

in touch



WITH MEMBERS OF PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Annual Meeting to be held June 8

Prairie Energy Cooperative will hold its annual meeting on June 8, 2011 – many of our member-owners do not take advantage of this opportunity to see democracy at work. YOU are the cooperative – when you signed up for electric service, you became a member-owner and our annual meeting is YOUR annual meeting.

Cooperatives were formed in the 1930's to provide rural residents with electricity. Why? The "city" utilities had no interest in providing electricity to rural America due to the high cost and lack of profit. Thankfully, rural residents joined together to help themselves and rural electric cooperatives were formed.

Each year, your cooperative gives it member-owners the opportunity to elect the officials that look out for the best interest of YOU, the member-owner. These directors are the voice of the membership and help guide the cooperative. The Annual meeting is a great place to get to know who your elected directors are.

The annual meeting is also a great place for you to learn more about the cooperative and to meet its employees. When your Annual meeting booklet arrives in May – please take the time to see what your cooperative has to offer and be sure to join us at this year's annual meeting of the member-owners!

This year's meeting will be held at the Clarion-Goldfield High School.



Greg Anderson, left, energy advisor, Prairie Energy Cooperative discuss the advantages of a Marathon water heater with contractors Jeff Peck, Crystal Lake and Paul Wright, Eagle Grove, at the Momentum Is Building conference Feb. 10 in West Des Moines.

Local building professionals attend energy-efficient building conference

The annual Momentum Is Building conference, sponsored by Iowa's electric cooperatives, was recently held in West Des Moines. Attendees include cooperative staff and building professionals from across Iowa, including electricians, HVAC professionals and building contractors.

The two-day conference focused on energy-efficient building practices by nationally known speakers, displays of the latest building products and techniques, and networking among the building professionals and electric cooperative staff. Momentum Is Building is partially funded by a grant from the Iowa Energy Center.

Topics addressed at the conference included:

- * Energy Efficiency Trends for Iowa
- * Electric Code Update
- * Geothermal Heat Pump Basics and Advanced Applications
- * Insulation Fundamentals
- * Hands-on Wall Building
- * Safe Deep Retrofits
- * Energy Efficiency: It's Good Business
- * Legislation Affecting Local Building Businesses

Several of the sessions provided continuing education credits for the attending professionals.

Prairie Energy Cooperative Energy Advisor, Greg Anderson says, "Each year Prairie Energy participates in the conference, along with our local building trades professionals so that we learn new energy-efficient techniques and building science principles that can be applied to building and remodeling projects in our community."

To learn more about attending Momentum Is Building in the future, contact Anderson at 515-532-2805 or email ganderson@prairieenergy.coop.

Plan for PROPER GRAIN BIN Clearances

When you start to plan for a new grain bin, please contact your electric cooperative or Corn Belt Power Cooperative in Humboldt. They will provide the assistance you need for a safe environment for everyone working and living around grain bins.

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) C2-2007 "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 September 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator*

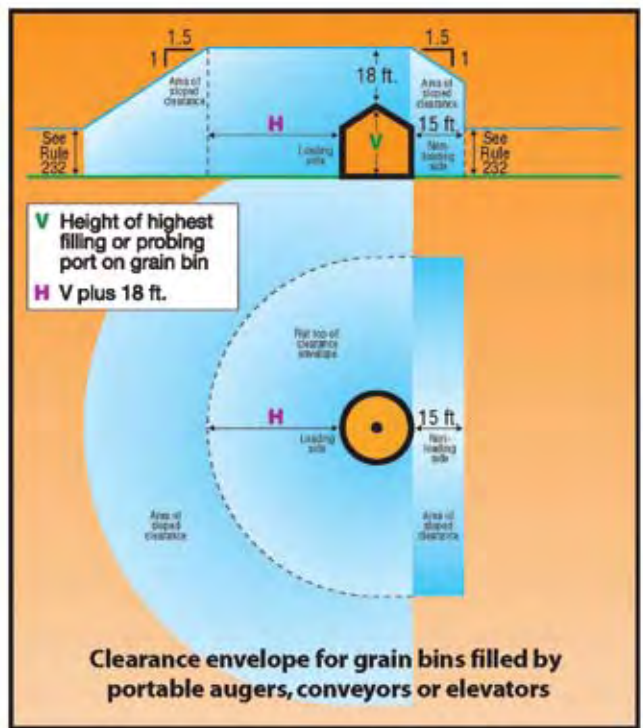
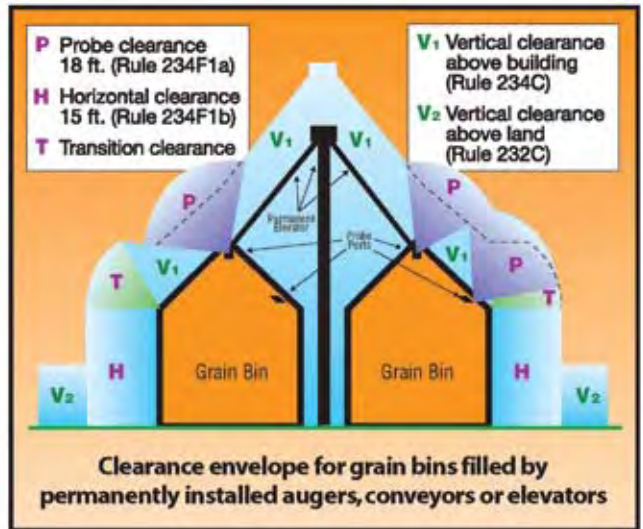


systems installed after December 24, 1997. (As adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board)

In addition, your electric cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative are required by the Iowa Utilities Board to provide an annual notice to farm lenders, grain bin merchants, and city and county zoning officials. This notice was sent in April 2011.

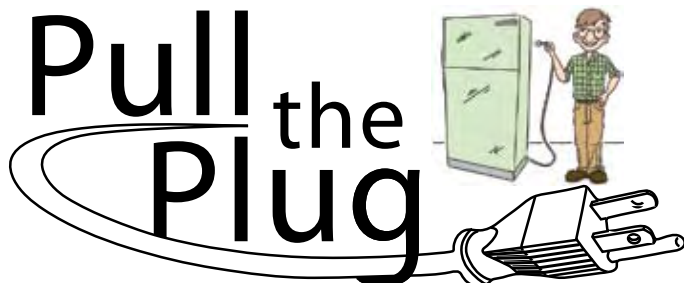
The drawings here show the specific clearances required. If you have any questions concerning the drawings, please contact your electric cooperative.

- Butler County REC.....(319) 267-2726
- Corn Belt Power.....(515) 332-2571
- Franklin REC.....(641) 456-2557
- Grundy County REC.....(319) 824-5251
- Humboldt County REC.....(515) 332-1616
- Prairie Energy Cooperative.....(515) 532-2805



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Recycle and earn a \$25 rebate check



Last year Iowa's rural electric cooperatives partnered with Environmental Services of Iowa to provide appliance recycling for co-op members.

The service, termed Pull the Plug, rewards members with an instant \$25 rebate for recycling an old, but working freezer, refrigerator, or window air conditioner.

Co-op members across Iowa recycled 1,770 air conditioners, freezers, and refrigerators in 2010.

Thank you for saving energy!

Contact your electric co-op today to recycle an appliance.

Time's running out: Filling the generation gap

Electric co-ops have important energy choices to make. We can't stall or wait for a magic "electricity" bullet. Tighter government regulations—and the high cost to comply with new rules—may signal lights-out for many of the nation's older coal-fired power plants at a time when forecasters predict energy demand will eventually outpace supply. We're approaching crunch time on our ability to keep the lights on—we need to build new power plants.

The recent economic turmoil, terrible as it was, provided some much-needed breathing room on addressing our growing energy needs. But as the economy rebounds, so will our nation's hunger for electricity. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) predicts when the final 2010 numbers are tallied, energy use will shoot up 5 percent from 2009 levels.

Our nation needs to build new power plants before the need for electricity outstrips current generation resources. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the nation's bulk power grid watchdog, estimates we need to build 135,000 megawatts of new generation by 2017 to meet demand. Generation facilities on the drawing board, though, will only deliver 77,000 megawatts—leaving a generation gap.

Compounding this issue, some of our current power plants may soon be shut down by federal regulations. One NERC-commissioned report claims new government rules could force utilities to retire or retrofit 33,000 megawatts to 70,000 megawatts of generating capacity by 2015. Meanwhile, every year we delay building new plants drives up construction costs. If we wait too long, we could see power shortages by the end of this decade.

While electric cooperatives own and operate some of the nation's cleanest and most modern generating facilities, they continue to explore new technologies and fuel sources. Distributed generation technologies, such as fuel cells, and renewable resources like wind, sun, and biomass (landfill methane gas, wood waste, farm by-products, and ethanol) offer generation alternatives that promise economic as well as environmental benefits.

As a distribution electric cooperative, we focus on delivering affordable and reliable power to our members. We're working with our power providers, Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, to find the best fuel-mix solution for the future. We appreciate our members' support as we make these critical and time-sensitive choices. Balancing our energy needs with electricity reliability and affordability is one more way we're looking out for our members.



Crow Lake Project

Construction of Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Crow Lake Wind Project, east of Chamberlain, SD, reached a milestone marker on Feb. 5, 2011, with the installation of its 108th, and final, turbine. This \$363-million project began construction in October 2010. Electrical and control connections remain to be tied in, tested, and cleared. The entire wind project should be operational in early 2011. When operating, Basin Electric will add more than 700 megawatts of wind generation to its energy portfolio.



YOUR RURAL ELECTRIC CO-OP has always extended a helping hand to those needing it. In response to actions by the Iowa General Assembly, your REC has established RECare, a program of members helping members.

RECare will provide funds to be distributed by local community action agencies to help pay winter heating bills and to assist in weatherization of homes of low-income consumers.

You may make a one-time contribution or a monthly pledge that will be automatically added onto your monthly electric bill. Even a dollar a month pledge will help others.

RECare Consumer Authorization Form

- I will contribute \$_____ per month. I understand this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill.
- I will make a one-time contribution of \$_____ to RECare. My check is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Account Number _____

Return to your local
Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Get your house ready for spring

It won't be too long until you can open the windows and start enjoying fresh air and warm weather. Is your house ready?

Here are five items to add to your springtime to-do list that might help your home feel more comfortable and cared for before it gets hot:

1. Call a qualified service technician to inspect and maintain your air conditioning system. Paying \$100 or so now could prevent a huge expense this summer if your system breaks down on a hot day and you have to have it repaired or replaced in a hurry. Maintenance goes a long way toward preventing emergencies and can prolong the life of your equipment.

2. While you're outdoors planting and pruning, trim all of the bushes and pull all of the weeds near your air conditioner's outside condenser unit. Remove any fallen

tree limbs that landed on it, brush off leaves that have collected on or around it, and pick up trash that found its way there as it sat unused all winter. Anything that touches the unit and prevents air from circulating around it will make it perform inefficiently.

3. While you've got your shovel and spade out, consider planting some shade trees on the sunny side of your house. As they grow, they will filter the sunrays that can beat so fiercely on your windows in the summer and make your air conditioner work harder.

4. Speaking of windows, if your house still has single-pane versions, this is a good time to replace them with double-pane models. Single-pane windows are energy inefficient and can drive your air conditioning bills through the roof. You could save several hundred dollars on cooling and heating bills every year



Consider planting some shade trees on the sunny side of your house. As they grow, they will filter the sunrays that can beat so fiercely on your windows in the summer and make your air conditioner work harder.

if you replace your drafty, old windows.

5. Clean your windows, inside and out. Newer models are simple to clean because you can tilt them toward the inside of the house so you can reach both sides. Clean windows let more sunlight into your house, which means you won't have to turn on as many lights.

Co-op representatives visit State Capitol

Representatives from Calhoun County REC, Prairie Energy Cooperative, Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative met with their state legislators Feb. 9 to give electric co-ops' perspective on pending bills.

Co-ops are asking legislators to support a bill that streamlines the procedures for archeological studies required by the State Historical Preservation Office.

When it comes to renewable energy sources, electric co-ops have always supported an incentive-based approach to adding wind energy. Senate File SSB 1078 would mandate utilities have a certain percentage of renewable energy and, therefore, co-ops oppose the bill.

Co-op representatives pointed out to legislators that Iowa already ranks second nationally in wind generation output with 3,670 megawatts installed and leads the nation in wind generation as a percentage of total power output at 17 to 20 percent.



Darrell Goff, right, Exec.VP/GM, Prairie Energy Cooperative discuss issues with Sen. Merlin Bartz, left, District 6, at the Iowa State Capitol Feb. 9. Also shown is Larry Tjaden, secretary, and Jon Leerar, CEO/GM, both of Hearland Power Cooperative.