

● OCTOBER 2024

# iowa

**ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING**

**Powering a brighter  
future in Guatemala**

**Celebrating the  
cooperative difference**

**Family dinner recipes**

**Win a \$100 gift card to support a local business ▶ See Page 3**



# CELEBRATING THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE

BY JIM GOSSETT



October is National Co-op Month! Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) and Iowa's electric cooperatives are joining the dozens of agriculture, telecommunications, credit unions and producer/marketing cooperatives in Iowa to celebrate.

In the cooperative spirit, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and the Iowa Credit Union League are teaming up to promote Co-op Month. A social media campaign will promote the advantages of co-op membership. Visit [www.IowaCooperatives.com](http://www.IowaCooperatives.com) for more information.

RVEC is a great example of a cooperative that benefits its member-owners. Since the 1930s, RVEC has provided reliable, affordable and responsible electric service while contributing to community growth and prosperity. Along with many co-ops across the country, RVEC celebrates National Co-op Month in October to remind member-owners of the cooperative difference – being locally owned, member-controlled and dedicated to the well-being of their communities.

Eleven years ago, I joined RVEC as director of key accounts and economic development. My previous career introduced me to not-for-profit models and electric cooperatives. Being with RVEC has strengthened my commitment to the cooperative business model. As CEO, I continue to serve other cooperative organizations. My time on the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives board is nearly complete, and I am board vice president for Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. These experiences allow me to share best practices that benefit RVEC and its member-owners.

### Extending cooperative education

RVEC collaborated with Dr. Keri Jacobs, a former economics professor at Iowa State University, to introduce “The Cooperative Way: A Business Model” at Des Moines Area Community College. Cooperatives like RVEC fill gaps in the market where private businesses have fallen short, especially in providing essential services like electricity to rural areas where there are considerably fewer consumers

per mile of line. We appreciate the tremendous opportunity to help community college students learn about the cooperative way of doing business.

### Collaborating is essential to our mission

We work with co-op partners in power supply, materials and equipment, and financial services to ensure the best service at the best price for our member-owners. By being democratically controlled and independent, RVEC can provide reliable, affordable and responsible power, making your time on the farm and at work more productive and your life at home more comfortable.

During National Co-op Month, we hope you take pride in being a member-owner of RVEC, just as we are proud to serve you.

*Jim Gossett is the CEO of Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative.*

### THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBER-OWNERS

Thank you to those who attended Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative's (RVEC) Member Appreciation Days in Glidden and Sac City last month. RVEC board members and employees enjoyed providing food, activities and learning opportunities to more than 100 member-owners and their families. We received positive feedback and will work to continue building on the success of these events in future years.

We appreciate everyone who voted by mail in the district director elections. The board listened to member-owners' feedback and converted our fall meetings from one annual meeting to a business-only meeting and two Member Appreciation Days. Look for photos and more comments in an upcoming issue of this magazine!

## OUTAGE INFORMATION

If you don't have power or if you have a power emergency, call **712-659-3649** or **800-253-6211**. Our phones are answered **24/7** year-round.



#### Office Address

Headquarters  
PO Box 486 /  
28725 Hwy 30  
Glidden, IA 51443



**Phone:** 712-659-3649 or 800-253-6211

**Fax:** 712-659-3716

**Hours:** 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday

**Website:** [www.rvec.coop](http://www.rvec.coop)

**Email:** [info@rvec.coop](mailto:info@rvec.coop)

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#### Directors

- David Onken, President ..... Glidden
- Jeff Cranston ..... Odebolt
- Mark Ludwig ..... Breda
- Karen Werner ..... Schaller
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- Adam Handlos ..... Glidden
- Dave Schroeder ..... Coon Rapids

Jim Gossett, CEO

RVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# CO-OP MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN ENERGY TRAIL TOUR

This summer marked the 35th annual Energy Trail Tour. Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) members Dave and Connie Hoffman and Dana and Michele Dettman participated in a motorcoach excursion to learn about electric generation and meet the people responsible for delivering electric power to their homes, farms and businesses. They were led through the Dakotas to learn about and see firsthand where their energy comes from and have some fun along the journey.

RVEC's generation and transmission cooperative Corn Belt Power Cooperative receives power from Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric) and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). The group participated in tours of electric generation facilities and subsidiaries operated by Basin Electric and WAPA.

In addition to the educational portion of the tour, participants also enjoyed good food, great fellowship and a few surprise stops along the way.

Highlights of the tours included:

## Oahe Power Plant and Dam

The first electric-generation stop on the three-day journey brought tour guests to Pierre, South Dakota, to understand the process of hydroelectric generation and the innovation of the rolled-earth dam that created Lake Oahe, the fourth-largest reservoir in the U.S. Water generated from the Missouri River Dam system served as the original power source for homes and farms in the region until electric demand surpassed generation capacity in the 1970s, leading to the need to source other generation resources.

## Antelope Valley Station

The tour included an overview of the model room and a guided walking tour of the coal-fired power plant owned and operated by Basin Electric. The walking tour included stops at the turbine deck, control room, boiler and observation deck on the 17th floor. Participants learned about the process of electric generation from coal resources and the investments made by Basin Electric in environmental control technologies to reduce emissions at their facilities.

## The Coteau Properties Company Freedom Mine

Tour guests learned how lignite coal is produced at a surface mine and how the land is returned to its original state. A guided driving tour took members through active mining areas where they witnessed giant earthmoving equipment in action. The Freedom Mine delivers approximately 16 million tons of coal and reclaims about 600 acres of mined land annually.

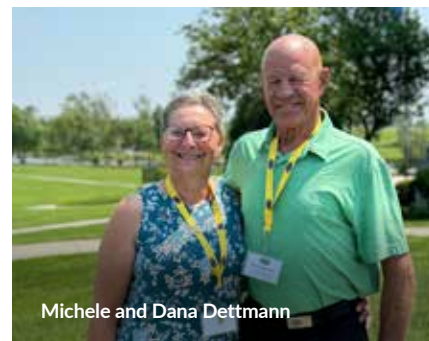
The trip also offered insight into operations at the Great Plains Synfuels Plant and how coal can be refined into synthetic natural gas and a variety of other products, including anhydrous ammonia, carbon dioxide and diesel exhaust fluid (DEF). Basin Electric owns and operates the Great Plains Synfuels Plant through its for-profit subsidiary, Dakota Gasification Company.

Energy Trail Tour participants also learned about wind generation and renewable energy resources in America's energy mix. The tour provided a "mobile classroom" on the process of wind generation and how it contributes to an all-of-the-above generation mix

that provides reliable and affordable energy to cooperative members.

Over three educational and fun-filled days, members gained a deeper understanding of the cooperative difference, the history of rural electric cooperatives, the seven cooperative principles that guide all cooperatives, and the Touchstone Energy® brand's four foundations of service: Integrity, Accountability, Innovation and Commitment to Community. Memories and friendships were made while gaining a deeper and more insightful appreciation for how reliable power is generated and delivered to the light switch.

If you would like to participate in this experience next year, watch this magazine for the opportunity to enter the drawing.



Michele and Dana Dettman



Connie and Dave Hoffman



# KNOW WHAT'S BELOW. CALL BEFORE YOU DIG.

# WHAT CAUSES BLINKING LIGHTS?

Blinking lights and brief power interruptions are frustrating, and these interruptions are most often caused by uncontrollable circumstances.

Wind, trees, lightning, birds, animals, equipment failure and humans can all disrupt the normal flow of electricity both momentarily and longer. Trying to find the exact cause of the blinks sometimes resembles trying to find the needle in the haystack, which equally frustrates the line crew.

While blinks can be annoying, they show that an electrical system is working exactly as designed. When a breaker in your house or business senses a power problem, the breaker

trips and the power flow stops until someone resets the breaker. Breakers on Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative's (RVEC) power lines are designed to sense a problem on the lines, stop power flow momentarily and then automatically reset – potentially avoiding a much more extended outage.

Before digital clocks and computers blinks often went unnoticed. In today's world, flashing digital displays and loss of computer data can be concerning.

RVEC member-owners need to protect computers and other sensitive electronic equipment by buying and using uninterruptible power supply



systems. These relatively simple and inexpensive measures will go a long way toward increasing power reliability and protecting fallout from blinks.

We encourage RVEC member-owners to notify us if blinking light problems repeatedly occur. Then, we ask for patience as line crews work to find and correct the problem. We all want the same thing – high-quality, reliable electric service.

# FALL PLANTING CAN SAVE ENERGY NEXT SUMMER

While most trees and shrubs are planted in the spring, cool temperatures and rain make fall a good time for planting, too.

Planting shade trees near the windows on the sunny side of your house can block heat and damaging UV sun rays from coming inside during air conditioning season. Evergreens near the house can block wind and keep it from blowing through windows when you're trying to keep your home warm in winter.

- ✔ Plant in the fall to allow enough time for roots to establish before the cold weather stops the tree from growing.
- ✔ Start your trees and shrubs in burlap or containers rather than planting their bare roots in the ground.
- ✔ Ask a landscaper or an expert at your garden center which varieties of trees do well when planted in the fall. Some, like red maple, birch, poplars and some oaks, do much better when planted in the spring.
- ✔ Water plants frequently and thoroughly after planting. They need about an inch of water a week until the ground is frozen.
- ✔ Wrap the trunks of young trees with burlap or plastic in late November to protect them from frost, sunburn and animals. Remove the wrap in the spring.
- ✔ Spread a thick layer of mulch around newly planted trees so freezing and thawing of the soil won't heave them out of the ground.

## TIPS FOR FALL PLANTING



# LOOK UP, LOOK DOWN, LOOK OUT

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative wants you to have a safe and productive harvest.

- 1 Be extra careful and stay alert for hazards.
- 2 Keep an eye out for overhead power lines and electrical equipment on and under the ground.
- 3 Be especially careful with tall equipment such as combines and grain augers.





# GRAIN BIN CLEARANCE NOTICE

When you start to plan for a new grain bin, please contact Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC).

RVEC and Corn Belt Power Cooperative will provide assistance in planning for a safe environment for everyone working and living around grain bins. The State of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors and elevators.

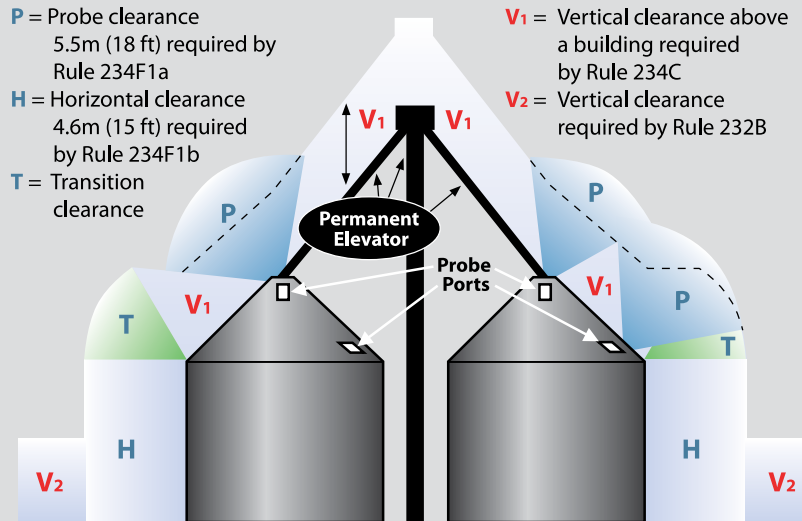
To the right are drawings of the specific clearances required for both scenarios. If you have any questions concerning the drawings, please contact RVEC.

According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 – 25.2(3) b. an electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)C2-2017 “National Electrical Safety Code,” Rule 234F. This paragraph “b” shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after Sept. 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after Dec. 24, 1997. (As adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board.)

The cooperative is required by the Iowa Utilities Board to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants, and city and county zoning officials.

If you have any questions concerning clearance regulations, please call the RVEC office at 712-659-3649.

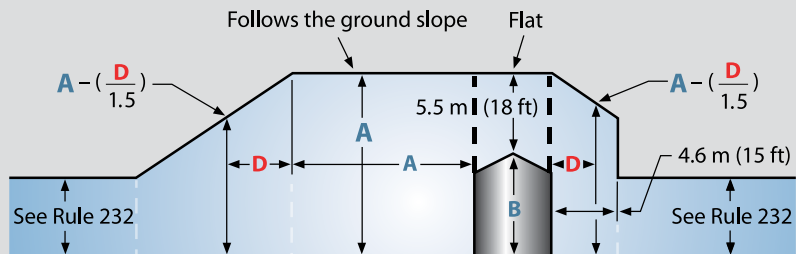
## Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators



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## Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors or elevators

### ELEVATION

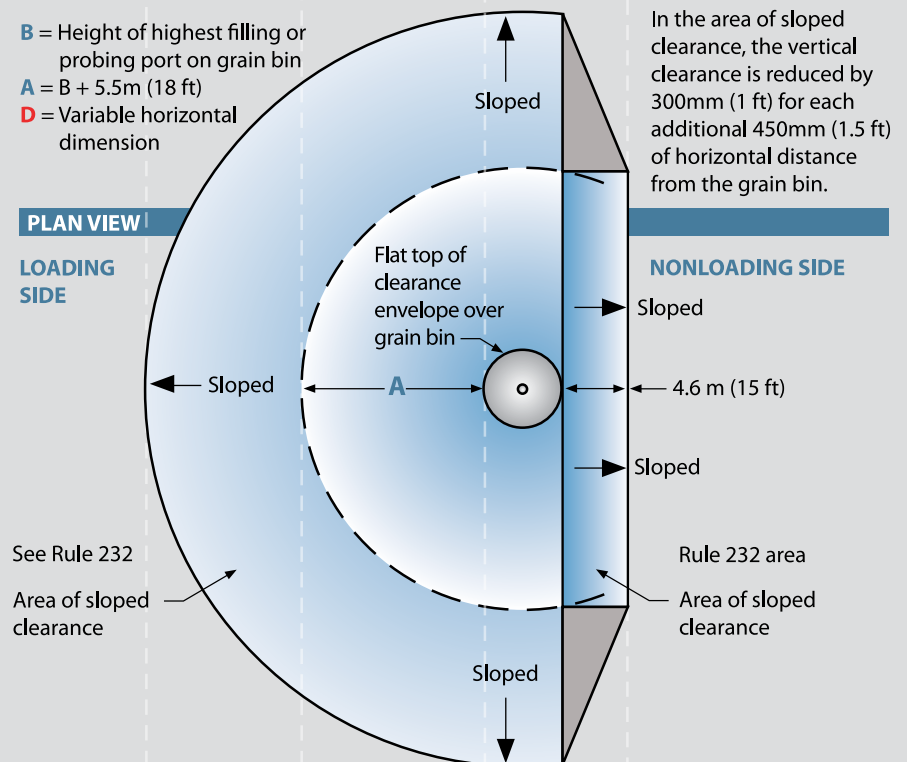


- B** = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin
- A** =  $B + 5.5\text{m (18 ft)}$
- D** = Variable horizontal dimension

In the area of sloped clearance, the vertical clearance is reduced by 300mm (1 ft) for each additional 450mm (1.5 ft) of horizontal distance from the grain bin.

### PLAN VIEW

#### LOADING SIDE



#### NONLOADING SIDE

Sloped

Sloped

4.6 m (15 ft)

Sloped

Sloped

Sloped

Sloped

Sloped

Sloped

Sloped

Sloped

Sloped

Sloped

Sloped

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Visit our website at [www.rvec.coop](http://www.rvec.coop)

# I AM THE CO-OP

The information we get from our Touchstone Energy cooperative about efficiency, safety and technology gives us the power to make informed decisions.

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