

iNtouch



WITH MEMBERS OF PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



June 15 - 21, 2012

Juniors: Enter the 2012 REC Youth Tour Contest

Prairie Energy Cooperative is sponsoring the "National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour." This trip is scheduled for June 15-21, 2012.

The winner will be rewarded with an All-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP to Washington D.C. Selections will be made from high school juniors whose parents or legal guardians are members of Prairie Energy Cooperative.

To receive a Youth Tour contest application, contact Don Kamrad by email dkamrad@prairieenergy.coop or call him at 641-923-2654 or 888-225-8707. Last day to apply - March 16, 2012.

2012 Annual Meeting of Members

Wednesday, June 6

Look for details in upcoming newsletters.

Special limited-time, low interest funding for geothermal heat pumps

The idea of owning a more efficient home and paying lower utility bills is appealing, but finding ways to fund the needed energy-efficiency improvements can be difficult during hard economic times.

Fortunately, Prairie Energy Cooperative members installing geothermal heat pumps may be eligible for a special loan program from Homeward, our cooperative's housing affiliate.

For a limited time, eligible members can borrow up to \$14,000 at 2.99% interest for seven years. Call Deb Prehm at 515-532-6477 or e-mail homeward@mchis.com to apply for a loan.

Homeowners considering geothermal heat pumps should discuss their options with a professional before making a decision. The energy advisors at Prairie Energy can help when making that decision. We do not sell the equipment, but can give you an estimated cost of operation for the different options available.

The cooperative also offers free energy audits, plus rebates for energy efficiency heating and cooling, weatherization, insulation and appliances. For rebate forms or more information check our web site www.prairieenergy.coop.

You can find information about federal tax credits that can cover 30% of the cost of materials and installation online at www.energystar.gov/taxcredits.

Employees Recognized

Four employees were recognized at the safety meeting held on December 29, 2011, for their years of service to the cooperative.



Tanner Riedesel
Lineman
5 years



Lori Demuth, Human Resources/Accountant II
10 years



Darren Johnson
Equipment Operator
10 years



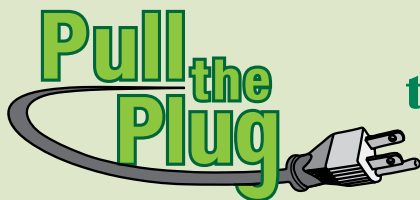
Steve Jackson
Operations Coordinator
20 years



Geothermal heat pumps rely on energy of the ground to move heat into and out of a building, providing winter heating and summer cooling.



Those old appliances use many times the electricity that newer, Energy Star-qualified appliances use. So pull that plug and save electricity.



Old refrigerators eat energy and money

Does this sound familiar? You bought a new refrigerator and moved your old fridge to a garage or basement to keep a few drinks and some surplus food items cold. Here's a tip that can help you save energy and money.

Old refrigerators, especially those bought before 1993, use more than twice as much electricity as new ENERGY STAR models. What's more, refrigerants in these older appliances weaken over time and door seals start to leak, causing a decline in the performance.

If you have moved your old refrigerator to an uninsulated location, such as a garage, it will use even more energy during hot weather. A fridge in a 90-degree environment, for example, uses nearly 50 percent more power than one in a 70-degree environment. And if the temperature falls below about 40 degrees in winter, the refrigerator's thermostat may not run

its cooling and defrost cycles for the appropriate amount of time.

Pull the plug on that old, inefficient refrigerator and show your love for energy efficiency.

Your electric co-op encourages you to get rid of old working freezers, refrigerators, and window air conditioners. We will send a certified recycling company to pick up your qualifying appliance and pay you \$25 each for up to three recycled appliances a year per residential/farm account.



If you still have a fridge from the 1980s, replace it with an ENERGY STAR qualified model and save over \$100 each year on your utility bills. Replace a fridge from the 1970s and save more than \$200 each year. Source: www.energystar.gov

Schedule a certified recycling company to pick up your qualifying old appliances by calling your electric co-op today.

Electric bills reflect weather patterns

Electric bills vary with the seasons, but how much weather affects your electric bills depends on many factors, including your home's original construction materials, insulation, and air leaks.

To save money, set your thermostat five degrees closer (lower in winter, higher in summer) to the outdoor temperature—this simple change could result in a savings of 90 watts per hour of electricity—about 197 kilowatt-hours (kWh) in three months.

An energy advisor at your electric co-op is ready to help you with a FREE residential energy audit of your home.

Contact us for more information.



Stay safe in snow and ice storms

After a snow or ice storm, avoid going outside if possible. Downed power lines could be submerged in snow and ice, making them difficult to identify.

When outside, treat all downed and hanging lines as if they are energized. Stay away, warn others to stay away, and immediately contact your utility company.

Remember that downed power lines do NOT have to be arcing, sparking, or moving to be "live"—and deadly.

- Stay inside and dress in warm, layered clothing.
- When using an alternative heat source, follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards, and be sure to properly ventilate. Always keep a multi-purpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it.
- Keep a close eye on the temperature in your home. Infants and older people are more susceptible to the cold. You may want to stay with friends or relatives or go to a shelter if you can't keep your home warm.



Power outages due to snow and ice storms are especially threatening because of extreme cold temperatures.

Iowa's electrical inspection program: How does it affect you?

If you are thinking about remodeling your kitchen, adding on a family room, or building a new pole building, the State Fire Marshal's electrical inspectors are ready to help you make those renovations safely.

At the direction of the Iowa State Legislature and the Governor, the Office of the State Fire Marshal has been working since 2007 to develop and implement a statewide electrical licensure and inspection program. The objective of this program is to ensure electrical safety through compliance with the National Electrical Code through inspections performed by trained electrical inspectors.

Since then, all electricians in Iowa have been obtaining professional licensure. With this completed, the electrical inspection phase of the program was kicked off on March 1, 2009. In the first three years, the state electrical inspectors have performed almost 70,000 inspections.

For the average Iowan looking to make renovations on their home, farm, or business, this will mean a few additional steps. **First, find out if your local government performs electrical inspections.** Electrical inspections in the remaining, non-inspected areas will now be conducted by a state electrical inspector assigned to the area. **Second, you will have to determine if the electrical work performed on your house or business requires an electrical permit.** Here are a few simple guidelines for electrical permit requirements:

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Electrical permits will be required for all new electrical installations in all areas of the state not currently under the jurisdiction of a political subdivision performing electrical inspections.

EXISTING CONSTRUCTION

Electrical permits will be required for all new installation and alterations unless **all** of the following conditions apply:

1. The installation is under the direct supervision of a properly licensed electrician.
2. The installation does not in any way involve work within a new or existing switch board or panel, such as a new circuit.
3. The installation does not exceed 30 amperes or 277 volts, single phase.

In addition to the above exemption, routine maintenance does not require an electrical permit.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Electrical permits are not required for routine maintenance. Routine maintenance has been defined as *"the repair or replacement of existing electrical apparatus or equipment of the same size and type for which no changes in the wiring are made."*

As a general rule, all electrical installations must be done by a licensed electrician. However, there are exceptions to licensing that allow homeowners and farmers to do their own work.



An electrical inspection will also be required any time that the service is disconnected to facilitate a component repair or an upgrade. Some utilities will also require an inspection if the electricity has been disconnected for an extended time.

Homeowners and farmers are allowed to do electrical work on their home or accessory building as long as the existing home is their primary residence and if they qualify for the homeowner tax exemption. A farmer can do electrical work on any of his agricultural use property. All are subject to electrical inspections.

Requests for electrical permits, fee payments, and requests for inspections may be made online at <https://iowaelectrical.gov>. This site also has an interactive inspector map. By clicking on your county, you will be provided the inspection phone numbers of every jurisdiction in your county. Accommodations have been made for those without Internet access – just contact your state inspector and he can guide you through the process. At <https://iowaelectrical.gov> you can also find a list of licensed electricians, electrical contractors, and answers to frequently asked questions.

You can also call the Chief Electrical Inspector's office at 515-725-6147 for more information.

YOUR licensed electrician is a PRO

Leave electrical work to licensed, professional electricians.

Electricity can be dangerous in a home that's improperly wired; has overloaded circuits; or has exposed or defective wiring, receptacles, and switches. Even if the job seems simple, it's better to call a professional electrician to do it.

Iowa's licensed electricians have hours of on-the-job training under the supervision of a more experienced electrician and have passed an exam. Data from the State of Iowa fire incident reporting system shows a 35 percent reduction in electrical fires since state inspections started in March 2009.


The time and money you spend hiring a professional will more than pay off in peace of mind and a safe home.



Recipe Winner

Veda Faro, of Stanhope, submitted the winning recipe "Cheesy Sausage Quiche" for the December issue of Living with Energy in Iowa. Veda won a \$50 credit on her power bill. Veda's winning recipe is below.

To find out how you can be a winner, check out the recipe section of this month's Living with Energy in Iowa magazine.



Cheesy Sausage Quiche

1 pound pork sausage	1/2 cup chopped onion
1/3 cup chopped green pepper	1 tablespoon flour
1-1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese	1 pie shell, unbaked
2 eggs, beaten	1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
3/4 teaspoon seasoned salt	1 cup evaporated milk
1 tablespoon parsley flakes	1/2 teaspoon pepper

Fry sausage, onion and green pepper; drain. Add flour and cheese and mix well. Put into pie shell and spread evenly. Combine remaining ingredients and pour over sausage mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 to 60 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

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Matt Hefty

Completes Apprentice Lineman Program

Matt Hefty has acquired his Journeyman/Lineman status by successfully completing the requirements for the Merchant Job Training and Safety Program.

Matt is also a graduate of Northwest Community College in Sheldon, IA. He joined Prairie Energy Cooperative in February of 2010.

Congratulations Matt.

Summary of Procedures for Annual Meeting

ARTICLE VII, Section 2 states.....

Candidates for election to the Board of Directors shall be nominated by a Nominating Committee, which committee shall be elected by the Board of Directors. Said Nominating Committee members so elected shall nominate candidates for election to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting of Members following the meeting at which said Nominating Committee members are elected.

Any twenty (20) or more members may make other nominations in writing over their signatures not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting at which directors are to be elected, and the Secretary shall post the same at the same place where the list of nominations by the Committee is posted; such nominations so made by such members to be subject to the same service requirements as nominations by the Nominating Committee heretofore prescribed.

Members voting at the annual meeting of members shall vote only for candidates from the district in which said member resides or receives service. The election of the directors shall be by ballot, and each voting member shall be entitled to cast one vote for each director to be elected from that member's district. Members may vote by mail-in ballot, to the extent that the same is consistent with the Bylaws of the Cooperative and if the Board of Directors has authorized such voting prior to the meeting at which the election is to occur. The election of directors shall be subject to ratification by a majority of all members present at the Annual Meeting of Members, and directors elected shall qualify and take office immediately following the Annual Meeting of Members.