

JANUARY 2023

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



Understanding the co-op's  
power restoration plan

New year, smarter home

Comforting casserole recipes

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## ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Marta Smigowska, a Consumers Energy member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could win \$100!

# CELEBRATING A DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



Whether you're celebrating a birthday or a historic anniversary, 75 years is a major milestone. At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

(IAEC), January 1948 was important because it marked the first month we published a statewide newspaper for member-consumers, titled "IRECA News." Sharing news and happenings from when IAEC was known as the Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the monthly tabloid quickly became a trusted and valuable source for information as more rural Iowa homes and businesses were receiving electricity through rural electric cooperatives.

An editorial in the first issue exactly 75 years ago reads:

*"The editors will do everything their knowledge and zeal will allow to make the publication foremost in its field. They hope to present material which will so inform members they will be inspired to contact others who ought to unite with us and to convince outside readers the cooperative system merits their wholehearted support."*

## Remaining steadfast in our mission

While the name and format of our monthly statewide publication have changed a few times over the decades, our commitment to our readers has not. We remain faithful to the legacy of providing valuable information to Iowa's electric cooperative member-consumers about co-ops, rural economic development, energy efficiency, industry trends and electric safety. We also make the magazine more enjoyable by including recipes, contests and reader-submitted cover photos.

And in a world shifting to digital platforms, we prefer to mail a printed magazine each month because it breaks through the digital noise and gets read. According to a scientifically valid readership survey we conducted in 2020, 87% of those who receive our magazine take time to read it each month. In fact, 44% of those who receive this magazine spend 10 minutes or more reading our 16 pages of content each month! We simply can't get that kind of engagement in a digital format.



But we do embrace digital technology when it makes strategic sense. A few years ago, we scanned every hard copy of the statewide publication in our central files and digitized the pages of each monthly issue to preserve our archive for generations to come. I enjoy history and learning about the past in order to guide our future, so I am grateful for the ability to

access and search 900 monthly issues with the click of a mouse.

## Energy topics stay at the forefront

Reading through our archive, I have seen many topics over the decades that are cycling back in the news today, including stories on nuclear technology, supply chain concerns and generating enough electricity to meet the growing electric demand of consumers. We'll look back on some of those headlines throughout the year as we celebrate our diamond anniversary.

I like to think that those first editors would be proud of where we stand 75 years later, carrying the torch they ignited so long ago. May this monthly publication continue to provide useful information to member-consumers of Iowa's electric cooperatives for another 75 years! Our cooperative system indeed merits your wholehearted support.

*Erin Campbell is the director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win a Fire HD 10 Plus Tablet

This 10.1-inch, full HD, 32 GB tablet boasts a display that is 10% brighter than previous generation, with more than 2 million pixels. Enjoy your favorite apps like Netflix, Facebook, Hulu, Instagram and more through Amazon's Appstore. Ask Alexa to play videos and music, open apps, make calls or send messages, check the weather, access compatible smart home devices and more.

### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than Jan. 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the \$100 gift card for a local business from the November issue was Jeff V. Collins from Guthrie County REC.



**ENTER ONLINE BY JAN. 31!**

## LINE PATROL BEGINS

Annual maintenance of our entire system has started. Our 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 and split or bad poles. We check to make sure 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.

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# NEW CUSTOM EDITION, SAME CO-OP VALUES

BY JIM GOSSETT



With the new year comes new beginnings! As we ring in 2023, Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) is excited to bring you

this custom edition of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine. The monthly publication will deliver the same valuable, timely content you've come to expect from RVEC in a new full-color format that is customized for our member-owners.

Instead of receiving our monthly newsletter in the mail, you will now find RVEC announcements and articles on Pages 4-5 (and occasionally Pages 12-13) of each issue. Bringing this content into the magazine not only updates the layout of our monthly message but also allows us to gain efficiencies with printing and postage.

Sending *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* each month is an important way to educate and inform members. Timely information about energy efficiency, safety, local news about rural economic development, and emerging trends and technologies in the electric industry is a prudent financial investment to keep our membership informed and co-op strong.

We have an obligation to help you use energy wisely and safely. What's in your best interest is in our best interest. We continuously work to be a trusted local energy partner and source of honest information – and this publication is just one way we strive to serve you.

Thank you for supporting RVEC and your interest in being an educated and informed member-owner. We look forward to sharing our new custom edition of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine with you each month.

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



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RVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## POWER RESTORATION PLAN

As the winter temperatures change, storm systems bring potentially damaging winds, sleet and snow. Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) would like to guarantee you will have power 100% of the time, but that just isn't possible.

Immediately after a severe storm hits, RVEC linemen begin assessing the extent of the damage. The line superintendent designs a plan to restore power to the greatest number of members in the shortest amount of time. The severity of the outage and weather conditions always plays a

role in the time it takes to restore power.

When a storm strikes, RVEC linemen are immediately dispatched to begin the restoration process. Repairs are made at the substations first, followed by major lines and then individual service lines.

The last portion of the plan, dealing with individual outage situations, can take the greatest amount of time because of the great distance involved between houses. During that stage, linemen move house-to-house making repairs.

During the power restoration efforts, telephone calls are answered as they come in. All telephone lines coming into the office can be busy during peak periods.

The diagram (right) shows how our restoration plan works. Repairs are made to lines from the substation first. This will restore power to House 3 and Factory 4. The main service line serving Houses 7 and Factory 6 will be repaired next. Finally, the individual service line to House 8 will be repaired.

# WHAT TO DO IF THE LIGHTS GO OUT

Winter weather can be harsh and unpredictable. Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) wants you to be prepared in case severe weather causes a power outage.

Here are a few tips for when winter weather hits:

- If your power goes out, see if your neighbors are also without power. If they have power, check your breakers.
- Turn off all lights in your home but keep one light on to let you know when the power is restored.
- Unplug appliances, TVs, computers and all electronic equipment to prevent damage when the electricity is restored. If there are too many appliances drawing electricity when the power is first restored, the system could overload and cause the power to go out again.
- Have batteries handy for flashlights and a radio. Make sure these items are in a convenient location so you can find them in the dark.

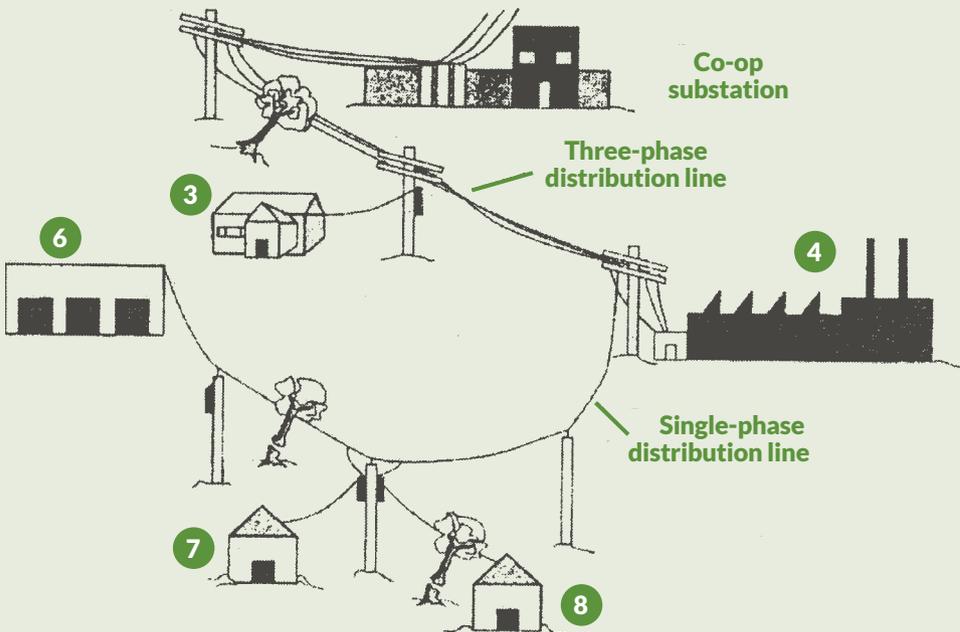


- Stay away from downed lines or tree limbs on power lines. Most downed lines are still “live” and can electrocute you if touched. Report these dangerous situations to RVEC.
- If you don’t have an alternative heat source, put on heavy clothing before you get cold.
- Pull the drapes to save heat. Don’t open windows or doors

unnecessarily. You want to keep heat in the house.

- Try to be patient while your power is being restored. RVEC will have your lights on as soon as possible.

The most important thing to remember is to call RVEC. Please have your location number ready when you call. We want to get your power restored as quickly and safely as possible!



## 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.

# PROTECTING AMERICA'S ABUNDANT SUPPLY OF RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE ELECTRIC POWER

BY CONGRESSMAN RANDY FEENSTRA  
AND CHUCK SODERBERG

**Editor's Note:** The following column was published in *The Hill* as an op-ed in late November to educate Congressional leaders about reliability concerns within the electric industry. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives has a strong legacy of working with Iowa's elected officials and policymakers to raise awareness about issues affecting the safety, affordability and reliability of power for the cooperative member-consumers we serve.

In today's world, electricity is essential. American families rely on electricity daily to heat and cool their homes, wash their clothes, cook their meals, charge their phones, turn on the lights and connect to the world. And while it might seem like magic, electricity is not generated out of thin air. We expect the lights to turn on when we flip a switch and our phones to charge when we plug them into an outlet. Our energy policies must reflect these expectations and ensure that our families, businesses and communities have access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Over the last few years, green-energy absolutists and federal policymakers

have prioritized an untenable, unrealistic and costly energy agenda over commonsense policies to power our country and provide American families with reliable, affordable energy. This detrimental agenda for American-made energy at the highest levels of government has caused gas increases and volatile electricity costs. Even worse, these policies have the potential to be particularly catastrophic for our rural communities, farm families and main street businesses.

### **Local model empowers lowans, ensures abundant supply**

As opposed to states like California, whose one-size-fits-all energy policies

impose production restrictions that lead to blackouts and high costs, Iowa is home to 48 locally owned, community-focused electric cooperatives that prioritize reliability and affordability for the more than 650,000 lowans and 210,000 businesses, homes and farms that they serve.

Thanks to local governance and diversified power generation sources, the average co-op member household in Iowa pays about \$5 a day for electricity and Iowa electric cooperatives have returned more than \$300 million to their member-owners in the form of retired capital credits. These low costs and attractive

returns are only possible due to a commonsense management approach that empowers electric cooperatives to invest in the most productive and cost-effective power sources for their member-consumers. We urge national policymakers to do the same.

To support a robust cooperative ecosystem and expand abundant supplies of affordable electricity, lawmakers must prioritize economic and energy certainty for electric cooperatives by advancing an all-of-the-above American energy strategy that prioritizes permitting reform and provides low-interest capital for community development projects.

### All-of-the-above energy strategy is critical

Reliable and affordable electricity generation requires source flexibility and policy malleability. In other words, Congress should embrace an all-of-the-above energy agenda that ensures that Iowans can access affordable electricity when and where they need it, while simultaneously investing in renewable energy sources that are abundant in Iowa like wind power.

To date, Iowa electric co-ops have invested in 33 wind farms, over a dozen utility-scale and community-based solar projects, four landfill gas projects, five methane digesters and multiple hydroelectric stations to complement more traditional power sources like natural gas and coal. Some co-ops are also looking at small-scale nuclear technology as another dispatchable power generation option.

Additionally, Iowa electric co-ops have interconnected roughly

2,200 member-owned generation installations as a demonstration of support for an all-inclusive generation mix, even from non-utility locations. By allowing local cooperatives to determine the best, most comprehensive energy strategy for their consumers, our families, farms and businesses benefit from lower costs, energy security and vital investments in our rural communities.

### Prioritizing permitting reform

Congress needs to prioritize federal regulatory and permitting reform. While a great deal of buzz was generated during the end of September over this issue, we are confident that a serious debate is needed over how the federal government can facilitate the development of critical energy and transmission projects. As firm believers in local control, we believe the value of energy infrastructure is best determined by those who will benefit from a particular project. Allowing utilities and the people they serve to have a voice in where a transmission line might be located and who might pay for it is important. The federal government isn't always in the best position to tell the American people what is in their best interests locally.

### Strengthening rural economies and communities

We need to protect and strengthen the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program, which powers economic and community development and keeps families and good-paying jobs in rural Iowa. This program provides zero-interest loans of up to one million dollars to local utilities and cooperatives, which

are then tasked with passing this funding along to small businesses and community organizations to support initiatives that create jobs, enhance economic opportunity, revitalize main streets and aid small businesses in rural America.

Ensuring that our rural communities have access to the capital and credit they need to strengthen long-term economic vitality and attract new residents and businesses to populate small, vibrant towns must be a top priority of the 118th Congress and the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization.

Electric cooperatives play a crucial role in delivering safe, affordable and reliable electricity to hundreds of thousands of Iowans and tens of millions of Americans. In both the long and short term, the largest threat to our nation's energy producers and electricity distributors remains federal overreach and unrealistic mandates. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Congress to eliminate red tape that hinders their ability to power our businesses, homes, hospitals and farms and to instead provide them with the flexibility to streamline baseload power generation and diversify their power sources.

Our laws must allow electric cooperatives to do what they do best: power our local economies and provide our thriving communities with reliable, affordable electric power that we all rely on every day.

*Congressman Randy Feenstra represents Iowa's 4th congressional district, and Chuck Soderberg is the executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.*





## BAKED GOULASH

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded, divided
- 1 24-ounce jar spaghetti sauce
- 1 8-ounce package elbow macaroni, cooked and drained
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

Brown beef and onion, drain. In large bowl, combine 1 cup cheese and remaining ingredients. Add beef and onion to pasta and sauce mixture. Place in 9x13-inch baking dish and top with remaining 1 cup cheese. Bake covered at 350 degrees F for 20-25 minutes until done. *Serves 6-8*

Connie Betts • Woodbine  
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

## BEV'S CASSEROLE

- ¼ pound cooked chicken, turkey or ham
- 1 cup uncooked macaroni
- 1 cup cheese, cut up
- 1 can cream of mushroom or chicken soup
- 1 cup milk
- 3 tablespoons onion, chopped

Mix all ingredients together and put in a 9-inch square baking dish. Cover and refrigerate several hours or overnight. Bake covered at 350 degrees F for 45 minutes. Make this simple casserole with leftover chicken, turkey or ham. Add a salad and your next meal is ready. *Serves 6*

Rhonda Benton • Rowan • Prairie Energy Cooperative

## CHICKEN PASTA OVERNIGHT CASSEROLE

- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 6-8 dashes tabasco sauce
- garlic salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 cups Colby Jack cheese, shredded, divided
- 1 7-ounce package shell pasta, uncooked
- 3-4 cups chicken, cooked and cubed
- 1 can water chestnuts, sliced and drained
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 cup celery, sliced
- 1 small bag frozen mixed vegetables

Put soups in mixing bowl and beat to smooth. Add milk, 1 cup at a time, until absorbed. Add seasonings and stir well. Add 1 cup cheese and remaining ingredients, stir until well mixed. Pour into buttered or sprayed 9x13-inch casserole dish. Cover tightly with saran or Press-n-Seal wrap. Refrigerate overnight. Set out 1 hour before baking. Bake covered with foil at 325 degrees F for 1½ hours. Uncover and add remaining 1 cup cheese. Cook for 30 minutes more for light browning. *Serves 10-12*

Belinda Fink • Cambridge • Consumers Energy

## UPSIDE DOWN PIZZA CASSEROLE

- 1½ pounds ground beef
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon onion, chopped or minced
- 1 16-ounce jar spaghetti sauce
- sliced pepperoni, optional
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1 cup flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Parmesan cheese

Brown beef with salt, pepper and onion, drain. Mix beef with spaghetti sauce and pepperoni, if desired. Layer the meat mixture in a 9x13-inch pan. Sprinkle mozzarella cheese over meat. Make a crust by mixing flour, eggs, milk and oil. Pour the crust mixture over top. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top and bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour. *Serves 6-8*

Judy Jackson • Hedrick  
Access Energy Cooperative

## BUSY DAY CASSEROLE

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 4 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 can mixed vegetables
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 pound cheese, shredded, optional

Brown beef with butter, drain grease. Put in 10x10x2-inch glass baking dish. Add potatoes, salt, vegetables and soup. Mix will and cover. Bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour, or until potatoes are done. If desired, top with cheese and melt in the oven for a few minutes. *Serves 9*

Raymond Robbins • Fort Madison  
Access Energy Cooperative

## CABBAGE CASSEROLE

- 1 medium head cabbage
- ½ cup butter or margarine
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

Cut up and cook cabbage, then place in casserole dish. Combine butter and flour and cook 2 minutes. Add milk, cream cheese, salt and pepper. Stir until cream cheese is melted. Pour mixture over cabbage. Bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour. *Serves 4-6*

Lori Collingwood • Ladora  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## CHEESEBURGER QUICHE

- ½ pound ground beef, browned
- ⅓ cup onion, chopped
- ½ cup milk
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1½ cups cheese, shredded
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- pie shell, optional

Mix ingredients together and place in pie pan, with or without pie shell. Bake at 350 degrees F for 35 minutes. *Serves 4*

Rebecca Hancox • Plano  
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative

## HAM/CHICKEN CASSEROLE

- 1 box Rice-a-Roni wild rice
- ½ small package frozen peas
- 1½-2 cups ham, diced
- 1½-2 cups rotisserie chicken, bite-sized pieces
- 2 cups cheese, shredded
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- ½ teaspoon curry powder
- croutons

Prepare wild rice according to package directions. Mix all ingredients together except for croutons. Place in a greased 9x13-inch casserole pan. Top with croutons (can substitute with diced bread mixed in melted butter). Bake at 350 degrees F for 1-1½ hours, or until hot and bubbly. *Serves 12*

Deb Wentzien • Lincoln  
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

WANTED:

## BEEF RECIPES

THE REWARD:

\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is Jan. 31

Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions. Also provide the number of servings per recipe.

EMAIL: [recipes@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:recipes@ieclmagazine.com)

(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

MAIL: Recipes

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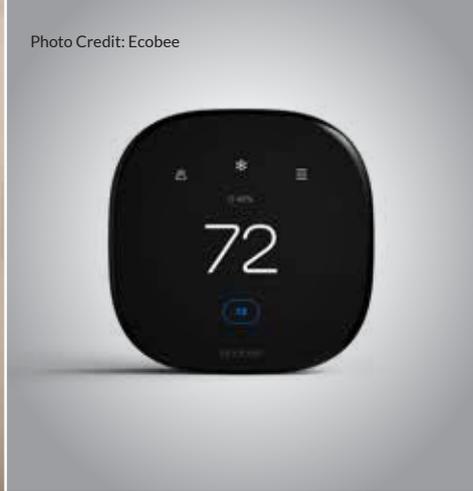
# NEW YEAR, SMARTER HOME

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE





Smart window coverings, such as these Serena Smart Roller Shades, can help save energy in the winter and summer with app capabilities and preset schedules.



Smart home technologies allow you to control your appliances and devices from anywhere on your smartphone.

You've probably heard the term "smart home" a lot in recent years. If you're curious about what makes a home smart, how it can boost energy efficiency and help you save money, you've come to the right place.

"Smart" was originally an acronym for self-monitoring analysis and reporting technology. It refers to technology that can be programmed for automation or controlled remotely using Bluetooth or Wi-Fi from a smartphone app or online. A smart home is one with automated control of appliances and systems, such as lighting fixtures and heating and cooling systems.

There are multiple reasons people choose to automate their homes, including convenience, energy efficiency and security. Just because a product is smart doesn't mean it's energy efficient. Added connectivity, lights and touchscreens can actually increase your energy use. Always look for the ENERGY STAR® logo when shopping, which certifies the products meet standards for energy efficiency.

Energy savings typically come from automating the systems, devices and appliances in your home to use less energy or use energy when it costs less. Here are a few ways you can start implementing smart technology at home.

### Smart upgrades for the entire home

Because heating and cooling account for the most energy use in a home, these systems are the best place to look for energy savings.

Smart thermostats offer features and functionality that can help you

save energy and money without thinking about it, including learning preferences and automatically setting temperatures. Geofencing is a feature that uses your phone's location to gauge your distance from home and adjusts the temperature accordingly.

Smart thermostats also let you control the thermostat from anywhere with an internet connection, and automatic software updates use new algorithms to maximize energy savings. Features vary by product, so be sure to choose one that's right for you.

Smart window coverings are increasing in popularity and availability. They can help save energy both in the winter and summer by operating based on the temperature of the room or a preset schedule.

Smart lighting can help you remotely control lights in your home based on occupancy or a preset schedule. Lighting also can be paired with home security systems.

You can use smart outlets and power strips to control devices from outside the home or manage use based on load. For example, you can plug your computer and devices into a load-sensing power strip that turns off peripheral devices, such as monitors and printers, when your computer is not in use.

### Smart streaming for the living room

Many people use Wi-Fi to stream TV shows and movies. Smart TVs with built-in streaming functionality offer the most efficient way to stream content. If your TV cannot connect to the internet for streaming, opt for

a streaming media player, such as Roku or Apple TV. They use 15 times less energy than a gaming console to stream the same shows and movies.

### Save on suds in the laundry room

Smart washing machines can be scheduled for off-peak energy times (when people in your community use less energy), which is helpful if your electric rate is based on the time of day energy is used. Smart clothes dryers can shut off automatically when your clothes are dry.

### Smart savings in the kitchen

There are many options for smart appliances in the heart of the home. Smart refrigerators offer energy-saving features, such as notifications when the door is left open. Some models have digital screens that show the fridge's contents to keep you from opening the door.

Smart ovens let you preheat when you are on your way home or check if you forgot to turn off the oven when you are away. Toasters, range hoods, microwaves and countertop ice makers are among the growing list of additional smart kitchen gadgets available.

More smart home technologies are on the horizon, bringing more ways to operate the various systems, devices and appliances in your home. As you think about ways to make your home smarter, remember to look for products that use the same smart home apps, which will make these new technologies even easier to manage.

*Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

# SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

## Wind Energy and Turbine Technology Program Scholarship administered by Iowa Lakes Community College

Committed to the communities it serves and to the production of renewable energy, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, power supplier to Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC), partners with Iowa Lakes Community College to offer a scholarship opportunity to students who study wind energy and turbine technology. Corn Belt Power is interested in maintaining a skilled and educated workforce that can install, maintain and service modern wind turbines.

Applicants must be enrolled in the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program at Iowa Lakes Community College.

One \$500 scholarship will be awarded annually to an individual who has met the requirements set forth. Recipients may be either first- or second-year students but are eligible for only one scholarship. Each scholarship will be split equally between the first two semesters of enrollment after receiving the scholarship. Scholarship proceeds will be used for tuition, fees and books.

To be considered a candidate for the Corn Belt Power Cooperative Scholarship, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Achieve a high school grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
2. Accepted as a full-time student in the identified program at Iowa Lakes Community College.
3. Be an Iowa resident.
4. File scholarship application with Iowa Lakes Community College by April 1.
5. Maintain 2.5 minimum grade point average; eligibility shall be reviewed each semester.

The primary criteria for the award will be the candidate's potential for success and grade point average.

For more information, contact Iowa



Lakes Community College, 800-242-5106, ext. 4491.

## Electrical Technology, Powerline, Powerline Technology or Substation Technician Scholarships administered by Northwest Iowa Community College

Corn Belt Power Cooperative, power supplier to RVEC, is partnering with Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon, to offer scholarship opportunities. As a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, Corn Belt Power is committed to the communities it serves and to maintaining a skilled and educated workforce to serve its members well into the future.

Applicants must be enrolled in one of the following technical programs at Northwest Iowa Community College: Electrical Technology, Powerline, Powerline Technology or Substation Technician.

Four separate \$500 scholarships will be awarded annually to individuals who have met the eligibility requirements. Recipients may be either first- or second-year students but are eligible for only one scholarship. Each scholarship will be split equally between the first two semesters of enrollment after receiving the scholarship. Scholarship proceeds may be used for tuition, fees and books.

To be considered a candidate for

the Corn Belt Power Cooperative Scholarship, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Reside in a county served by a member cooperative of Corn Belt Power Cooperative.
2. Achieve a high school grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
3. Accepted as a full-time student in one of the identified programs at Northwest Iowa Community College.
4. File scholarship application with the Northwest Iowa Community College Foundation by March 1.
5. Maintain 2.5 minimum grade point average; eligibility shall be reviewed each semester.

All applicants are required to submit a letter of reference from a high school instructor, guidance counselor, current employer or manager of a member electric cooperative with their applications. This reference should address the applicant's potential for success in the program chosen for enrollment. The primary criteria for the award will be the candidate's potential for success and grade point average.

For an application form or more information, contact the Northwest Iowa Community College Foundation, 603 West Park Street, Sheldon, IA 51201-1046, 800-352-4907, ext. 246.

# HOW ELECTRIC VEHICLES IMPACT THE GRID

BY KATHERINE LOVING

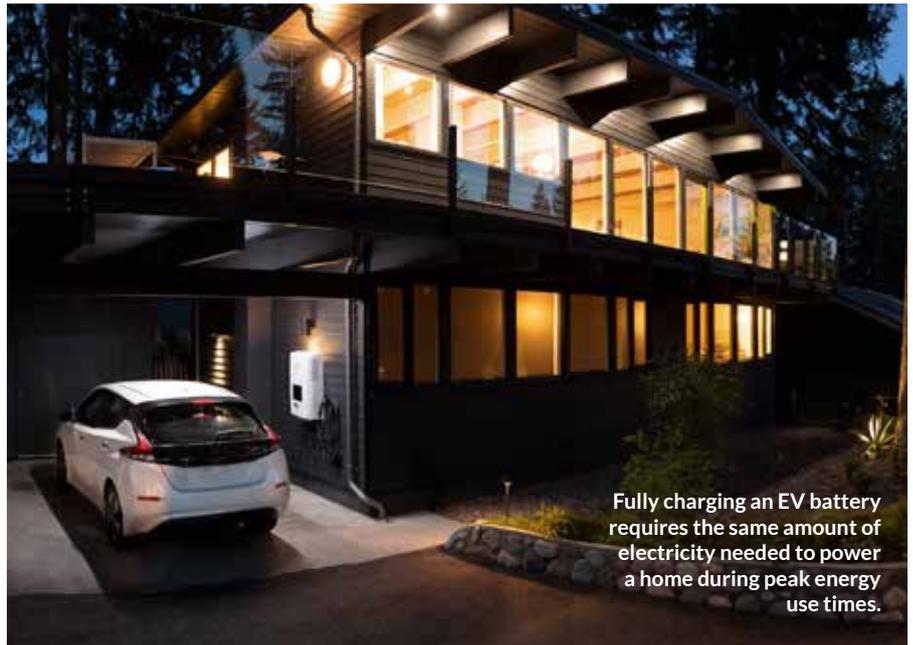
There was a record increase in electric vehicle (EV) sales last year, and experts predict that by 2035, many major vehicle manufacturers will only produce electric models. With this increase comes the need for more electricity to power EVs.

A 2021 Department of Energy study showed that increased electrification, or replacement of direct fossil fuel use with electricity, would account for a 38% increase in electricity demand by 2050 – and EVs will play a major role in this increased electrification. These shifts will significantly impact the nation's grid, which means power supply and grid infrastructure must be carefully planned to accommodate the increased need for electricity.

## The realities of EV charging

EV charging presents new challenges in maintaining the electric grid. Fully charging an EV battery requires the same amount of electricity needed to power a home during peak energy use times. However, EV charging is a concentrated pull of energy over an extended period, which can add stress to the local power grid by increasing the amount of electricity a utility has to provide. Additionally, the neighborhood transformer needs adequate capacity to handle the increased load. EV charging can shorten the lifespan of transformers by straining and overloading their capacity if they are not matched to a neighborhood's energy needs.

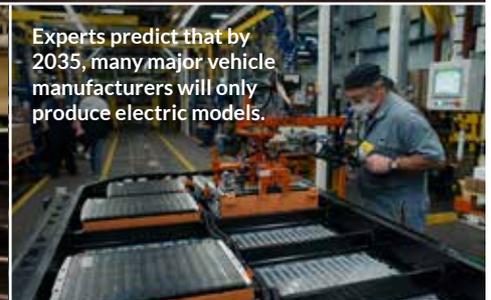
Electric cooperatives are currently identifying ways to manage this new pattern of electricity use, though exact strategies will vary based on each utility's unique needs. Analyzing energy load patterns or identifying where and when the local grid has spikes in demand can provide electric co-ops with data on where to place higher-capacity transformers. This analysis can also provide a picture of overall energy use and patterns to help forecast energy consumption for the



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future. Planning system maintenance and upgrades are also part of that long-range forecasting; however, this has been recently complicated by supply chain issues with transformers, as wait times are upward of one year.

## Coordinating helps ease demand

EV owners can play a role in reducing energy costs and system stress associated with charging. Check with your local electric co-op to see if they offer an EV charging rate. Typically, an EV rate incentivizes charging during the night when electricity demand and wholesale energy rates are lower. Charging at night is also a great way to ease demand in your neighborhood, even without a special EV rate.

Another potential change on the horizon is a new energy peak time. EV drivers that plug in to charge as soon

as they return home from work would create even more electricity demand during this busy time of day. But if EV drivers use a timer to schedule charging at night, the electricity demand could be spread over a more extended period to reduce stress on the grid. This would be especially beneficial for neighborhoods with multiple EV drivers.

EVs are only expected to increase in number. Electric co-ops and EV owners both have roles to play in accommodating increased demand. If you own an EV, let your electric co-op know so they can better plan energy demand for you and your neighbors.

*Katherine Loving writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

Photo credit: Ford

# HOW TO SAFELY USE A GENERATOR

Before using a portable generator, it's essential to understand the potential dangers associated with using them, such as their production of carbon monoxide (CO). CO is an odorless, colorless and tasteless poisonous gas that is called the "silent killer" because it is virtually undetectable without the use of technology like CO alarms. Follow these tips when using a generator.

- **Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator.** Be sure you understand the directions before hooking up the generator.
- **A generator is a temporary power source.** It should never be used as a permanent solution.
- **Maintain adequate ventilation because generators emit CO.** It's against fire code to operate a generator in your home, garage or other enclosed building. Place it in a dry location outdoors. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends generators be positioned at least 20 feet from doors, windows and vents to prevent CO from entering the home.
- **Never plug a portable electric generator into a wall outlet or connect directly to a home's wiring.** This can energize utility power lines and injure you or others working nearby. Electrical back feed can also damage the generator and home electrical equipment.
- **Turn off the generator and allow cooling before refueling.** Gasoline and its vapors may ignite if they come in contact with hot components or an electric spark. Store fuel in a properly designed container in a secure location away from the generator or other fuel-burning appliances, such as water heaters. Always have a fully charged, approved fire extinguisher located nearby.



Photo: Honda

- **Protect your appliances.** Turn off or disconnect all appliances and lights before you begin operating the portable generator. Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit. Remember, generators are for temporary usage, so prioritize your needs.
- **Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated in wet conditions.** Use a generator only when necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- **Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.** Many generator components are hot enough to burn you during operation.
- **Use proper extension cords.** Use only safety-tested, shop-type electrical cords designed and rated for heavier, outdoor use to connect appliances. Many generators are equipped with twist-lock connects to reduce the chance of accidental disconnections due to vibrations.
- **Shut down the generator properly.** Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
- **Remember maintenance between uses.** Drain the gasoline from the generator while it is being stored. It's also a good idea to inspect the fuel and oil filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality, and to start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency situation happens.

For more information, visit Safe Electricity at [safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org)

# HOW TO LIVE TO BE 115

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

Ever get into one of those conversations where you think, “How did that THAT topic come up?”

It happened during a luncheon at the 2022 statewide rural electric cooperative (REC) annual meeting in Des Moines. As we finished our salad, the conversation turned to cigarettes, of all things. A gentleman from eastern Iowa mentioned he quit smoking years ago but still craves a cigarette now and then.

He recalled the cigarette machine in the lunchroom at the American Institute of Business (AIB) in Des Moines when he was a student there in the 1970s. Those cigarettes were \$0.50 a pack, higher than the typical \$0.35 or \$0.40 at local stores. But hey, they were handy. AIB even placed ashtrays outside the classrooms for extra convenience.

While I’ve never been a smoker, I chimed in with a memory from the 1991 Iowa REC Youth Tour. As we flew to Washington, D.C., I remember how one of the livelier participants got busted for messing with the ashtrays in the armrests.

The former smoker commented that when he flew in years past, he was seated in the smoking section, which was usually in the back six or so rows. (Not sure how that kept the smoke away from the other passengers. Go figure.)

“It seemed like everyone smoked back then,” added another gentleman at our lunch table. As everyone nodded in agreement, the conversation turned to health and longevity as we enjoyed fruit pie for dessert. The former smoker recalled a hard-working local contractor in his area who smoked a pack of cigarettes a day and drank a fifth of whiskey for good measure. He lived to be about 93 years old.

## Wise words from a supercentenarian

I mentioned I’m from Lake City, the



Darcy Dougherty Maulsby with Bessie Hendricks of Lake City at her 110th birthday party. Bessie turned 115 in November.

same hometown of the oldest person in America and the fourth oldest living person in the world – Bessie Hendricks. Bessie and I share a Nov. 7 birthday. Bessie was born in 1907 and turned 115 this past November. Her lifetime has seen 21 presidents, the sinking of the Titanic and two world wars.

A few years ago, I visited Shady Oaks Care Center in Lake City to interview Bessie and her adult children. When I asked her secrets to longevity, the retired farm wife credited hard work. She also advised to “stay away from doctors.”

Bessie takes hardly any medication and still enjoys listening to her family

sing “You Are My Sunshine.” (She used to sing along but turning 115 does come with some limitations.) Much to my delight, Bessie also enjoys eating dessert.

If you ask doctors to explain supercentenarians (people who are 110 or older), they’ll usually say a lot of this longevity is due to good genes. While we can’t do much about our genes, we can make a New Year’s resolution to stay positive, just like Bessie.

And for good measure, ditch the cigarettes, but don’t skip dessert.

*Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family’s Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at [www.darcymaulsby.com](http://www.darcymaulsby.com).*



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