of your oven can help you save. A slow cooker uses between 100 and 450 watts, which is significantly less than an electric oven at 2,000 to 5,000 watts. That means you can use a slow cooker for a longer period and still use less energy.

Opt for your microwave or toaster oven to reheat or cook smaller items. The microwave uses significantly less energy than the oven. A toaster oven uses about half the energy of a conventional oven, according to Energy Star®.

You also want to avoid turning on your oven and leaving the door open to heat your home. This can break your oven and be a safety hazard, especially with gas ovens that can cause carbon monoxide buildup.

When cooking on the stovetop, match the pot or pan size to the burner. Lids help your pots retain heat, which cooks food faster and wastes less heat. Keep your stovetop clean to ensure the appliance heats evenly.

If you're looking to upgrade your stovetop, consider switching to an induction cooktop. It uses an electromagnetic field below the surface to heat pots and pans directly. This provides more precise heat, faster cook times and higher efficiency. It can also improve the air quality in your home when compared to a gas cooktop.

In my experience, people like to gather in the kitchen during parties. To avoid overheating your guests in a room that has a hot oven, turn your thermostat down a few degrees before guests arrive.

Next, let's look for refrigerator savings. The gaskets on your refrigerator doors should make a tight seal to keep in cold air. Make sure you clean and maintain them or replace them if necessary. Don't let frost build up in the freezer, which can decrease efficiency and make your freezer work harder to maintain a balanced temperature.

Wait until food cools before putting leftovers in the fridge. Putting hot food in the refrigerator results in more energy used to cool it down. Aim for about 30 minutes of cool time. Perishable food



should be refrigerated within two hours after it is cooked, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Setting your refrigerator colder than needed wastes energy. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends 37 degrees for the refrigerator and 0 degrees for the freezer. Use an appliance thermometer to monitor the temperature.

When it comes to cleanup, run full loads of dishes in the dishwasher--being careful not to block any moving parts. Use eco mode if your dishwasher has that setting. If you are in the market for new appliances, select Energy Star® models.

Whatever you choose to cook or how you cook it, keep in mind these simple tips to make your kitchen more efficient and save energy this holiday season.

**Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative**  
The Power of Many, Working as One!

Visit us online at [www.ilec.coop](http://www.ilec.coop)  
Phone: (800) 225-4532  
Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Member Name:** JOHN DOE  
**Account #:** 99999999

**Billing Date:** 12/31/2023  
**Current Bill Due Date:** 01/15/2024

Previous Balance	\$120.00
Payment Received	\$10.00
Adjustments	\$5.00
Balance Forward	\$10.00
Current Charges	\$111.21
<b>Total Amount Due</b>	<b>\$136.21</b>

**Due Date:** 01/15/2024

**Important Messages:**  
Stop by our booth at the Clay County Fair September 7-15. Visit with the employee team about energy efficiency rebates, electric water heaters and other programs available. Our booth is located in the Tower Gate Pavilion. Don't forget the coupon from the August newsletter to receive a gift.

## EXCITING UPDATE!

In January, we're rolling out a fresh new look for our bills! Expect a cleaner design, clearer information and enhanced features to make your billing experience even better. Stay tuned for more details in our January newsletter.

**Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

**OFFICE HOURS:** 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Mon- Fri).  
Contact Iowa Lakes 24 hours/day, 7 days/week:  
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