

● SEPTEMBER 2025

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Meet this year's
Shine the Light winners

Keeping the lights on
during peak demand

Fall apple recipes

PECO members participate in Energy Trail Tour ▶ See Page 4

IOWA CO-OP MEMBERS EXPERIENCE POWER GENERATION FIRSTHAND ON 36TH ANNUAL ENERGY TRAIL TOUR

More than 130 electric cooperative member-consumers from western and north central Iowa embarked on an educational adventure this summer, participating in three motorcoach tours that showcased the journey from power generation to their homes and businesses. The 36th annual Energy Trail Tour season featured three tours departing from Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) in Le Mars, with tours scheduled June 18-20, June 25-27 and July 9-11.

PECO members Blake Smith and Barb Schomaker, and Randy and Kim Olson participated in the 2025 tour.

The three-day educational experience took participants through the Dakotas to visit key facilities operated by Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric) and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). These are the primary power suppliers for local distribution cooperatives through their generation and transmission

partners NIPCO and Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Corn Belt Power).

The facilities included:

- Hydroelectric generation at Missouri River facilities Oahe Dam and Powerhouse (June tours) in Pierre, South Dakota, and Big Bend Dam (July tour) in Fort Thompson, South Dakota.
- Coal-fired generation at the Antelope Valley Station power plant.
- An active surface mine at Coteau Properties Company Freedom Mine.

On the motorcoach “mobile classroom” portion, participants also learned about the production of synthetic natural gas and wind generation.

Cooperative values in action

Beyond the technical education, participants gained a deeper insight into the cooperative difference. They learned about the history of rural electric cooperatives, the Seven Cooperative Principles and Touchstone

Energy’s four service foundations: Integrity, Accountability, Innovation and Commitment to Community.

The tours combined education with fellowship, creating lasting memories while building appreciation for the complex process of delivering reliable electricity to the communities these cooperatives serve.

Power supply information

NIPCO purchases approximately 80% of its power supply from Basin Electric and 20% from WAPA, which markets power generated from the Missouri River Dam System.

Corn Belt Power has a purchase power agreement with Basin Electric, along with an allotment from WAPA, which markets power generated from the Missouri River Dam System.

Interested in participating next year? Contact our office to find out how you can learn more about the 2026 Energy Trail Tour.



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer



Barb Schomaker and Blake Smith



Randy and Kim Olson

NEW HEADQUARTERS UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN CLARION

Prairie Energy Cooperative has officially broken ground on a new headquarters facility in the Clarion Industrial Park, with construction led by Sande Construction and an estimated completion date of June 1, 2026.

Our current Clarion office and warehouse, in-service since 1986, have reached the end of their useful life. The existing warehouse is too small, outdated, and no longer meets modern safety or operational needs. As our membership and service demands grow, so does our need for a more efficient and secure workspace.

The new headquarters will consolidate all Clarion staff into a single location. It includes the renovation of an existing spec building, plus the addition of a new warehouse and pole yard. Updated security features and a modern



layout will improve working conditions, support employee well-being and help us serve our members more effectively.

We look forward to sharing updates with our members as construction progresses!

LOCAL SHINE THE LIGHT NOMINEES RECEIVE DONATIONS

Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO), one of the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, is proud to be driven by a strong commitment to community. To celebrate local volunteers who go above and beyond, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives held its fifth annual Shine the Light contest earlier this summer. Employees and member-owners of Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives were encouraged to nominate individuals who make a positive impact in their communities.

Congratulations to Aimee Goeman McKnight of Belmond, who was selected as one of three statewide winners for her dedication to the Build A Better Belmond – Pool Fund. To learn more about Aimee's story, turn to Page 11.

In addition to Aimee, four other nominees from within PECO's service territory were recognized. Each received a \$100 donation from PECO to support their chosen charity or nonprofit.

- **Lance Arnold**
Klemme – Iowa River Players Theater
- **Kathy Deimerly**
Clarion – Wright County Connections
- **Rodney Legleiter**
Kanawha – Wright County District Junior Fair
- **Debra Schimmelpfennig**
Woden – Woden Commercial Club



We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who submitted a nomination and helped shine a light on these inspiring community members. To learn more about the Shine the Light contest and see the 2025 winners, visit www.IowaShineTheLight.com, and read more on Pages 10-11 and 14 of this issue.

PECO HOSTS SUCCESSFUL MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

Prairie Energy Cooperative's (PECO) third annual Member Appreciation Day was held on July 17 at the Red Shed Event Center in Clarion and welcomed a great turnout once again! With around 550 members and guests in attendance, the event was a celebration of community, gratitude and cooperative spirit.

Smokee Heights served up a delicious meal, while The Olde Creamery kept

everyone cool and smiling with ice cream treats straight from their truck. Bounce houses kept the kids busy, and PECO giveaways for both kids and adults were a hit throughout the evening.

One of the most popular attractions of the day was the bucket truck rides, offering a unique view from high above. It was a crowd favorite that gave attendees a glimpse into the work our linemen do every day.

The board of directors and PECO staff would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who joined us. Your continued support helps make this annual event a great success year after year.

Mark your calendars! Next year's Member Appreciation Day is already set for July 16, 2026, and we look forward to seeing even more of you there!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THESE LUCKY MEMBERS WHO WERE WINNERS OF THE GIVEAWAYS THIS YEAR:

\$50 gift cards: Ron Hejna and Henry Hocraffer

\$100 Amazon cards: Diane Amonson, Brian Moore, Rita Vanderheiden, and Earl Webner

Legacy RTIC 20-quart cooler: Mervin Krauss

Legacy swag bag: Dean Avery

Resco swag bag: Roger Leist

Axe throwing game: Steve Hemken

Igloo 60-quart cooler: Roger Wenzel

Electric grill: Matt Lund

Hammock: Tim Chipman

12-inch bike: Travis Roberts

18-inch bike: Logan Reed

24-inch bike: Mike Wibholm

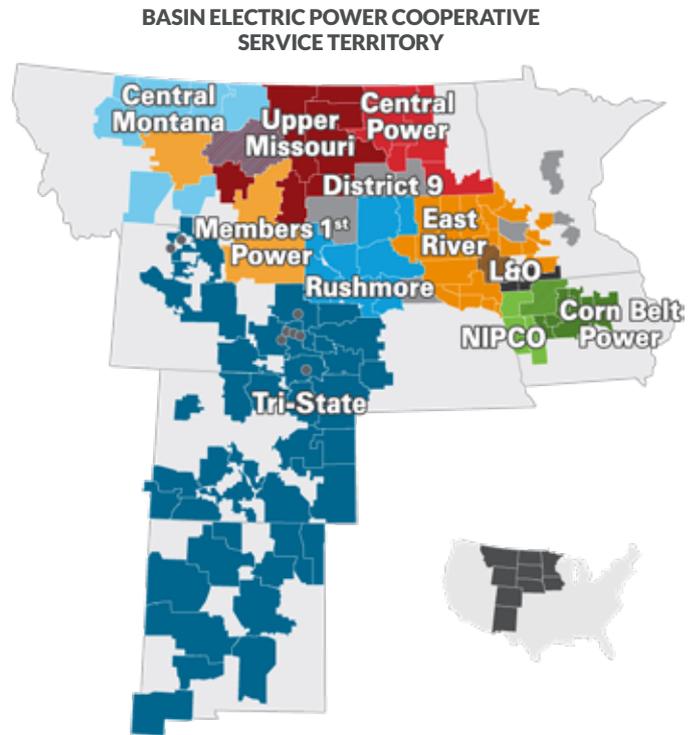
Bounce house: William McBride



BASIN ELECTRIC CONSIDERING 2026 RATE INCREASE

In 2024, the Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric) board of directors authorized a Class A rate increase of \$4 per megawatt-hour (MWh), or approximately 6.5%, beginning Jan. 1, 2025. Basin Electric’s financial forecast indicated the need for an approximate \$5.20 per MWh rate increase; however, after feedback from members, the board elected to use a portion of the rate stability fund in order to gradually implement the rate increase. Basin Electric is regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which will also need to approve the rate change.

Basin Electric is now considering raising rates Jan. 1, 2026. The increase would be a 18.7% and would affect Prairie Energy Cooperative through our generation and transmission provider, Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Corn Belt).



Load growth and investments in reliability

Investments in new generation and transmission facilities are needed to support member load growth, and it’s critical to invest in existing facilities to maintain reliability. To accommodate these large loads, Basin Electric is investing approximately \$8 billion over the next 10 years in transmission and generation assets to ensure reliable electricity for our members.



Decreased surplus sales on the west side of the system

Market dynamics have been impacted by changes in the generating fleet, which has influenced prices and the ability to make surplus sales. Overall, this has lowered energy prices from previous years and has impacted the ability to sell Basin’s excess west side generation.



Impacts of inflation

Cost increases for internal labor, contracted labor, materials and maintenance, in addition to higher costs of borrowing money and increased insurance premiums. From 2016 to 2023, Basin Electric’s member rates increased by an average of 1.5% per year, while inflation rose at almost twice that rate, averaging 3.2% per year.



Volatility of power markets

Power markets have become more volatile, resulting in dramatic price movements. Increasing intermittent generation, swings in natural gas prices and increasing electricity demand are primary contributors to volatility. While this is managed through generation and hedging, the cost of this is increasing.

PECO ATTEMPTING TO MAINTAIN STABLE AND AFFORDABLE RATES

Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) is an electric distribution power cooperative. Our power is supplied by two generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives: Corn Belt Power Cooperative in Humboldt, Iowa, and Basin Electric Power Cooperative in Bismarck, North Dakota. Our electric rates are impacted by our G&T cooperatives. These are factors which we have limited or no control. We are always engaged in discussions with our G&T cooperatives, but their decisions are based by their leadership teams and board of directors.

PECO member-owners expect lower electric rates in an environment where nearly all the costs associated with those rates are increasing. PECO shares this expectation. PECO has not raised our energy rates since November 2016. PECO did raise the facility charge with all member-owners in February 2025. The facility charge supports PECO in covering our fixed costs. It helps insure we can fix and maintain the poles, wires, meters, insulators and so on that serve your property.

Part of our commitment to our members is to ensure fiscal responsibility so that we can meet all of our financial obligations. This includes performing annual budgets, 10-year financial forecasts and conducting cost-of-service studies to evaluate our rate structures. As we continue to meet our financial obligations, we will have to pass on a rate increase in 2026. As we research our options over the next several months, we will continue to strive to safely provide reliable, affordable and responsible energy to our member-owners.



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Visit our website at www.prairieenergy.coop



FOCUSED ON YOUR STREET. NOT WALL STREET.

Think of your not-for-profit Touchstone Energy cooperative as your very own local energy advisor. After all, we're owned by you and the other members in our community, which means you'll always have a say in how your co-op runs. To learn more, visit TouchstoneEnergy.com.

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