



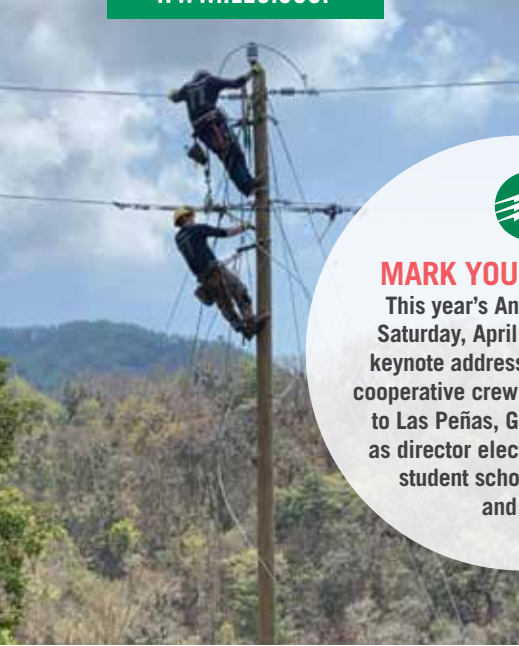
IOWA LAKES  
ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE

# ILEC NEWS

Quarterly publication for member-owners

WINTER 2024 - 2025

WWW.ILEC.COOP




**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**  
This year's Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 12 will feature a keynote address from the electric cooperative crew who brought power to Las Peñas, Guatemala, as well as director elections, door prizes, student scholarship awards and more!



## Powering a Brighter Future for the People of Las Peñas, Guatemala

Imagine a life without daily access to electricity. Tasks we take for granted—brewing coffee, enjoying a hot shower, washing clothes, maintaining a comfortable home, preserving food, cooking meals, or simply lighting a room—would become incredibly difficult or even impossible without reliable electric service.

This was a reality in rural America until electric cooperatives began forming in the 1930s and 1940s, bringing power to communities that had been left in the dark while cities thrived with the conveniences of electricity. Today, most of us are generations removed from those days, but for 14 linemen from electric cooperatives in Iowa and Minnesota, the experience of transforming lives through rural electrification became very real.

Join us on Saturday, April 12 at the Clay County Regional Events Center in Spencer to hear the full account of the crew's experience and their appreciation for the opportunity to make a difference in Las Peñas. Through their efforts, they were not just building power lines—they were helping to light up a future full of new possibilities for an entire community.

[→ Read full story on page 8](#)



PRESIDENT/CEO, RYAN CRAIG

**A**s we continue our mission to provide reliable and affordable electricity, I want to share key factors shaping our cooperative's future and the steps we're taking to address them. I understand that rate adjustments are never welcome news, but by communicating proactively, we can navigate these changes together with clarity and purpose.

### **Rising Power Supply Costs: A Changing Energy Landscape**

The electricity market is changing rapidly, driven by multiple factors including fuel costs, infrastructure investments, and the ongoing push for cleaner energy sources. These shifts have led to an increase in power supply costs across the industry. As your

## **NAVIGATING THE ROAD AHEAD: Understanding Power Supply Costs, Grid Resiliency, Defined Electric Service Areas and the 2025 Rate Adjustments**

cooperative, we remain committed to balancing these external cost pressures while delivering the dependable energy our member-owners rely on.

### **Building Grid Resiliency for a Reliable Future**

In addition to managing costs, we are investing in grid resiliency to better withstand the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Strengthening of our infrastructure includes modernizing equipment, upgrading distribution lines, and enhancing emergency response systems.

While these upgrades are essential for maintaining reliability and safety, they also contribute to rising operational costs. Our focus is to ensure that our system is prepared for the challenges of tomorrow while meeting today's energy needs.

### **Defined Electric Service Areas: Certainty for Communities**

In Iowa, the location of your home, farm, or business determines which electric utility serves you. This framework, known as "defined electric service territory," was established nearly

50 years ago under Senate File 1258. It ensures that every part of the state is served by a utility provider.

Defined service areas provide your cooperative with the certainty needed to make long-term investments in power generation, major grid upgrades, and new technologies to enhance service. They also allow us to be proactive in maintenance and vegetation management, improving reliability for the homes, farms, and businesses we power.

Additionally, defined service areas enable us to actively support local economic development efforts, creating and retaining jobs, enhancing community services, and contributing to local tax revenues.

### **Informed Decisions Through a Cost of Service Study**

To guide our decision-making, we are in the process of a comprehensive cost of service study to evaluate the true cost of delivering power. This analysis helps ensure that rates are equitable, sustainable, and reflective of current economic conditions and infrastructure needs.

While the findings are not yet final, despite cost-control efforts, rising power supply and resiliency costs make a rate adjustment probable. By aligning rates with the cost of service, we can maintain the safety, reliability, and affordability of your energy supply.

## Looking Ahead: 2025 Rate Adjustments

As we approach 2025, we are finalizing plans for a rate adjustment. Although specific details are still in development, we are committed to fairness and transparency. Our goal is to ensure every member understands the reasons for the adjustment and how it will impact them.

We are also exploring and evaluating strategic initiatives to minimize the impact on member-owners, including our load management program, energy efficiency advice, system peak notifications, and supporting members in optimizing energy use. These efforts can help mitigate increased costs and ensure that our Cooperative remains both financially sound and member focused.

## Keeping You Informed and Engaged

Our Cooperative has been proud to avoid any rate increases since 2018, reflecting our commitment to operational efficiency and cost control. However, as we plan for a necessary 2025 rate adjustment, we are focused on keeping our members informed every step of the way.

We will provide regular updates and resources to help you understand your bills, explore energy-saving opportunities, and gain insight into our Cooperative's financial health. This transparency is key to ensuring you feel confident and engaged in how we manage and deliver your energy services.

I sincerely appreciate your trust and engagement as we navigate this process. Your feedback and questions are always welcome—because we are more than just a utility; we are a community. Thank you for your continued support as we work to balance our mission of providing safe, reliable, and cost-effective service with the challenges of a changing energy landscape.

# Powering Lives, Empowering Communities: THE IMPACT OF IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Iowa's electric cooperatives are proud to be owned by the members we serve. For more than 85 years, we've been committed to providing power that is safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable.

Electric cooperatives cover more than two-thirds of the state's land mass and maintain enough power lines to wrap around the equator two and a half times – that's close to 62,000 miles! Electric cooperatives serve almost 240,000 households, farms and businesses throughout the state, which means we power the lives of approximately 650,000 Iowans throughout all 99 counties.

We serve primarily rural areas of the state and we are mission driven to improve quality of life for our member-owners. We adhere to seven core principles that guide all cooperatives:

- 1. VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP:** The cooperative is open to any persons who are able and willing to join, accept responsibility as a part of the organization and can use the organization's services.
- 2. DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL:** Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.
- 3. MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:** Member-owners contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.
- 4. AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE:** The member-owners of the cooperative determine everything it does, which allows the cooperative to function independently.
- 5. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION:** Cooperatives provide education and training for their member-owners, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives.
- 6. COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES:** Cooperatives serve their member-owners most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
- 7. CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:** While focusing on member-owner needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities.

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative's mission is to provide safe, reliable, competitively-priced energy and other valuable services to benefit our members, our customers and the communities we serve.



Members of Iowa electric cooperatives met with Iowa's Congressional Delegation in Washington, D.C. this fall.

## ADVOCACY IN ACTION: IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES DISCUSS PRIORITIES WITH LEGISLATORS IN D.C.

**A**s part of our cooperative commitment to advocacy, Iowa's electric cooperatives regularly coordinate meetings with state and federal legislators through the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC). The week of September 23, approximately 20 electric cooperative representatives traveled to Washington, D.C., to talk with federal legislators face to face.

"Going to our nation's capital is a valuable opportunity for our Iowa Rural Power grassroots efforts to shine. Iowa's electric cooperatives care deeply about the member-owners and communities we serve and it's important to meet with elected officials to discuss issues that affect our ability to provide reliable and affordable power," remarked Leslie Kaufman, executive vice president of IAEC.

Iowa electric cooperative advocates were able to meet with every member of the

Iowa Congressional Delegation, including Senator Ernst, Congressman Feenstra, Senator Grassley, Congresswoman Hinson, Congresswoman Miller-Meeks and Congressman Nunn. Specifically, cooperative representatives expressed concerns about recent cuts to the USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant (REDLG) program. Through REDLG, USDA provides grant funds to local utility organizations, often including local electric cooperatives, which use the funding to establish revolving loan funds. Loans are made from the revolving loan funds to local businesses and projects that will create or retain rural jobs. Iowa cooperative advocates urged the Iowa Congressional Delegation to support the House version of the REDLG markups, which would partially restore REDLG funding for FY25, with intentions to return to optimal REDLG funding levels in FY26.

During the legislative visits, Iowa

electric cooperative advocates also highlighted continued threats to the reliability and affordability of power in the wake of the Environmental Protection Agency's recent mandates on power plants. America's electric cooperatives oppose the EPA's power plant rules on the grounds that they are unlawful, unrealistic and unachievable.

Additionally, IAEC coordinated briefings from the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the USDA and CoBank and to learn more about emerging trends and issues impacting Iowa cooperative member-owners.

We appreciate the service of Iowa's elected officials and the tireless work of their staff who help look out for Iowans in the Halls of Congress. The next planned trip for Iowa Rural Power advocates will come in the spring of 2025. Learn more about Iowa Rural Power grassroots advocacy at [IARuralPower.org](http://IARuralPower.org).

# YOUTH TOUR: ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS APPLY NOW FOR LEADERSHIP TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative will send 2 students on an all-expenses paid Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., June 15-21, 2025. Both students will also receive a \$500 college scholarship!

One way we invest in the next generation of rural Iowa leaders is by participating in the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program. Your Cooperative is looking for high school juniors with a passion for government and public service to apply for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to our nation's capital in June.

Two students from within our service territory will be selected from eligible candidates to attend the 2025 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., from June 15-21 along with 40 other student leaders from Iowa. The Iowa Youth Tour group will join with hundreds of students from across the country as they learn more about electric cooperatives and American history, coming home with a greater understanding of their role as American citizens. On the trip, students learn about the U.S. government, meet members of Congress and take in the sights of D.C. as they visit monuments, museums and historical landmarks. Students who go on Youth Tour often call it the trip of a lifetime!

All high school juniors within your Cooperative's service territory are eligible to apply, not only dependents of member-owners. Contact Bobbi Jo at 800-225-4532 ext. 6729 or [bobbijor@ilec.coop](mailto:bobbijor@ilec.coop) for an application. The application deadline is March 14, 2025.

For more than 65 years, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives have been sending deserving students to D.C. This program is a great resume builder for student leaders and a wonderful opportunity to kickstart one's passion for government affairs or advocacy.



**Students  
can apply  
now for a  
trip to our  
nation's  
capital from  
June 15-21!**



Area high school students interested in government and public service are encouraged to apply! Learn more at [IowaYouthTour.com](http://IowaYouthTour.com)

➔ **Make sure to apply for  
Youth Tour 2025 by March 14!**

# IOWA'S POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES: ACRE/FORE

Iowa's electric cooperatives have two political action committees (PACs). The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association coordinates "Action Committee for Rural Electrification," or ACRE. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives oversees FORE, or "Friends of Rural Electrification."

Contributions to ACRE/FORE are for political purposes and are divided between the two organizations and all contributions are strictly voluntary. Both ACRE/FORE are bipartisan and the funds are used to assist candidates who support the interests and goals of electric cooperatives. These legislators will control the direction of our industry, communities, state and nation in the years to come. Influencing who these leaders are is crucial to our future.

## ACRE - Action Committee for Rural Electrification (National Political Action Committee)

- Assists electric cooperative supporters in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives
- Provides bipartisan support
- Seeks Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative's approval before contributing to Iowa members of Congress
- Sometimes gives more ACRE funds to members of Iowa's congressional delegation than were actually contributed by Iowans

## FORE - Friends of Rural Electrification (The State of Iowa Political Action Committee)

- Assists candidates at the state level and state legislators who have shown support of electric cooperatives
- Assists candidates for some statewide elected offices
- Provides bipartisan support
- Does not fund presidential candidates
- Relies on a 14-member committee to allocate funds. The committee is made up of the IAEC board of directors and a representative from each of the association's districts.
- Committee membership represents both political parties
- Contributes to state political parties for use in state legislative races
- Allows Iowa's electric cooperatives to participate in legislative functions

Thank you for your support as Iowa legislators deserve our support who support Iowa's electric cooperatives. For more information, please contact Elliott Gebel, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives by email: [egebel@iowarec.org](mailto:egebel@iowarec.org) or phone: 800-798-7037, ext. 206.



**Please complete and mail with your check payable to REC/PAC to: Elliott Gebel, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

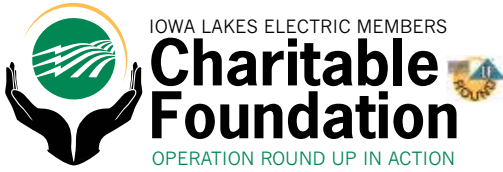
Cooperative: **Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative**  
 Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Profession/Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my personal check made payable to REC/PAC, to help support those political candidates who believe in the rural electric cooperative program.

**Please check one of the following:**

- Supporting Member \$35
- Sustaining Member \$50
- Century Club Member \$100
- Ambassador Club Member \$250
- Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- FORE President's Club \$500 (\$400 Iowa; \$100 ACRE)
- ACRE President's Club \$500 (\$250 Iowa; \$250 ACRE)

Contributions to the NRECA Action Committee for Rural Electrification\* (ACRE\*) are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. Contributions to ACRE are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. You have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Any contribution guidelines presented are merely suggestions. You are free to contribute more or less than the suggested amounts, or not at all. NRECA will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount contributed or a decision not to contribute.



# QUARTERLY REPORT

Directors of the Iowa Lakes Electric Members Charitable Foundation reviewed 4 grant applications and awarded \$12,250 to three organizations during its quarterly grant review process in October 2024. Following a review of grant applications, the directors approved the following grants shown below.

The Foundation’s Board of Directors meets quarterly to review the grant applications. The grant applications are available on Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative’s website ([www.ilec.coop](http://www.ilec.coop)) or at our

headquarters office in Estherville.

Operation Round Up is a strictly voluntary program where member-owners round up their electric bills to the next nearest dollar and those monies are used to assist worthy causes and organizations in your local communities. Donations are tax deductible and both monthly and year-to-date donations are printed on the member’s monthly billing statement.



**\$5,000**

## AURELIA KIWANIS CLUB

The Aurelia Kiwanis Club received a \$5,000 grant for a walking path addition. Iowa Lakes Electric Members Charitable Foundation Board Member Lynn Winterhof (far left) presented the check to the Aurelia Kiwanis Club members.



**\$5,000**

## EMMETSBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Emmetsburg Community Development received a \$5,000 grant to purchase equipment for the Soper Park Splash Pad. Iowa Lakes Electric Members Charitable Foundation Board Member Ruth Brown (far left) presented the check to the members of the Emmetsburg Community Development.



**\$2,250**

## THE BRIDGE OF STORM LAKE

The Bridge of Storm Lake received a \$2,250 grant for an exterior painting project. Iowa Lakes Members Charitable Foundation Board Member Dan Sievers presented the check to the team at The Bridge of Storm Lake.



**APPLICATION DEADLINES:**  
**JANUARY 1, 2025**  
**APRIL 1, 2025**  
**JULY 1, 2025**  
**OCT. 1, 2025**

## JOIN US APRIL 12, 2025 FOR YOUR COOPERATIVE'S ANNUAL MEETING



**“What a memorable and humbling experience – I’m not sure words could ever articulate what we experienced.”**  
 - Brian Reidy,  
 East Central Iowa REC

### 2025 Annual Meeting Keynote Address

## POWERING A BRIGHTER FUTURE IN LAS PEÑAS, GUATEMALA

Recently, 14 linemen from electric cooperatives in Iowa and Minnesota traveled to Las Peñas, a remote village in Guatemala, to bring electricity for the first time. Partnering through their statewide associations and NRECA International, the team worked together to build a brighter future for the villagers. NRECA International, affiliated with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, has been coordinating efforts like this since 1962, empowering over 220 million people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America through electrification projects.

Before the linemen arrived, there were no power lines serving the village. The local municipal utility set poles for the team, and they immediately got to work stringing 3.5 miles of primary wire by hand—without the benefit of modern equipment like bucket trucks. Rain was a constant challenge, making the team appreciate the maintained roads back home. Hunter Venz of Prairie Energy Cooperative in Clarion reflected on the

difficulty: “The biggest challenge would be praying for no rain. If it rains, you will not get to the village without walking... and who knows where you would have to park. The road is only built for tractor, horse, mules... it was built 3 weeks before we got here.”

Electricity provides access to safer cooking and lighting, easier chores, safer food and water, a higher quality education, better healthcare, and more. By participating in these international electrification projects, we connect even more deeply with our cooperative mission of powering lives and empowering communities.

Join us at the Annual Meeting to hear the full account of the crew’s experience and their appreciation for the opportunity to make a difference in Las Peñas. Through their efforts, they were not just building power lines—they were helping to light up a future full of new possibilities for an entire community.

### JOIN US FOR A FREE BREAKFAST, GREAT SPEAKERS AND PRIZES!

Join us on Saturday, April 12 at the Clay County Regional Events Center in Spencer! Breakfast will be served from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m., followed by the business meeting starting at 9 a.m. The event will feature a keynote address from the electric cooperative crew who brought power to Las Peñas, Guatemala, as well as director elections, door prizes, student scholarship awards, and more! Please note that scholarship applicants must be present to win.





# \$30,000



## IN COMBINED SCHOLARSHIP GIFTS WILL BE AWARDED TO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!

Your Cooperative will once again be awarding scholarships to high school seniors through its Community Commitment Scholarship Program. The program is a result of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative’s dedication and commitment to community and education.

## SCHOLARSHIPS WILL BE AWARDED BY RANDOM DRAWING AT THE 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

All qualified and registered high school seniors in attendance will be awarded either a \$1,000, \$750 or \$500 scholarship. Recipients will be selected at random during Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative’s 2025 Annual Meeting. Students must be present to win.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE SCHOLARSHIPS?

Dependents of member-owners and employees of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative are eligible.

- Must be a U.S. citizen.
- Must be a senior in high school for the 2024-2025 school year and planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school
- Please reserve your seat by submitting the RSVP to Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative by April 4, 2025. Complete your registration at the scholarship table the morning of the Annual Meeting.

## WE’D LOVE YOUR RSVP, BUT NO PRESSURE!

Planning to attend? Please RSVP to help us prepare. Not sure if you can make it? No problem! You’re still welcome to show up and register at the door to be eligible for scholarships. We’ll be glad to see you either way!



### RESERVE YOUR SEAT BY SUBMITTING THE RSVP BELOW BY APRIL 4, 2025

I understand I must be present at the 2025 annual meeting to be eligible for an award.

Students must be a U.S. citizen, a dependent of a current Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative member-owner or of an employee, a senior in high school for the 2024-2025 school year and planning to enroll in an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Father’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Month/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and address of the accredited school you plan to attend in the fall:

School\College: \_\_\_\_\_

College Town\City: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Course of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

**Completed RSVP can be mailed or emailed to Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative office by April 4, 2025.**

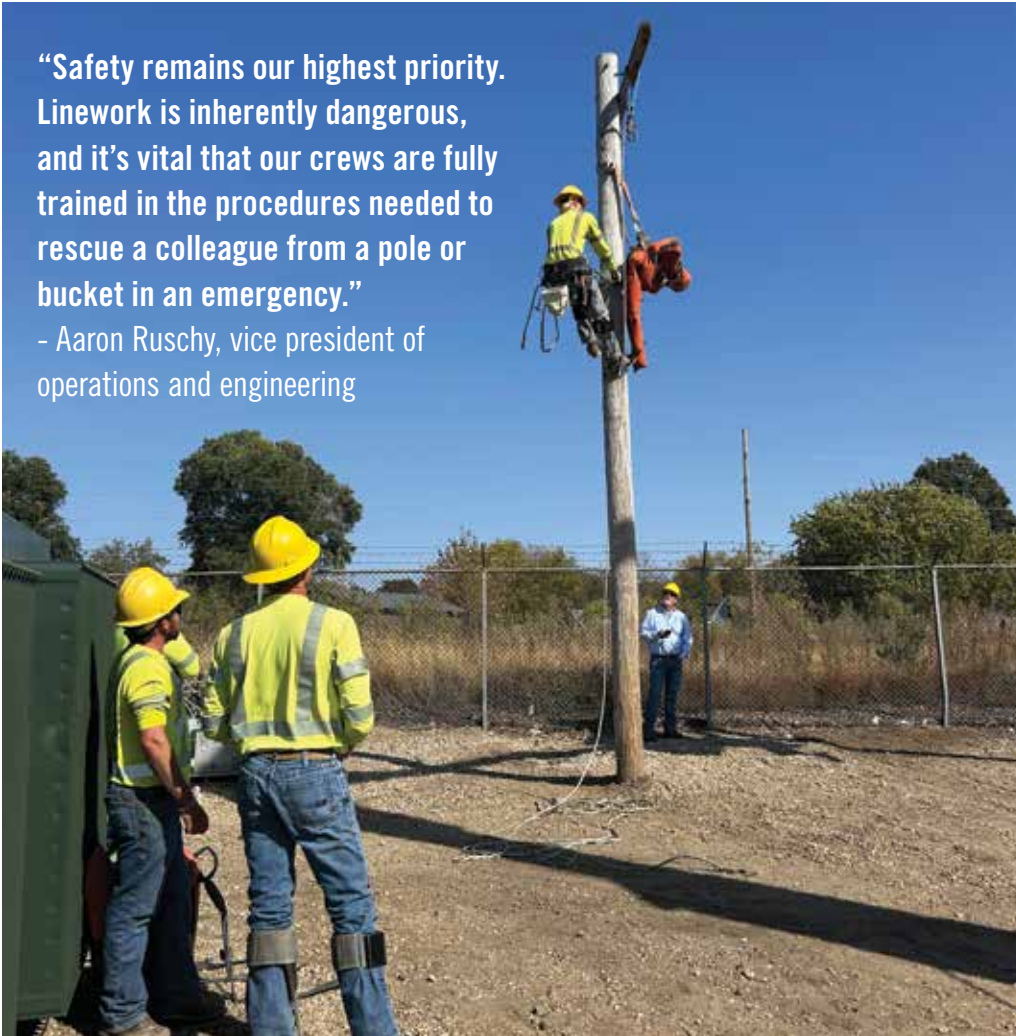
**Mail:**  
Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative  
Attn: Lindsay Steffen  
702 South 1st St.  
Estherville, IA 51334

Email: [ilec@ilec.coop](mailto:ilec@ilec.coop)

## POLE TOP AND BUCKET TRUCK RESCUE CERTIFICATION

“Safety remains our highest priority. Linework is inherently dangerous, and it’s vital that our crews are fully trained in the procedures needed to rescue a colleague from a pole or bucket in an emergency.”

- Aaron Ruschy, vice president of operations and engineering



**D**uring the October safety meeting, your Cooperative’s lineworkers participated in pole top and bucket truck rescue training. The annual certification focuses on speed and safety. Line crews demonstrate how to use their bucket trucks, ropes and climbing gear to remove an injured victim from atop a utility pole.

As part of the certification, each lineworker must call for help utilizing the proper mayday procedures, put on their pole climbing gear and climb the pole. Once at the top, the lineworker secures a 200-pound mannequin using a rope and block. Then they lower the mannequin down the pole, safely climb down themselves and provide emergency first aid and care.

Lineworkers are also required to obtain certification in bucket truck rescue. They practice operating the bucket controls from the ground, safely lowering the bucket. In the event of a real mayday call, they would pull the injured victim out of the bucket and administer first aid and CPR.

Each lineworker must complete both rescue procedures in four minutes or less to maintain their certification.

### WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEE, CARSON HOFFMAN

CARSON HOFFMAN joined the Emmetsburg line crew in October 2024. Hoffman graduated from Emmetsburg High School and furthered his education at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon for Powerline.



## Grand Champion 4-H Market Hog Breaks Record at Sale of Champions



Above: Mara White, of Estherville, pictured with Wade Brueggeman, vice president of pork production operations at Tyson Foods. Tyson Foods was among those that purchased her Grand Champion 4-H Market Hog at the new record price of \$61,500.

IFAA held their annual Sale of Champions, which aids in raising money for their student scholarship program, on August 17. The sale brings in all 16 youth exhibitors receiving Grand Champion and Reserve Champion in their respective species 4-H & FFA shows. Across the 16 exhibitors the sale raised \$669,000, of which 75 percent of the proceeds go to the exhibitors, and 25 percent of the dollars go back to the foundation.

This year there were eight sale records broken, with one being the Grand Champion 4-H Market Hog. The hog was exhibited by Mara White of Estherville and sold for \$61,500. The Reserve Grand Champion 4-H Market Hog sold for \$32,000 and was exhibited by Joe Stien of Watkins.

Mara is the daughter of member-owners, Brad and Jill White.

Source: Iowa Pork Producer- September 2024 Issue

## County pork producer Marla Conley was inducted into Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame

**M**

arla Conley has made a notable impact in the Cherokee County 4-H program and continues today to make a positive effect within the 4-H program and the Cherokee County Fair.

Since the beginning of Marla's 4-H career, she has always lived by the 4-H tenets of Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, while serving her community still today. Marla was a Cherokee Comets, Cavaliers, and Boys 4-H Club member. In addition, she was a member of the 4-H County Council and Northwest Iowa Area 4-H Council.

Marla has won many project awards along with awards in Leadership, Citizenship, Agriculture, and the exceptional honor of winning the I Dare You Award. She has won Champion Senior Showmanship with her lambs, horses, and beef projects.

Marla has been the 4-H swine superintendent for the Cherokee County Fair for many years and has helped with building improvements and the installation of the swine pens. Marla is also a very intricate part of the educational aspect of the Kids and Pigs program at the county fair. She rarely misses a 4-H or fair activity.

Marla Conley comes from generations of 4-H believers. She is a true believer of 4-H still using her Head, Heart, Hands, and Health to serve her community. Marla epitomizes the spirit of dedication, community service, and commitment that the 4-H Hall of Fame represents.



Marla Conley from the Cherokee County Pork Producers is inducted into the Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame.

Source: Iowa Pork Producer- September 2024 Issue

SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.

# MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT WITH SMARTHUB!

Are you new to SmartHub? SmartHub is ILEC's user-friendly software that allows members to manage their electric accounts from a web portal (desktop) or a mobile device. Through SmartHub, members are able to pay bills (manually or automatically), sign-up for and receive outage and email notifications, sign-up for paperless billing and monitor electric usage (current and historical). Members can also manage their contact information in SmartHub.

## WHAT IS NEEDED TO REGISTER FOR SMARTHUB?

ILEC members will need an email address and your account number. Your account number can be located on your bill. To register for SmartHub, or to learn more, visit [www.ilec.coop](http://www.ilec.coop).




## SMARTHUB CHECKLIST:

- Registration:** You'll need your email address and account number. Your account number can be found on your latest bill.
- Consider signing up for **Paperless Billing:**  
*This can be activated during your account registration.*
- Download the SmartHub app** from the Apple or Google Play app store.  
*Search for "SmartHub" in the app store and install on your device.*
- Consider signing up for **Auto Pay**, using debit/ credit card or bank draft.  
*Click on "Bill & Pay" and then click on "Auto Pay Program" link.*
- Set up **notifications via email or text message.**  
*Under the Notifications menu, click "Manage Contacts" to add email and/or phone number(s). Enter verification code to activate. Click on "Manage Notifications" to set up email and/or text alerts using the contact info entered.*


For assistance or more information about SmartHub, please contact ILEC at 800-225-4532 or visit us online at [www.ilec.coop](http://www.ilec.coop).






## AUTOMATIC PAYMENTS

Experience the convenience of securely automating your monthly bill. Our SmartHub Auto Pay option is a simple, easy to use solution to manage your monthly bill.





Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative  
The Power of Many, Working as One!  
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Visit [www.ilec.coop](http://www.ilec.coop) for more information!

# SECURE YOUR PROPERTY WITH HEARTLAND SECURITY

Heartland Security offers a cost-effective, reliable solution to help protect your home, family, business, and valuables. When you request a free quote, our local security specialists will visit your location to customize a security system to meet your needs.



## COMPREHENSIVE INTRUSION PROTECTION

Our intrusion protection systems are designed to detect unauthorized entry into your home or business. We offer a variety of sensors, including door, motion, and glass break sensors. For pet owners, we provide pet-friendly motion sensors to minimize false alarms. If a sensor is triggered, your system will alert our monitoring center, and we will

contact you and, if necessary, emergency services.

Intruders may sometimes break windows to bypass entry sensors. Our glass break sensors detect the sound of breaking glass, trigger an alarm, and alert our monitoring center to ensure a fast response.

## ADDITIONAL SENSORS FOR ENHANCED PROTECTION

Heartland Security offers additional sensors that integrate seamlessly with your security system. Common add-ons include smoke, carbon monoxide, water, and extreme temperature sensors. These sensors remain active whether your system is armed or disarmed, ensuring continuous protection and alerting you and our monitoring center 24/7.

## ADVANCED MONITORING WITH CAMERAS AND AUTOMATION

We also offer indoor, outdoor, and doorbell cameras to monitor activity in and around your property. Our automation services allow you to control your thermostat, lights, locks, and more from your smartphone or smart device.



## CUSTOM SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR PEACE OF MIND

At Heartland Security, our experts design and install custom security systems tailored to your home or business's unique requirements. To learn more, call us at 888-264-6380 or request a free quote on our website.

**Security systems made easy**

A security system from Heartland Security is an affordable, reliable way to help keep your home family safe.

**Heartland Security**

888.264.6380 • heartlandss.com



## 2025 Momentum is Building Conference for contractors and builders

Iowa builders and contractors are invited to explore the latest in energy efficiency technologies at the 2025 Momentum is Building Conference, set for February 20-21, 2025, at The Sheraton West Des Moines in West Des Moines, Iowa.

A key attraction for attendees is the opportunity to earn CEU (continuing education credits) in Iowa’s plumbing/mechanical, HVAC, and electrical codes. Attendees will also have the chance to network with industry peers, learn from leading experts in energy efficiency and the building trades, and gain insights into current energy efficiency regulations and incentives.

Sponsored by the Iowa Cooperatives for Energy Efficiency (ICEE), the annual Momentum is Building Conference links Iowa’s construction industry with the services and resources provided by local electric cooperatives, which serve nearly 650,000 Iowans across all 99 counties.

“Electric cooperatives have long supported energy efficiency, and one of our

key goals is to help member-consumers use energy wisely,” says Angela Catton vice president of communications and development at Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative. “We invest in this conference to build relationships between cooperatives and the contractors who serve our members.”

“We’re excited to ‘return to our roots’ in 2025, bringing the conference back to the Sheraton and kicking it off by welcoming back Bill McAnally, a longtime friend of the event and a respected expert in energy efficiency, as our Opening Keynote,” added Ryan Cornelius, vice president of corporate relations at Corn Belt Power Cooperative. “We are also welcoming back our fantastic CEU providers, Dave Sullivan (Electrical), Terry Moorman and Jeff Reichart (PMSB).”

For over 30 years, the Momentum is Building Conference has created a platform for electric cooperatives and contractors to collaborate in providing rural Iowans with safe, efficient, and cost-effective home comfort solutions.



The 40th Annual Northwest Iowa Ag Outlook Conference and Trade Show will be held Tues., Feb. 18, 2025 at the Clay County Fair & Events Center.

Northwest Iowa Ag Outlook Conference and Trade show is a day-long seminar and trade show held each February. Ag Outlook is geared towards farmers and agri-business professionals to give them the knowledge they need to compete in global agriculture. The trade show features the latest in agriculture products, equipment and services. This event is free and attracts nearly 2,000 each year.

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative sponsors the Ag Outlook show also has an exhibitor booth allowing our member service staff to visit with member-owners and others in the agriculture community.



For a full list of events, visit [spenceriowachamber.org/ag-outlook](http://spenceriowachamber.org/ag-outlook).



Registration is available online at [www.MomentumIsBuilding.com](http://www.MomentumIsBuilding.com).  
Early bird registration runs until January 20, 2025.  
For more information, contact Bobbi Jo at 800-225-4532 ext.6729.

**Iowa Builders and Contractors:**  
**REGISTRATION IS OPEN!**

**MOMENTUM IS BUILDING**

February 20-21, 2025 at  
Sheraton West Des Moines Hotel

[www.MomentumIsBuilding.com](http://www.MomentumIsBuilding.com)

# \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP

## Available from Basin Electric

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.



### FOR AN APPLICATION:

Call: Bobbi Jo at 800-225-4532, ext. 6729.

Email: [ilec@ilec.coop](mailto:ilec@ilec.coop).

Visit [www.ilec.coop](http://www.ilec.coop).

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 31, 2025.**



## HOLIDAY MEALS: Recipe for Energy Savings

It's fun making a big meal and sharing it with guests, but you might not appreciate the higher energy bill. Here's how to make your meal more energy efficient.



### 1. PREHEAT PROPERLY:

Preheat the oven only to the temperature required. Preheating may not be necessary for food cooking for several hours.



### 2. USE THE GLASS:

Glass and ceramic dishes retain heat better than metal, potentially reducing cooking time and temperature.

### 3. BAKE IN BATCHES:

Conserve energy by making multiple batches of cookies or more than one pie at a time.



### 4. MAKE THE RIGHT MATCH:

For stovetop cooking, avoid energy waste by matching the size of the pot or pan to the size of the burner.

### 5. COVER IT UP:

Keep the lids on pots and pans to save energy by helping food cook faster.

### 6. KEEP IT CLEAN:

Clean burners after every use. A clean burner heats more efficiently, using less energy.

### 7. TAKE IT SLOW:

Use a slow cooker whenever possible. They're generally more efficient than cooking on a stovetop.

**Follow these tips and you'll be thankful not only for the time spent with friends and family, but for the lower energy costs as well.**

## RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEE & DIRECTOR MILESTONES

### 10 YEARS



Dan Winterhof  
Director  
District II

### 15 YEARS



Kristin Hanson  
Manager of Human  
Resources & Payroll

### 30 YEARS



Mike Kummer  
Foreman  
Estherville/Swea City



Dave Grothaus  
Lineworker  
Pocahontas



Brenda Clymer  
Inventory & Work Order  
Accountant



Kay Dahl  
Operations Assistant

### 35 YEARS



Jeff Roemen  
Lineworker  
Alta



Doug Vlasman  
Energy Advisor  
Emmetsburg

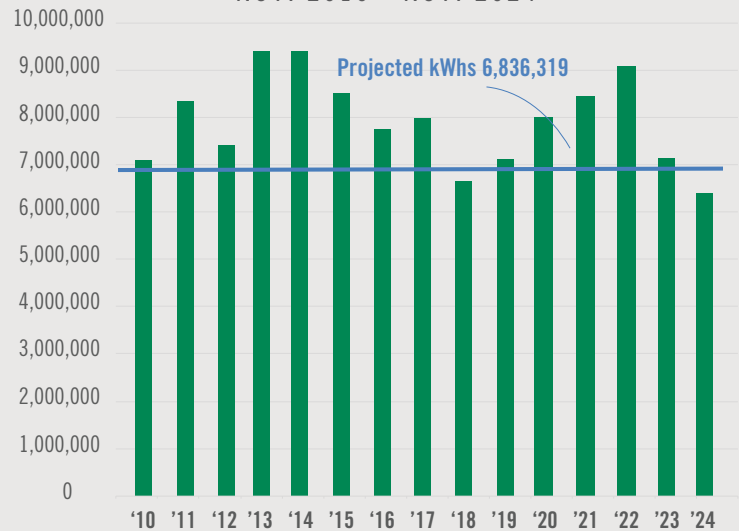


### 40 YEARS

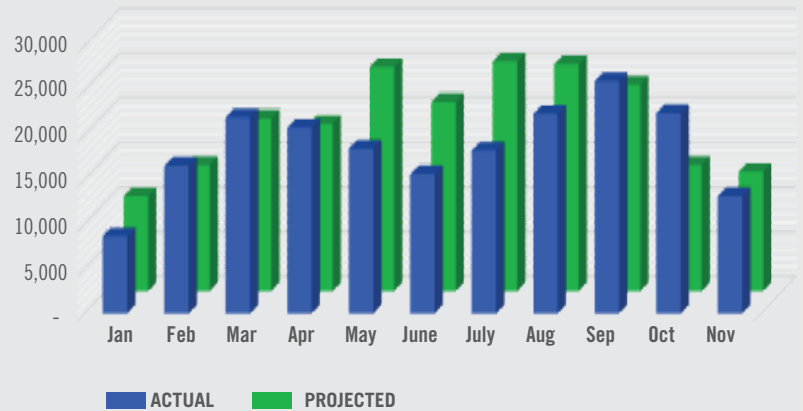
Alan Madden  
Director  
District IV

## COOPERATIVE STATISTICS

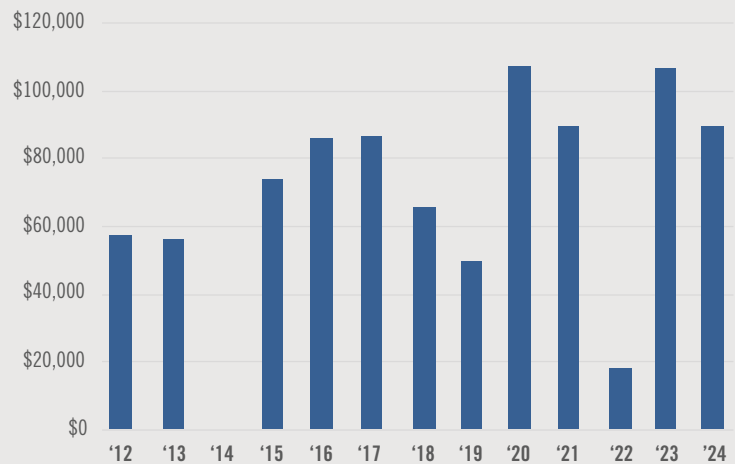
### WIND TURBINES KILOWATT-HOURS GENERATED VS. PROJECTED NOV. 2010 - NOV. 2024



### SOLAR DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ENERGY KWH PRODUCTION VS PROJECTED JANUARY - NOVEMBER 2024



### CORN BELT ESTIMATED CONTROLLED LOAD NOVEMBER 2012 - NOVEMBER 2024







# SNOW REMOVAL SAFETY

Winters in Iowa present challenges to member-owners and your Cooperative's lineworkers.



Please allow the following clearance for lineworkers to be able to access the area in the event of an emergency:

**10'** IN FRONT  
OF POWER  
EQUIPMENT

**3'** ON SIDES AND  
BACK OF POWER  
EQUIPMENT

## A daily or even hourly question: Where do we put all this snow?

Keep safety in mind when clearing snow from your driveway and other areas around your home or business. Electric cooperative members need to be mindful of the location of power equipment and make sure it is clear and accessible for Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative crews. Please take note of the locations of pad-mounted transformers, meters, regulators, cabinets, poles and overhead wires before moving snow.

Snow piled on electrical equipment not only impacts your safety, but also

has the potential to affect electric service to hundreds of homes and businesses in your neighborhood. Please allow at least 10 feet in front of power equipment and 3 feet on the sides and back for line workers to be able to access the area in the event of an emergency.

In addition to paying attention to ground-level equipment, be sure to look up and be aware of overhead power lines – especially when removing snow from your roof. Also, member-owners with large tractor mounted snowblowers

should be aware of the direction of the chute's position as to avoid blowing a large stream of snow at overhead lines. The snow may not damage the poles, but the solid stream will knock high voltage fuses out of their holders causing an outage, or rocks in the stream of snow can hit and chip/break porcelain insulators which will also lead to an outage. As we all know, outages in cold winter weather tend to take a little longer to restore due to the conditions.

# BE AN ENERGY STAR!



One of the best ways to make your home more energy efficient is by choosing products with the Energy Star® label. But what exactly does that label mean, and how can it benefit you?

## How Products Earn the Energy Star® Label

Energy Star® is a program by the U.S. Department of Energy (DoE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help consumers identify energy efficient products that save money and reduce environmental impact.

Products that earn the Energy Star® label must meet strict guidelines for energy efficiency, performance and cost effectiveness.

### Here's how the process works:

1. The product must be more energy efficient than typical models. This helps you save on energy bills by using less electricity while still providing the same performance.
2. The product must be tested in EPA-recognized labs, following standardized procedures. These tests ensure the product meets all energy efficiency and performance requirements.
3. Once tested, the product's data is reviewed by a third-party certification body to verify it meets the set standards. This ensures that only the best products receive the Energy Star® label.

Even after a product is certified, the EPA conducts "off-the-shelf" testing on random samples of Energy Star® products to ensure they continue to meet the required standards. If a product fails to meet the performance requirements during verification testing, it can be disqualified from the Energy Star® program. The EPA has clear procedures for handling such disqualifications to maintain the integrity of the label.

### Speaking of Labels

Whether you are upgrading your refrigerator, replacing light bulbs or purchasing new electronics, the blue Energy Star® label is your assurance that the product has passed all energy efficiency tests. It's easy to spot and can be found on products ranging from small and major appliances to electronics.

Many large appliances, such as washing machines and clothes dryers, include a yellow Energy Guide label that provides estimated energy use. Comparing these labels can help you determine how much you'll save with an Energy Star® model compared to a standard model.

While Energy Star® products can cost a little more upfront, their energy savings over time will often cover the difference. They help reduce your household energy consumption, which could translate to lower utility bills.

### Why Should I Care?

As a member of an electric cooperative, choosing energy efficient products benefits not only you but also our entire community. When member-owners use less energy, it lowers overall electricity demand, helping to stabilize rates and reduce costs for everyone.

As you shop for appliances, electronics or other home equipment, look for the Energy Star® label. Whether it's a new washing machine or energy efficient lighting options, these products are a simple and effective way to save money and lower energy use. Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative offers rebates on Energy Star® appliances including clothes washers, clothes dryers, refrigerators, freezers and dishwashers.

To browse products that have earned the Energy Star® label, visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov).

## NEW STORM LAKE LEARNING CENTER AWARDED FUNDS

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative sponsored and was awarded both a USDA Rural Development Grant and Loan for Iowa Central Community College's new Storm Lake Learning Center. The loan and grant totaled \$2.3 million dollars, or 23% of the total project cost.

The new facility houses new programs at the Storm Lake campus including advanced manufacturing, computer science programming, electrical technologies, industrial mechanics, liberal arts, health sciences, teacher academy and nursing.

Jed Skogerboe, manager of business and community development is shown presenting the check to Dr. Stacy Mentzer, vice president of instruction in front of the new facility.





## The Fallows, LLC Event Center Opening Soon

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative is proud to support Kyle and Ameer Norris through our revolving loan fund program. Their venture, The Fallows, LLC, is set to open as a premier event venue this spring in rural Graettinger, Iowa. We're excited to see their vision come to life and contribute to the community's

growth and success!

Pictured (left to right): Kyle and Ameer Norris, owners of The Fallows; Jennifer Sievert, vice president of customer and corporate relations and Tod Faris, executive director, Kossuth/Palo Alto County Economic Development.

## SPECULATIVE BUILDING SITE IN SOUTH TECHNICAL PARK MAKING PROGRESS DESPITE CHALLENGES

The speculative building site in the South Technical Park, Spencer, IA continues to advance, overcoming several hurdles along the way. Despite delays caused by flood damage to materials, the need to power wash structural steel girders, and persistent rain, the project remains on track as a priority for the team.

The recent setbacks have underscored the importance of maintaining a focus on quality. Crews have been working diligently to address these issues without compromising the integrity of the finished product. Power washing the structural steel girders, for instance, ensures that they meet the high standards expected for a project of this scope.

The speculative building is designed to attract businesses and spur economic growth in the area. Once completed, it will serve as a versatile and modern space for potential tenants, enhancing

the region's appeal to entrepreneurs and investors alike.

Although the timeline has shifted slightly due to these unforeseen circumstances, the project team continues to push forward, ensuring that every aspect of construction meets rigorous standards. Progress updates will be shared regularly as the team works toward completion.





## Cooperative Employees Teach Electrical Safety

In September, Cooperative employees were invited to youth safety days in Emmet and Buena Vista County to teach electrical safety. The high voltage trailer was used to demonstrate the potential dangers of playing and working near power lines. The students learned about the importance of line worker safety gear, saw up close what can happen if contact is made with a live power line and learned what to do if they should encounter down power lines.

Your Cooperative employees also met with a group of Spencer High School students to talk about careers within the electric utility industry and gave a short demonstration with the high voltage trailer.



Youth safety presentations are offered free of charge. Contact Bobbi Jo at 800-225-4532 for more information.



Jeff & Jeremy,  
Thank you so much for presenting electrical safety at our Safety Day this year! What a great presentation you guys had. The kids and teachers mentioned how cool it was and said it was their favorite presentation of the day.

Thanks again,  
Nicole Reinart, County Youth Coordinator Buena Vista County



# BRING ON THE PARADE

This fall, your Cooperative participated in several homecoming parades within our service territory including Estherville Lincoln Central, Spirit Lake and Pocahontas. Cooperative employees also took part in the holiday parades in Estherville, Emmetsburg and Storm Lake.

# COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PROJECT



The Community Christmas Project is organized by the Estherville Area Ministerial Association and helps over 100 families each year during the holiday season. Iowa Lakes Electric employees assisted in this year's Community Christmas Project.

Pictured (left): Rosie Harvey, customer care and collections representative and Natalie Brown, manager of accounting. Pictured (right): Amy Howard, executive assistant and Ryan Craig, president/CEO;



# Cooperative's Disaster Revolving Loan Fund Helps Spencer Businesses Affected by Flood



Flood damage in the basement of Weasy's Lounge and Grille

**T**he Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) was established to support businesses affected by widespread flooding, helping them rebuild and reopen. It provided relief and aid in the recovery efforts of impacted communities. At the time of publication, \$150,000 of the allocated \$200,000 had been utilized. Most recently, the following businesses received flood recovery loans: Axaholics, Weasy's Lounge and Grille, Collectors Cove, Hondo's Sales and Service, LA Spa and Nails and Jacobsen Homes Corp.

**AXAHOLICS** (left to right): Daniel Jorgensen, owner; Jed Skogerboe, manager of business and community development, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative

**WEASY'S LOUNGE AND GRILLE** (left to right): Darin Johnson, owner; Jed Skogerboe, manager of business and community development, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative

**COLLECTORS COVE** (left to right): Jeremy Madden, energy advisor, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; Samantha Olsen, owner; Jed Skogerboe, manager of business and community development, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative

**HONDO'S SALES AND SERVICE** (left to right): Mark Tuttle, director, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; Jed Skogerboe, manager of business and community development, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; Erik and Mariellen Mosbo, owners



# Letters from Our Member-Owners



■ Thank you for your recent contributions to the St. Mary's Athletic Booster Club Annual Campaign. Your generosity and support are greatly appreciated by our athletes, coaches, school and booster board. Your support provides for student athletic activities from kindergarten through high school. We are excited for another year of activities and hope you can join us at some of our athletic events! Go Panthers! St. Mary's Athletic Booster Club

■ Thank you so much for awarding me an ILEC scholarship. It will be put to great use as I continue my education at USD. Ashley Hinkeldey

■ Thank you for the \$25 bill credit from the Quiz Corner drawing. It is very much appreciated. Deanna

■ Thanks to all of you who have given my family many years of wonderful service! Cheri Frye

■ Thank you for your contribution to the back to school bash. Iowa Lakes Community College & Estherville Lincoln Central

■ Thank you for your donation to Respite Angels. This will help to provide much needed Respite Care. Thank you, Respite Angels, Kelly Schultz, Director

■ Thank you! Clayton Burton

■ Thank you for supporting the livestock ribbon auction at the Emmet County Fair. I really appreciate your generosity and support of the 4-H program. Thanks again, Kody Irmiter

■ Thank you for the \$25 credit that was drawn at the Clay County Fair. I have never won anything, and you guys gave me Christmas twice this year. Thanks again! Becky Lehr

■ Thanks for all your help to make our 2024 Progressive Agriculture Safety Day a big success! Palo Alto County Extension & Outreach

■ Your continued support of the fund is appreciated. Together, we have served 72 kids after the loss of 35 employees in 20 states since we started in December 2022. The need is real. Your donations matter. Cooperative Family Fund

■ Thank you for supporting our community campaign. Your donation will save lives during cardiac emergencies. We appreciate your generosity. Thank you, Katie Schwint, Buena Vista Regional Healthcare Foundation Executive Director of Community Development

■ Thanks for supporting the BV Fair. Thank you for your ongoing support. Achieving our club's goals and upholding the 4-H Motto.

■ Thank you for your donation to the Friends of Estherville FFA tailgate. We had a good turnout and are excited to be able to contribute to FFA jackets and scholarships for our students. Thank you for your generosity, Friends of Estherville FFA and FFA students



■ Thank you very much for once again sponsoring a hole for our Knights of Columbus golf tournament. We were able to raise a lot of money that will help benefit our local special Olympic athletes! Mark Maeyaert

■ Thank you for your donation to Rembrandt Food's Golf Fundraiser. With your support, we were able to raise \$20,000 for the Sioux Rapids American Legion. Thanks again!

■ Thank you for donating a door prize and being a hole sponsor to our first ever golf outing. We had a great turnout and look forward to next year! Palo Alto County Pork Producers



## DONATION DRIVE FOR KIDS

Employees and directors of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative kindly donated winter boots, coats, sweatshirts, hats, gloves, and mittens to Estherville Lincoln Central Elementary School.

Pictured (left to right) are Sarah Kollasch, customer care and billing representative; Christa Klingbeil, elementary counselor; Lindsay Steffen, customer care and billing representative; and Katie Harris, communications specialist.

## QUIZ CORNER

Congratulations winners: Thomas Brekke of Spirit Lake; Terry Johnson of Wallingford; Roger Madsen of Spirit Lake and Steven Underwood of Ringsted.

Send in your completed Quiz Corner and Iowa Lakes will draw four lucky members each quarter who will receive a \$25 credit towards their electric bill.

- 1) This year's annual meeting will be held on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ at the Clay Regional Event Center.
- 2) Snow removal safety. Please allow the following clearance for line workers to be able to access power equipment in the event of an emergency: \_\_\_\_\_ feet in front of power equipment, and \_\_\_\_\_ feet on sides and back.
- 3) At the time of quarterly newsletter publication \$ \_\_\_\_\_ has been provided to flood victims to provide relief and aid in flood recovery efforts.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Account #: \_\_\_\_\_



### Energy Efficiency Tip

Taking steps to help your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills. Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains or other items. Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks to form. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions.

Source: energy.gov

## Reach Us

### OFFICE HOURS:

8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Mon- Fri)  
Contact Iowa Lakes  
24 hours/day, 7 days/ week  
with the following toll-free  
number:

### General Phone:

(800) 225-4532 (24 hr.)  
(Primary and Emergency)

**Fax:** (712) 362-2819

### Visit Us Online:

[www.ilec.coop](http://www.ilec.coop)

**E-Mail:** [ilec@ilec.coop](mailto:ilec@ilec.coop)

### Newsletter Editor:

Jen Sievert

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opportunity provider  
and employer.



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