

● JUNE 2024

# iowa

**ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING**

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# RURAL IOWANS BENEFIT FROM DEFINED ELECTRIC SERVICE TERRITORIES

BY JIM GOSSETT



Iowa's high-use electric customers and businesses looking to locate in Iowa are suggesting they be allowed to choose their electric utility provider. This would require a change to Iowa's electric service territory law. They seek deregulation for the largest power users in the state. The effect this would have on Iowans, particularly rural Iowans, would be higher electricity costs while reducing reliability.

Here's what Ethan Hohenadel, director of regulatory affairs for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, wrote in a column in *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine last year:

*Iowa's electric cooperatives are concerned about the negative economic impacts of deregulation for rural Iowans because we know firsthand how exclusive service territories provide stability. Exclusive service territories also provide consistency*

*and reliability through a utility's obligation to serve its assigned service territory.*

*In 1976, the Iowa Legislature passed Senate File 1258 which created assigned electric service territories. The legislation's goal was "to encourage the development of coordinated statewide electric service at retail, to eliminate or avoid unnecessary duplication of electric utility facilities, and to promote economical, efficient and adequate electric service to the public."*

This means electricity is available to everyone no matter where they choose to live, work or visit in Iowa. By assigning a single electric utility to serve within the assigned territory, only one set of substations, power lines and transformers are installed to serve every home and business. Imagine the cluttered landscape of several sets of equipment if multiple utilities provided electric service.

Hohenadel continues:

*Although the Iowa Legislature didn't set out to increase reliability by creating assigned service territories, SF 1258 accomplished that as well. According to a 2021 utility report published by*

*the highly respected law firm Wilkinson Barker Knauer, LLP, "Deregulation may make power cheaper for some major electricity buyers like Big Tech, but it increases costs for the average consumer, all while sacrificing reliability. In fact, nine out of ten states in the continental United States with the highest utility costs have fully restructured markets with retail choice."*

### Advocating for our membership

Consider the makeup of Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative's membership in proposed deregulation. Forty-five percent of the sale of energy is to seven large users, who likely would be targeted in a deregulated environment. This could leave more than half of our current member-owners to pay for all the costs associated with operating an efficient, reliable distribution system.

For more than 45 years, Iowa's assigned service territory laws have reinforced reliable and affordable electric utility service. Efforts to weaken or eliminate these laws will only harm rural Iowans.

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



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#### Directors

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

Jim Gossett, CEO

RVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## YOUTH TOUR WINNER



Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) is excited to announce that Porter Snyder, a student at Carroll High School, will represent the cooperative on the Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., in June.

Porter will join several other Iowa students along with students from across the country in learning more about cooperatives, U.S. history and our government. They will

also participate in leadership training, engage with elected officials, network with their peers, and tour monuments and museums in our nation's capital.

RVEC is proud to support Youth Tour and believes that investing in the next generation of co-op members is essential to the economic future of rural communities.

**Congratulations, Porter! We hope you have an awesome, educational and enjoyable time on your trip.**

## SAVE THE DATES: MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENTS AND ANNUAL MEETING

We're excited to celebrate you, our valued member-owners! Join RVEC for Member Appreciation events filled with fun, gratitude and connections.

**MEMBER APPRECIATION | Wednesday, Sept. 4 – Glidden**  
5-7 p.m. 28725 Hwy 30 in Glidden

**MEMBER APPRECIATION | Wednesday, Sept. 11 – Sac City**  
5-7 p.m. 601 E Main St in Sac City

Here's what you can look forward to at each event:

- **Member connections:** Meet and mingle with RVEC employees, directors and fellow cooperative members.
- **Exclusive giveaways:** As a token of our appreciation, enjoy special giveaways and surprises throughout the evening.
- **Behind-the-scenes tours:** Have you ever wondered how RVEC operates behind the scenes? Take a guided tour and gain fascinating insights.
- **Delicious food:** Indulge in tasty burgers and hotdogs as you relax and enjoy the festivities. It's our way of saying "thank you" for your continued support.

Stay tuned for more details. We can't wait to celebrate our member-owners and express our gratitude to you for being part of the RVEC family!

### Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Cooperative will be a business meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 25. The meeting will be held in the boardroom. There will be no dinner served and no program.

**ANNUAL MEETING BUSINESS MEETING | Wednesday, Sept. 25 – Glidden**

## RVEC BOARD APPROVES ALLOCATION

Patronage allocation for 2023 has been applied to all Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) member-owners' patronage accounts that received service last year. Your allocation amount is shown on your bill.



Deferred patronage allocations are revenues exceeding the operating expenses of the cooperative, which are shown in the books as margins. This is allocated back to member-owners as patronage and is in proportion to the amount you paid to the cooperative for electric service in 2023.

At present, the patronage has no cash value and cannot be used in payment of electric bills, or any other bill owed to RVEC. Even if you move off our lines, the patronage cannot be paid to you until that year is approved to be refunded by the board of directors.

The only time patronage can be refunded, other than the board of directors approving a general refund to all member-owners for a particular year, is if the owner is deceased. The executor must complete the required paperwork. Estates are usually refunded several times per year when approved by the board of directors.

Please keep RVEC informed when you have a change of address. This ensures any future patronage checks will come directly to you.

## MEMBERSHIP – SINGLE OR JOINT

Joint memberships are allowed for Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) member-owners according to provisions in the cooperative's Articles of Incorporation. Please read the following questions and answers to consider if you and your spouse should consider a joint membership.

### Q: What are the advantages of a joint membership?

**A:** With a joint membership, either spouse is eligible to serve on the RVEC board of directors or the nominating committee. Either one may vote at a cooperative Annual Meeting.

### Q: Does a joint membership entitle both the spouses to a vote at a cooperative Annual Meeting?

**A:** No. A membership, whether single or joint, has one vote. Either spouse may cast the vote, but the joint membership has only one vote.

### Q: What happens to the patronage dividends if either spouse dies with a joint membership?

**A:** If spouses hold a joint membership and one of the two dies, the membership is considered to be held by the survivor. Ownership assignment of the patronage is transferred to the surviving spouse. In the case of a single membership, if the member dies, the surviving spouse must take out a new membership in their own name. The patronage is paid out to the deceased spouse's estate and is not assigned to the surviving spouse's new membership.

Forms to change your membership are available at the RVEC office. Look at the name on your electric bill to see if you have a single or joint membership. Please call if you would like more information about RVEC membership.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE SELECTED

The Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) board of directors appointed the following member-owners to the nominating committee during the regular April 17 board meeting. The purpose of the committee is to nominate members to serve on RVEC's board of directors.

District 1	Mark McCool
District 2	Dennis McCartan
District 3	Jeremiah Johnson
District 4	Tracy Onken
District 5	Dale Wernimont
District 6	Raasch Farms / Carol Raasch
District 7	Craig Corderman

The nominating committee met on May 16 to nominate members of the cooperative for the office of director. Directors whose three-year terms will expire are:

District 2	Steve Schable
District 3	Adam Handlos
District 5	Mark Ludwig

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## VIEW YOUR KWH USAGE AND PAY YOUR BILL

Save yourself some time. Go to [www.rvec.coop](http://www.rvec.coop) and pay your bill online.

# NOMINATE A LOCAL VOLUNTEER BY JUNE 30

Do you know someone in our community who deserves to be recognized for making a difference? Nominate them for the Shine the Light contest by June 30 and they could win \$3,000 for their local charity or nonprofit.

“We’re really excited to participate in this statewide effort to celebrate our cooperative commitment to community,” says Jim Gossett, CEO of Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC). “There are so many incredible volunteers throughout our service area who deserve to be recognized.”

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, this is the fourth year of the Shine the Light contest, which celebrates the people who improve our communities.



Three winners will be announced in September, and each will receive a \$3,000 donation for their charity or nonprofit. The winners will also be featured in the September issue of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine and on social media.

### How to nominate

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers.

If you receive electricity from RVEC, you're a co-op member-consumer and we encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community.

The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

Go to [www.iowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.iowaShineTheLight.com) by June 30 to make a nomination and to review the contest rules. Nominators will need to provide basic contact information and answer this question in 500 words or less:

How has your nominee made a difference in the community, and how might their local charity/nonprofit use the \$3,000 donation?



## STAY SAFE DURING THE FOURTH OF JULY

*Make your Independence Day celebrations safe for your family by following some common-sense rules for celebrating with and near electricity.*

### 1. Keep fireworks far away from overhead power lines.

If fireworks are legal in your community and you choose to set them off yourself, keep them at least 10 feet away from power lines and 35 feet away from high-voltage wires.

### 2. Keep an eye on your grill.

Whether it's electric, gas or charcoal, do not leave a hot grill unattended, even for a few minutes. The intense grill heat can easily harm children or pets. Plus, if flames are involved, you need to be close by in case the fire gets out of control.

Cooking accidents are the leading cause of house fires.

### 3. Don't overload power cords.

If you need an extension cord to plug in your grill or another cooking appliance, do not use that cord on more than one device at a time. And do not plug extension cords into each other; they're not designed to be strung together. They can overheat and cause a fire.

### 4. Stay away from water sources.

Keep the grill, blender, TV and other appliances away from the pool and from all water sources. Even if you're a safe distance away from the water, unplug the appliance as soon as you're finished using it.

### 5. Have a working fire extinguisher.

Keep a working fire extinguisher on hand, and make sure you're familiar with how to use it.



## KEEP COOL THIS SUMMER

There's no need to lose your cool when you get your summer electric bill during the hottest days of the year. Instead, try some alternatives to cranking up the air conditioning when the sun is blazing, and it hasn't rained in days.

**✔ Install a dehumidifier.** If the indoors feels as humid as the outdoors, there's too much water in the inside air. If you see water dripping out of the air conditioner or if you must set it so low that you're freezing just to make the humidity level feel comfortable, a dehumidifier will help.

**✔ Cook outdoors or eat cold food.** Salads, raw veggies and fruit make great summer meals. And best of all, they don't require you to turn on the stove or oven, which can make the air in the kitchen too warm. Instead, gather the family for a barbecue and fire up the outdoor grill or serve a cold buffet on extra-hot evenings.

**✔ Hang bright curtains.** Red, orange and yellow tend to deflect heat, so for curtains, those colors are energy efficient. Closing the curtains or blinds during the day will keep sun rays from heating up the home you're trying to keep cool. Or install solar screens or a window tint to let in the light but keep out the heat.

**✔ Run fans.** Ceiling fans whose blades turn counterclockwise pull heat up from the room and send a soft breeze down, so anybody nearby will feel cooler. Portable electric fans placed in windows facing outward can suck heat out of a room on days when you want to give your air conditioner a break.

### ✔ Run your dishwasher, clothes washer and dryer after dark.

Appliances that use heat to operate also throw some heat into the rooms where they are located. So run these appliances during the coolest part of the day – after the sun goes down.

*Happy*  
**4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY**

The Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative office will be closed Thursday, July 4. Have a safe and enjoyable holiday!





IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine  
for members of  
Iowa's electric  
cooperatives.

June 2024

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



**WHERE**  
WE HAVE MEMBERS  
**WE**  
ACTIVELY  
**LIVE**  
OUR COMMITMENT

We're not just a service provider – we're active members of our community. We take pride in serving our members and going the extra mile in everything we do. Get closer to your **local cooperative** for ways we support you and strengthen our community.

