

iNtouch



WITH MEMBERS OF PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

ECA Reminder

As stated in the September and October issues of iNtouch, the Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA) will increase due to rate increases from our power supplier. You will see this increase on your January usage statement.

FYI, the energy adder will increase approximately \$.006 per kwh. Example: for every 1,000 kwhs used your increase will be \$6.00.

Your cooperative strives to keep rates affordable for its member/owners while still maintaining its financial stability and the reliability, quality and integrity of its system.

Attention Members:

Heat meters are for structured heat only. This means if you have a heat meter you cannot not have anything else hooked up to it - it is for your electric heat only! If you do have something else on your heat meter, you could lose your discounted heat rate.

Best Wishes for the Holiday Season



The directors and employees of Prairie Energy Cooperative wish you a safe and happy holiday season. We remind you to turn off electrical

decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

*All cooperative offices will be closed
Dec. 23, 26 and Jan. 2.*

Experience the wonder of Washington D.C.

For over 40 years, electric cooperatives have sponsored high school students from across America to visit the nation's capitol and meet their members of congress. You could be part of this tremendous opportunity.

High school juniors whose parents or guardians are Prairie Energy Cooperative members are invited to apply for the 2012 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., held June 15 - 21.

The goal of the youth tour is to support education and to provide opportunities for youth in rural Iowa.

Since the late 1950s, the Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) Youth Tour has brought high school juniors and seniors to Washington, D.C. for an all-expense paid tour of the city. Students

on the tour learn first-hand what it is like to be involved in politics, community development and today's social issues. They participate in National Youth Day, visit with their representative and senators and explore the sights around the nation's Capitol.

Students are selected for this program by their local electric cooperative. Prairie Energy Cooperative requires the students to complete some in-book quizzes and write a letter to an elected official.

The top three applicants will be interviewed and one winner will be selected. The winner will be announced by April 5, 2012. A \$100 savings bond will be awarded to each runner-up.

To see even more about the tour visit the National Youth Tour Web site at www.youthtour.coop and watch the 2011 Youth Tour Video. Contact Don Kammrad by email dkammrad@prairieenergy.coop or call him at 641-923-2654 or 888-225-8707 for more information.

Last day to apply is March 16, 2012.

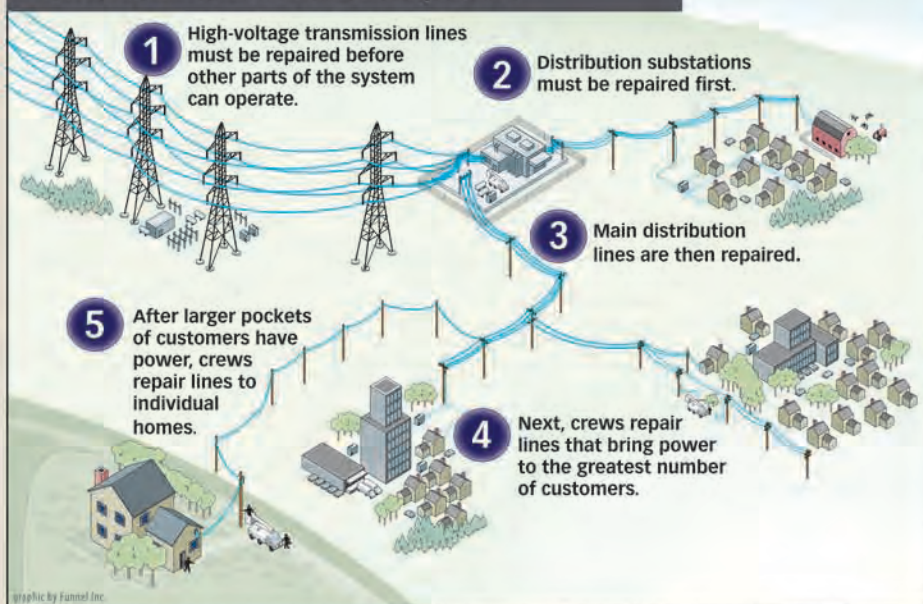
Last year's Youth Tour winner Adelai Swanson of Galt, in front of her favorite memorial, the Lincoln Memorial.



"I enjoyed every second of my time in Washington D.C. I learned more about our government and found all the monuments and memorials very patriotic and interesting. It really was the experience of a lifetime!"

**Adelai Swanson, Galt
2011 Youth Tour Participant**

How line crews restore power



When a widespread outage occurs, line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of customers in the shortest time possible. Working from substations to homes results in faster repairs for the most customers.

Iowa REC power OUTAGE MAP

Information about power outages affecting homes, businesses, and farms served by electric cooperatives in Iowa is available online. To see a state-wide map of power outages, go to your local electric cooperative's website:

- Butler County REC - www.butlerrec.coop
- Franklin REC - www.franklinrec.coop
- Grundy County REC - www.grundycountyrecia.org
- Humboldt County REC - www.humboldtrec.coop
- Prairie Energy Cooperative - www.prairieenergy.coop

Scholarships available

As a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, your local electric co-op is committed to supporting the education of students living on electric cooperative lines. Scholarships available include:

\$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship

Now through Feb. 3, 2012, applications are being accepted for a \$1,000 Basin Electric scholarship for tuition at a two-year or four-year college in the fall of 2012 (including vocational and technical schools). Contact your local electric co-op for an application form.

Northwest Iowa Community College Scholarships

Corn Belt Power Cooperative, power supplier to your electric co-op, offers four \$500 scholarships. Applicants must be enrolled in one of the following technical programs at Northwest Iowa Community College: Electrical Technology, Powerline, Powerline Technology, or Substation Technician.

Contact Sheila Van Engen, foundation secretary, Northwest Iowa Community College Foundation, 603 West Park Street, Sheldon, IA 51201-1046, 800-352-4907 ext. 246, or e-mail svanengen@nwicc.edu.

Wind Energy and Turbine Technology Scholarship

Corn Belt Power partners with Iowa Lakes Community College to offer one \$500 scholarship for a student enrolled in the school's Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program. Contact Jolene Rogers, institutional advancement/foundations, Iowa Lakes Community College, 800-242-5106, ext. 4491, or e-mail jrogers@iowalakes.edu.



Giving energy-efficient gifts



Why give energy-efficient gifts?

"Green" gifts are desirable on several counts. For starters, the person receiving the gift gets a neat gadget to use, plus energy-efficient gifts can help hold down electric costs year-round.

"Choosing a green gift can be easy," says Brian Sloboda, senior program manager for the Cooperative Research Network (CRN). "Just be aware of energy use. Think solar, reusable and recyclable."

Some Suggested Green Gift Ideas:

For decorators: LED (Light-Emitting Diode) Christmas/holiday lights (\$15-\$35). They help hold down holiday electric bills, and they stay cool to the touch.

For gardeners: Solar garden lights (\$15-\$50). Available in a wide selection of colors, styles and sizes, solar garden lights can add a lovely touch to your favorite green thumb's garden.

For cooks: Toaster oven (\$60-\$140). Especially great for the empty nester or those cooking for just one or two, toaster ovens offer an energy efficient alternative to heating a large standard oven.

For movie buffs or sports fans: ENERGY STAR-rated TVs (price based on size). TVs are getting bigger and better, but some can still use as much electricity as a refrigerator.

For Techies: Solar cell-phone charger (\$55-\$100+). Solar chargers enable users to avoid the use of energy draining chargers in the home. Place a solar charger by a window, and it can charge a cell phone or other device, including a GPS unit or even an MP3 player.

You'll discover many options when you start looking for green gifts. Get creative, and remember that what you give can help reduce someone's future electric bills.

Avoid the rush; embrace the CFL



Did you know? Replacing incandescent bulbs with ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs right away, rather than waiting until they burn out, is beneficial because you can begin to enjoy the energy savings right away. By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or the bulbs in them with ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs can save you more than \$65 each year. ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs use 75 percent less energy while providing the same amount of light.

Retailers are predicting a mad rush by consumers to stock up on incandescent light bulbs, which are being phased out by the U.S. government. Forego the frenzy to stockpile those familiar A-shaped light bulbs. Embrace

what's replacing them: CFLs, LEDs, and the new high-efficacy halogens. You can learn more about these halogens online at www.lumennow.org.

Already, a quarter of American homes are lighted by those twisty CFLs—compact fluorescent light bulbs. If you haven't already replaced your incandescent with this cool-to-the-touch, energy-efficient light bulb, now is a good time to start.

Here's why:

- **You'll save money.** CFLs cost more per bulb than incandescent, but they cost about 75 percent less to use.
- **You'll change them less often.** Nobody likes to replace light bulbs—especially the ones in ceiling fixtures. CFLs can last for up to 8,000 hours, so you'll replace them every few years instead of every few months.
- **You'll save energy.** Your electric bill might be a bit lower if you replace all of your light bulbs with CFLs. And if everyone in America did the same, we would need an estimated 90 fewer power plants. That would save a lot of CO2 emissions. In fact, a single CFL saves 450 pounds of carbon from being produced.

12 Days of Holiday Safety

It's easy to make safety a part of your holiday with these tips. Tackle one a day and you're well on your way to a safe New Year!



ESFi
Electrical Safety Foundation International

Day 1 What's that noise? Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Make sure everyone knows what to do if they hear them.

Day 2 What a shocker! Before use, inspect all electrical lights, decorations, and extension cords for damage.

Day 3 Two's company, three's a crowd. Do not overload outlets with too many decorations or devices.

Day 4 Is it working? Test your ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) to make sure they're protecting you.

Day 5 Ouch! Prevent trips and falls by keeping cords safely along walls and out of doorways and high traffic areas.

Day 6 Kids eat the darndest things! Avoid putting lights, metal hooks, breakable ornaments, and other small decorations within reach of young children.

Day 7 Thirsty? Keep your Christmas tree stand full of water. A fresh, green tree poses less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.

Day 8 Make a wish! Blow out the candles before leaving a room or going to bed.

Day 9 Nice and warm. Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn—decorations, trees, gifts, and curtains.

Day 10 Can't touch this! Consider installing tamper-resistant outlets/receptacles to prevent kids from inserting objects into the slots.

Day 11 Escape Route: Share your family fire escape plan with overnight guests.

Day 12 Hot stuff! Keep children away from cooking areas; use back burners and turn pot handles in away from little hands.

There's no greater gift you can give your family than a safe and happy holiday! Learn more at holidaysafety.org.

Keep the holiday fires burning—safely

- Never burn your Christmas tree, its branches or any of its needles or foliage in the fireplace. It will flash and crackle and put you at high risk for a house fire.

- Recycle or trash your holiday wrapping paper; do not put it in a fireplace. Wrapping paper—and newspaper—will ignite into a huge fire and throw off sparks and embers that can catch your chimney on fire. Same goes for garbage, charcoal and plastic.



- Do not coax your flames by squirting charcoal lighter, camp fuel, gasoline or any other liquid accelerant onto the logs.
- Before you light the season's first fire, have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned by a professional chimney sweep.
- Ask the sweep to install a cap on the top of the chimney to keep out debris, birds and animals.
- Equip every level of your house with both smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Test batteries twice a year and replace as needed.
- Invest in a couple of fire extinguishers: one for the kitchen and one to keep near the fireplace. Teach everyone in the house how to use them.
- Move furniture, rugs, draperies, books, newspapers and anything else that can catch on fire at least two feet away from the fireplace.
- Never, never store fuel near the fireplace or anywhere inside the house.
- Keep children and pets away from the fireplace.
- Extinguish the fire before leaving the house, going to bed or leaving the room where your fireplace is located.
- Soak hot ashes in water and place them in a metal container outside your home.

Two board members complete Leadership Program



Marion Denger, right, board president, and Jim Wellik, vice president, earned their Board Leadership Certificates. The Board Leadership Program provides ongoing education and information needed to keep directors on top of the important industry related issues and developments. Directors must earn 10 credits to receive their certificates. The program is through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

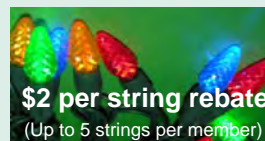
The three C's of Christmas



1. Caulk holes and cracks around windows and doors
2. Check the battery in your smoke detector
3. Change your furnace filter

2011 Holiday Lights Rebate Coupon

To apply for your rebate, purchase LED holiday lights by December 24, 2011, complete this coupon, attach your sales receipt and return to Prairie Energy Cooperative by December 31, 2011.



\$2 per string rebate
(Up to 5 strings per member)

Member Name _____

Address _____

Acct # _____

(Acct number as listed on your electric bill where the credit is to be applied.)

No. of LED holiday light strings purchased _____ (maximum rebate of 5 strings or \$10.)

Mail to: Prairie Energy Cooperative, 2099 Hwy 3W, Clarion, IA 50525