

● JANUARY 2026

# Iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

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# THREE REASONS FOR OUR FIRST ENERGY RATE CHANGE IN 10 YEARS

BY TIM MARIENAU



As demand for electricity continues to grow and the cost of generating power rises nationwide, utilities across the country are feeling

the impact – and Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) is no exception. These broader industry pressures influence every part of our operations, from the wholesale power we purchase to the materials required to maintain and upgrade our system. While we’re proud we haven’t had a rate change in almost 10 years, these increased costs place tremendous pressure on the cost of your electric service.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative, one of our wholesale power suppliers, will increase their rates by over 18% the next two years. Our other wholesale power supplier, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, will also increase their rates to us by an average of 10%

over the next three years. Wholesale power accounts for over 70% of our costs, so changes in wholesale rates have a significant impact on our operation. The remaining 30% of our costs are internal. Some of these are controllable, some are not. An example of uncontrollable costs is how much electricity is used across our 11-county service territory.

In November, your board of directors approved a rate increase effective with the February 2026 billing cycle. Every rate class will experience an increase of about 10% for 2026. PECO returns any margins to its members, so there is no incentive to raise rates more than necessary. The monthly facility charge will not increase.

### Careful consideration

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative owned by its members, PECO’s board of directors only increase rates when it must, to remain financially stable and to meet our lenders’ financial covenants. Your board of directors

and employees take this responsibility seriously, as we too are members.

One of the challenges we face as a rural electric cooperative is low density. We have roughly two members per mile of line compared to Iowa’s investor-owned utilities with 28 consumers per miles of line and Iowa’s municipalities with around 58 consumers per mile of line. This is an enormous difference in terms of cost recovery. Simply put, we have fewer members and more miles of line. As a result, we have significantly fewer members from whom we recover our fixed costs.

I can assure you as a cooperative we will continue to look for ways to manage costs for our members, striving to provide value without sacrificing safety or reliability.

For more information about the new rates effective on the February bills, see below and visit [www.prairieenergy.coop/rates](http://www.prairieenergy.coop/rates).

*Tim Marienau is the CEO of Prairie Energy Cooperative.*



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**Website:** [www.prairieenergy.coop](http://www.prairieenergy.coop)

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RATE CHANGES (EFFECTIVE WITH FEBRUARY BILLS)				
<b>SINGLE PHASE GENERAL SERVICE &lt;50 KVA</b>				
		<b>2025 Rate</b>	<b>1/1/2026 Rate</b>	
MONTHLY FACILITY CHARGE	\$	45.00	\$ 45.00	No Change
ENERGY CHARGE				
First 1,000 kWh		0.121400	0.133540	10%
Over 1,000 kWh		0.105000	0.115500	10%
<b>SINGLE PHASE GENERAL SERVICE &gt;50 KVA</b>				
		<b>2025 Rate</b>	<b>1/1/2026 Rate</b>	
MONTHLY FACILITY CHARGE	\$	60.00	\$ 60.00	No Change
ENERGY CHARGE				
First 7,500 kWh		0.114700	0.126170	10%
Over 7,500 kWh		0.100000	0.110000	10%
<b>MULTI-PHASE MEDIUM POWER &lt;100 KVA</b>				
		<b>2025 Rate</b>	<b>1/1/2026 Rate</b>	
MONTHLY FACILITY CHARGE	\$	70.00	\$ 70.00	No Change
ENERGY CHARGE				
First 2,500 kWh		0.126000	0.138600	10%
Over 2,500 kWh		0.110000	0.121000	10%

# SEEKING BOARD CANDIDATES

Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) is member-owned, which means your participation helps shape the future of the co-op. One of the most important ways to get involved is by serving on the board of directors.

Two seats on PECO's seven-member board will be up for election at the annual meeting in June. The three-year terms of **Ryan Eekhoff (District 2)** and **Marion Denger (District 5)** are expiring, and both have indicated they are willing to serve again.

**District 2 townships:** Buffalo, Bingham, Wesley, Orthel, Britt, Garfield, Prairie, Boone, Erin and Liberty townships

**District 5 townships:** Iowa, Scott, Lincoln, Blaine, Morgan, Wall Lake, Vernon, Oakland, Blairsburg, Williams and Alden townships

Members residing in District 2 or District 5 who are interested in being considered as candidates are encouraged to contact the office

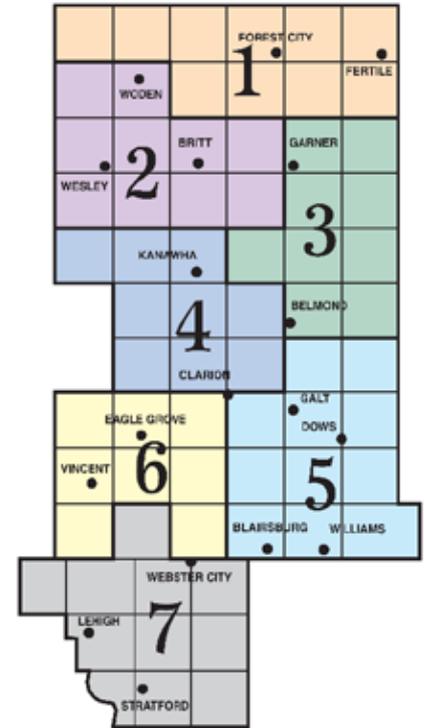
at 515-532-2805. Nominating committee information will be shared next month.

### Board member qualifications

To qualify, candidates must be PECO members receiving electricity in the townships listed.

In conjunction with these requirements, a board member is expected to attend the monthly board meetings, generally held on the last Tuesday of each month, and various information and training meetings throughout the year. Because the board of directors is responsible for establishing the policies and rates under which the cooperative operates, it is important that directors can devote adequate time to these activities.

To learn more about director requirements and expectations, visit [www.prairieenergy.coop](http://www.prairieenergy.coop).



## PATRONAGE RETURNED TO MEMBERS

Prairie Energy Cooperative has always been not-for-profit. This means that as a member of the co-op, you share in the excess revenue and the return of that excess revenue to members, called patronage. As new funds continue to come in, the original funds can be paid back to members in the form of patronage retirement.

This year, members who purchased electricity from the co-op in 2012 are receiving patronage for that year, totaling \$480,923.61. This retirement was paid out in the form of a bill credit, which was included on your December bill.



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# APPLY FOR THE 2026 YOUTH TOUR TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Every generation leaves behind a legacy, footprints that shape the future. Iowa Youth Tour is your chance to do the same. For over 60 years, electric cooperatives have sent high school students to Washington, D.C., to discover their voice, step into history and begin writing the story only they can tell.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience isn't just about seeing the nation's capital. It's about preparing students to lead, to grow and to make their mark on the world.

### What's in it for students?

Delegates from Iowa will join over 1,800 students from across the country in Washington, D.C., June 14-20. During the trip, students will:

- Develop leadership skills through hands-on experiences and workshops

- Strengthen their resumes with a nationally recognized program that stands out to colleges and employers
- Connect with peers from 44 states, building friendships that last long after the trip
- Meet with elected officials and learn how government impacts their communities
- Experience history up close by visiting world-class museums and monuments
- Learn about cooperatives and how they support rural communities across America

The best part? All expenses – travel, lodging, meals and program costs – are covered by Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO). The program is coordinated by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and the



National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

### Don't let this opportunity pass by

Applications are open now through March 20. Eligible applicants must be current high school sophomores or juniors who live within PECO's 11-county service area. The application includes a short essay and can be downloaded at [www.prairieenergy.coop/youth-tour](http://www.prairieenergy.coop/youth-tour) or picked up at our office.

This is more than a trip – it's a chance to make your mark!

For questions, contact Darren Johnson or Chad Chapman with PECO member services at 515-532-2805 or [mbrsrv@prairieenergy.coop](mailto:mbrsrv@prairieenergy.coop).

## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY INCREASED TO \$2,500 THIS YEAR

Each year, Basin Electric Power Cooperative – Prairie Energy Cooperative's wholesale power supplier – offers a scholarship to support local students pursuing higher education. This year, the award amount has increased to \$2,500.

The scholarship invests in the future of our rural communities. Recipients are selected based on academic achievement, leadership, community involvement, work experience, and their educational and career goals. Funds must be used for college expenses, and recipients must be enrolled in a college program for the upcoming fall semester.

High school seniors and current college students are encouraged to apply. Applications are available on our website or by contacting our office at 515-532-2805.



The application deadline is Feb. 20, 2026.



IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine  
for members of  
Iowa's electric  
cooperatives

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

A group of about ten utility workers, including men and women, are gathered in a circle in a workshop or training area. They are wearing work clothes and hard hats. In the center, a man in a light blue shirt and white cap is speaking to the group. To the left, there is a piece of equipment labeled "SAFETY TRAINING" with various electrical components and wires. The background shows a concrete floor, yellow safety barriers, and orange traffic cones.

# SAFETY

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