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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



Line inspection continues

**Beware of third-party
payment programs**

Recipes: Dip and Spreads

Win a Portable Power Station ▶ See Page 3

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A POWER OUTAGE

If you have a power outage, first check your fuses or circuit breakers to rule out problems with electricity inside your home. Replace fuses or reset breakers if needed. **Note:** It is the member's responsibility to repair any wires or equipment located between the meter pole and your buildings and/or equipment.



CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO RELIABILITY, AFFORDABILITY IN 2023

BY JIM GOSSETT



Happy New Year! I hope you are looking forward to the new year as much as I am. While there was a lot to celebrate in 2022, it certainly was not without

challenges and uncertainty. I think we all would like a little more predictability in the coming year. We know you count on Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) for reliable, affordable and responsible power; and that you expect predictability in your power supply and in our service to you. We strive to do just that.

The RVEC board approved the 2023 Capital and Operating Budget last month, with no rate increase budgeted for the seventh consecutive year. Budgeted operating margins for 2023 are slimmer, but we are confident we can continue to find ways to achieve our number one financial goal – rate stability – through 2023.

Our board is pleased we have been able to do this during a time when we

all face inflationary cost pressures not seen for 40 years. Iowa electric cooperatives' all-of-the-above energy strategy helps ensure affordability and reliability. Much has been written in this space over the last several months about what it takes to maintain a reliable source of generation. You will read more in the coming months.

In addition to managing the finances of the cooperative in a sound and predictable way, you can also count on us to make all decisions with you, the member-owner, in mind. We will continue to operate in an efficient manner, looking for ways to be even more productive for you.

I also would like to mention how proud I am to be working with such a dedicated, intelligent and creative group of co-workers at RVEC. They work every day to improve processes, create efficiencies and discover additional ways to serve our member-owners. Their pride shows in their work each and every day.

Jim Gossett is the CEO of Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative.



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- Steve Schable Carroll
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- Dave Schroeder Coon Rapids
- Karen Werner Schaller
- Jim Gossett, CEO

RVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

LINE INSPECTION CONTINUES



Annual maintenance of our entire system has started. Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative linemen are inspecting lines for defective items, checking meters and looking for any safety hazards.

During the inspections we look for shot insulators, blown arrestors, loose guy wires, split or bad poles. We ensure poles have nothing stapled to them and that trees are not close to

our electric lines. We are also looking for inadequate clearances from buildings and other driveways.

We have maintenance programs to upgrade lines, which ensures you have the most reliable and safest system possible.

If you have questions about the trucks in your neighborhood, give us a call.

STAY SAFE AND WARM IN SNOW AND ICE STORMS



Power outages due to snow and ice storms can be especially threatening because of extreme cold temperatures.

After a snow or ice storm, avoid going outside if possible. Downed power lines could be submerged in snow and ice, making them difficult to identify. When outside, treat all downed and hanging lines as if they are energized. If you see a downed power line, stay away and immediately contact Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC). Remember that downed power lines do NOT have to be arcing, sparking or moving to be “live” – and deadly.

If your power is out because of a snow or ice storm, RVEC and Safe Electricity suggests these tips to help you stay safe and warm:

- Stay inside, and dress in warm, layered clothing.
- Close off unnecessary rooms.
- When using an alternative heat source, follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards, and be sure to properly ventilate. Always keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it.
- Stuff towels and rags underneath doors to keep heat in.
- Cover windows at night.
- Keep a close eye on the temperature in your home. Infants and people over the age of 65 are more susceptible to the cold. You may want to stay with friends or relatives or go to a shelter if you can't keep your home warm.

WHAT EXACTLY IS AN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE?

You receive this publication because you buy electricity from an electric cooperative. Electric co-ops are a utility that operates like no other.

Cooperatives are consumer-owned businesses, which means that you and your neighbors own your electric utility. In fact, you may have noticed that Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative refers to you as a “member-owner” rather than as a “customer.”

The cooperative's board of directors is a group of member-owners just like you. In fact, member-owners (including you!) can run for a seat on the board. When a

director's term expires, the cooperative holds an election – and all member-owners will get to vote. The cooperative is governed by its member-owners, and those who govern it are elected by the member-owners.

Cooperatives have their roots in their local communities, and they never sell stock. In this business model, member-owners retain local control.

Take advantage of the opportunity to participate as a member-owner of your electric cooperative by attending membership meetings and voting in board elections.



BEWARE OF THIRD-PARTY PAYMENT PROGRAMS

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) member-owners have many options when it's time to pay an energy bill, but the cooperative recommends avoiding third-party payment processing websites.

The cooperative receives calls from member-owners concerned that they received late fees because their bills were not paid in a timely manner through third-party sites.

Third-party sites may charge additional service fees and do not always make the payment on the same day, which could result in your payment being late and your power being disconnected.

RVEC is not affiliated with any third-party payment service. However, the cooperative offers a wide range of payment options.

Using SmartHub® is the best way to pay your energy bill and manage your account. For more information about SmartHub or the other free bill payment options, contact RVEC at 712-659-3649 or visit the cooperative website at www.rvec.coop.





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