

● JUNE 2022

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Meet PECO's scholarship
and Youth Tour winners

Attend our member
appreciation event

Ice cream recipes

Nominate a local volunteer by June 30 ▶ See Page 5

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Lana Van Engen, an Osceola Electric Cooperative member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could win \$100!

BE AWARE OF UTILITY PHONE SCAMS THIS SUMMER

BY CHUCK SODERBERG



"Your electric bill is past due, and we will cut off power to your home in the next hour if you don't pay us over the phone immediately!"

Have you ever received a

threatening call like this from someone claiming to be from your local electric cooperative? Would you know what to do if you received a call like this?

This spring, several of Iowa's electric cooperatives noticed increased activity from utility scammers contacting member-consumers in their service areas. These phone scammers would often appear to be calling from local numbers and claim to be from the local electric cooperative. Sometimes, the calls included prerecorded messages.

In almost all the calls, the scammers threatened the innocent person on the other end of the line, demanding immediate payment to prevent disconnection of electric service.

We want to remind readers that your local electric co-op would never contact you out of the blue to demand immediate payment or threaten immediate disconnection. If you receive a suspicious call, text or email from someone claiming to be from the co-op, please contact your electric co-op office directly by using the phone number on a recent bill or on the co-op's website to verify the communication.

The best defense against a utility scammer is an educated consumer; follow these tips from Utilities United Against Scams to protect yourself from a potential scam.

Protect personal information

Never provide or confirm personal information (Social Security number, date of birth, etc.) or financial information (banking account

information, debit or credit card information) to anyone initiating contact with you and claiming to be from your local electric co-op. Never give out information or provide any payment to any callers or unexpected individual(s) appearing at your door claiming to represent your co-op. Your local co-op will already have your relevant personal and account information.

Take your time

Do not be rushed. If you receive a call, text, email or visitor saying you have to pay your bill immediately to avoid disconnection, tell them you would like to verify that they are a legitimate co-op representative by calling a verified number for the local co-op office.

Beware if a representative exhibits impatience, annoyance or anger when you question their authority. While a scammer will discourage you from hanging up and calling the number on your utility bill, a real co-op representative will encourage you to do so for your own peace of mind.

Always ask questions

Ask the person contacting you to provide your account number, your last payment amount, date of payment and their employee identification number. If they are a legitimate utility representative, this information will be readily accessible. If not, hang up or shut the door, and call your utility directly to report the suspicious activity.

Contact your utility directly

If you receive a suspicious call or visit, please contact the local police and your electric co-op immediately. Share details that the scammer told you, which might aid in a possible criminal investigation.

For more tips, download a free copy of the *Consumer's Guide to Imposter Utility Scams* at www.utilitiesunited.org. Remember, contact your local electric co-op directly if you receive a suspicious call, text, email or visit from someone claiming to represent the utility.

Chuck Soderberg is the executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win an electric ice cream maker!

When it comes to homemade ice cream, "the more, the better" is the motto of this family-friendly machine. Ideal for entertaining, it makes two quarts of your favorite frozen dessert in a single batch (in just 25 minutes). The clear plastic lid has an opening for adding mix-ins like chocolate chips and nuts.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than June 30. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the electric string trimmer from the April issue was William Kelly, Prairie Energy Cooperative.



ENTER ONLINE BY JUNE 30!

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED



Marissa Eekhoff, daughter of Ryan and Lori Eekhoff of Kanawha, was chosen as Prairie Energy Cooperative's winner of the \$1,000 Basin

Electric Power Cooperative scholarship employee pool.

Eekhoff will be entering her junior year at Iowa State University where she plans to earn her bachelor's degree in animal science.

"I am excited to finish out my sophomore year strong and head into the summer with Key Cooperative as a feed sales intern," she says. "I have loved my time and the people I have met at Iowa State and enjoy the way that it feels like home. Being involved in just about anything I can keeps me super busy and focused during the semester. I am honored to have received this scholarship again this year!"

Congratulations!



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Facebook: facebook.com/PrairieEnergyCooperative

Website: www.prairieenergy.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

PATRONAGE RETURNED TO MEMBERS

When you began receiving power from Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO), you became a member of the co-op. This means that you share in the co-op's excess revenue. While other businesses return their profits to investors and stockholders, we return that excess revenue, called patronage, to you.

PECO's board of directors approved a \$884,137 capital credit retirement for its members due to our wholesale power supplier, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, retiring a portion of the capital credits that PECO was allocated in 2021. This retirement will be returned in the form of a bill credit for those who were members of the co-op and purchased electricity in 2021. Your June bill will show this as "Patronage Dividend Refund." Members that have



moved off our lines will receive this retirement in the form of a check.

Call the office at 515-532-2805 with any questions.

YOUTH TOUR WINNER: JENNA PRIGNITZ OF GARNER



Jenna Prignitz, a sophomore at Garner Hayfield Ventura High School, will have an education-filled week of adventure in Washington, D.C., as Prairie Energy Cooperative's Youth Tour contest winner. Prignitz will be among a group of 1,900 students sponsored by electric cooperatives from across the country to take part in the Youth Tour from June 18-24.

This is the first Youth Tour since 2019, as the COVID pandemic forced the 2020 and 2021 tours to be canceled.

The Youth Tour was inspired in 1957 by former President Lyndon B. Johnson, then a U.S. senator from Texas, when he called on electric cooperatives to send young people to Washington, D.C., to see what the standing flag represents.

The students will meet with state and federal legislators to get an up-close look at how government works, along with experiencing the monuments, museums and history of the nation's capital.

Prignitz is the daughter of Jerry and Karrie Prignitz of Garner.

HELP US CELEBRATE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Do you know someone in our community who deserves to be recognized for making a difference? Nominate them for the Shine the Light contest by June 30, and they could win \$2,000 for their local charity or nonprofit.

"We're really excited to participate in this statewide effort to celebrate our cooperative commitment to community," says Tim Marienau, CEO of Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO). "There are many volunteers throughout our service area who deserve to be recognized."

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, this contest debuted last year and celebrates the people who make our communities better. Three winners will be announced in September, and each will receive a \$2,000 donation for their charity or nonprofit. The winners will also be featured in the September issue of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine.

How to nominate

Members, employees and retirees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers. If you receive electricity from PECO, you're a co-op member and we encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not

need to be a co-op member. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

Go to www.IowaShineTheLight.com by June 30 to make a nomination and to review the contest rules. Nominators will need to provide contact information and answer this question in 500 words or less: How has your nominee made a positive difference in the community, and why do they deserve to be recognized?

Help us shine the light on our community volunteers and make a nomination by June 30!



**Nominate a local volunteer,
and they could win
\$2,000 for their charity!**

Contest entries accepted during June at
IowaShineTheLight.com

BRUCE NUZUM TAKES THE STATEWIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HELM

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN



Bruce Nuzum (right) presents check at loan closing to Mike and Marian Verdon, owners of Trinity Fabricators, Inc. for equipment upgrades in their facility near New Albin.



Building on a 25-year career with the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG), Bruce Nuzum was recently named president of the organization

following Rand Fisher's retirement in January. Founded in 1985, IADG is the business and economic development organization for its sponsors and partners, including more than 220 member-owned electric cooperatives, municipal utilities and independent telecommunication companies throughout the state.

Nuzum is originally from Iowa and graduated college during the farm crisis of the mid-1980s. Those trying times prompted him to move out of state. After a few years away, he returned to

Iowa to be closer to family and began working in economic development in Jasper County. In 1997, Nuzum joined IADG and most recently served as senior vice president of finance and operations.

We sat down with Nuzum to learn more about him, including his vision for IADG and rural economic development efforts in Iowa.

Q: What drew you to economic development work?

I have always had a strong sense of community and involvement, which I attribute to my grandfather. He was a volunteer leader, and through his business, he was actively engaged in his small rural community. His involvement demonstrated the importance of a partnership between business and community for both to be successful. When I had the opportunity to lead a

county development organization in an area that included my hometown, it seemed like a natural fit.

Throughout my career, what has kept me in economic development is the variety of projects and the satisfaction of being a part of a team helping to bring jobs and opportunities to rural Iowa.

Q: When it comes to economic development in electric cooperative-served areas, what do you feel are Iowa's strengths?

Iowans have a strong work ethic and a sense of community that you don't get everywhere else. Plus, they are used to thinking creatively to solve problems. That's why so many inventions come from farm workshops or out of the garage. These traits make for a great workforce for businesses in rural areas. Combine this with the investment our utility partners have made in electric

and broadband infrastructure and commercial and industrial parks to serve their members and communities, and it makes rural Iowa an excellent place for business.

Q: While you are not new to IADG, you're new to this role. What are the organization's short- and long-term goals?

IADG's core mission is to help businesses expand in the communities and territories of our utility sponsors. One of our primary goals is working with our partners to help existing companies be successful. We are a connecting point to financial programs and other services, which can help their business operations.

Another goal is to promote our members and the available sites and buildings in their service territories in the most effective ways possible to generate leads and bring new businesses and job opportunities to rural communities. Through various marketing and programming activities, including prospecting growing companies, exhibiting at trade shows and using our website and other online databases, we work toward this goal.

Economic development is about creating future success and developing places for businesses to expand. A long-term goal is to help identify and access financial tools, which can help our members continually reinvest in themselves by continuing to develop industrial parks and shell buildings in partnership with local development organizations.

We also strive for continuous improvement through training and education for our staff and utility partners to ensure we are ready to bring tools to the table when an opportunity presents itself.

Q: Electric cooperatives are grounded in "commitment to community." How does this approach factor into what IADG does day in and day out?

We assist our members with community development through the Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant (REDL&G) Program. The electric co-op helps a nonprofit entity

with its first loan to build its Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). Our members have had a tremendous impact by bringing low-cost funding to assist community projects and have built \$76 million of locally controlled funding for rural Iowa. IADG plays an active role in helping utilities apply for these funds and offering ongoing administration support for the RLF.

Q: What are some of the key industries IADG works with, which translate into opportunities for rural Iowa?

Our target industries include agriculture, ag processing, advanced manufacturing, warehousing and information technology. IADG is especially known for its work with agriculture and ag processing – everything from food production and further processing, including the manufacturing of biofuels.

Q: What are some economic development trends that are exciting for Iowa?

One of the big trends in the industry is the move to automation and data-driven processes – often referred to as Industry 4.0. Technology continues to advance, and the increasing capabilities of robots and computer-driven equipment make production more efficient. These increases in capacity and efficiency are essential for all businesses, especially rural businesses dealing with workforce shortages. With the partnerships between businesses and communities, there are great opportunities for our utility partners to help assist with the move to

FUN FACTS:

What is the best piece of advice you've received?

When I started my career, someone told me that economic development was 95% preparation and 5% perspiration. The longer I do this, the more I agree that you must be prepared and ready to jump when an opportunity presents itself.

What do you love most about Iowa?

It's where my family is, so that makes it home. But I have also had the opportunity to live elsewhere and travel to other parts of the world. It makes me appreciate the people who live here and how we all look out for each other.

Favorite sports team?

I grew up a Hawkeye, but I'm an equal opportunity cheerer.

Favorite Iowa restaurants?

A few spots come to mind:
Darrell's Place in Hamlin
Whatcha Smokin' BBQ in Luther
The Landmark Bistro in Grundy Center

Favorite Iowa event?

Iowa State Fair, of course!

automation at rural businesses through RLFs and other programs where IADG can help with the connections.

Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.

REDL&G PROGRAM FUNDS

In 2021, IADG members received nearly \$8.3 million from the REDL&G program to help Iowa's economy. This funding helped spur \$51.9 million of new capital investment and created and retained 928 jobs. Cumulatively, IADG members have received 386 REDL&G awards totaling \$166.5 million since the program was created.

Utilizing REDL&G, IADG members have had a tremendous impact on Iowa. These cumulative awards have been part of

\$1.06 BILLION



of new investment in rural communities and have created or retained

20,529 JOBS

ICE CREAM

RECIPES

OLD FASHIONED CRANK ICE CREAM

- 6 large egg yolks, whisked
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- dash salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups whole milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ice
- 2 cups rock salt

Blend egg yolks, sugar and salt until smooth. In large sauce pan, mix milk and cream, simmer until small bubbles form and mixture is hot but not boiling. Add egg mixture. Reduce heat, stir about 5 minutes or until 175 degrees F – DO NOT BOIL. Remove from heat and place in a bowl. Add vanilla extract. Chill the mixture before filling ice cream canister about half full. Place ice and rock salt around the maker. Keep adding ice and rock salt as it melts. Crank the ice cream maker and when it cannot be turned, the ice cream is done. Add any toppings as desired.

Reta Janssen • Doon • Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

CARAMEL DELIGHT

- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour
- 1 cup quick rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups pecans, chopped
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1 6-ounce jar caramel topping
- $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon vanilla ice cream, softened

Combine flour, oats, brown sugar and nuts, then stir in melted butter. Spread in a thin layer on the bottom of a baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20 minutes until lightly browned. Cool and crumble. Place half the oat mixture in the bottom of a 9x13-inch pan. Warm caramel slightly in the microwave then smooth over oat mixture. Slice ice cream and place slices in an even layer over the oats and caramel. Top with remaining half of the oat mixture. Freeze until firm, at least 24 hours. Serves 15

Jill Miller • Nevada • Consumers Energy

CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM ROLL

- 4 eggs, separated
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar plus 1 tablespoon, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour, unsifted
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cocoa
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 quart ice cream, softened

Line a 10½x15½x1-inch jellyroll pan with aluminum foil and generously grease the foil. Beat egg yolks 3 minutes on medium speed. Gradually add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar; continue beating for 2 minutes. In a separate bowl, combine flour, cocoa, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar, baking soda and salt. Add alternately with water on low speed, just until the batter is smooth. Add vanilla and set aside chocolate mixture. Beat egg whites until foamy. Add 1 tablespoon sugar and beat until stiff peaks form. Carefully fold into the chocolate mixture. Spread batter evenly into the prepared pan. Bake at 375 degrees F for 14-16 minutes, or until the top springs back when touched lightly. Invert onto a slightly dampened towel and carefully remove foil. Immediately roll the cake and towel together from the narrow end of the cake. Let stand 1 minute and unroll, then re-roll, omitting the towel. Cool completely on wire rack. Unroll the cake and spread with softened ice cream and reroll. Freeze the cake immediately. Cut into slices to serve. Serves approximately 15

Joan Androy • Logan
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

LEMONY ICE CREAM PIE

- 1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened
- 1 6-ounce can frozen lemonade concentrate, partially thawed
- 1 9-inch graham cracker crust
- Optional garnish: fresh raspberries, lemon slices, fresh mint springs

Stir together ice cream and lemonade concentrate until blended. Spoon into graham cracker crust and freeze 2 hours or until firm. Garnish if desired.

Debra Peterson • Albia
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative

FRIED ICE CREAM PIE

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups crushed cornflakes (measure after crushing)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream
- Toppings: honey, chocolate syrup, caramel, whipped topping, cherries

In a large skillet, melt butter on medium heat. When butter is completely melted stir in cornflakes, sugar and cinnamon. Stir continuously on medium heat for 4-5 minutes or until cornflakes turn color. Cool and let ice cream soften. Press two-thirds of the cooled cereal mix into a pie pan. Spoon softened ice cream over cereal crust and smooth. Sprinkle remaining one-third of cereal mixture on top. Cover with foil and freeze 6 hours. Before serving, top with honey, chocolate syrup, caramel, whipped topping and cherries. Serves 10-15

Nan Jurgens • Thornton
Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative

SHOWER DESSERT (LIME SHERBET FREEZE)

- 3 cups Ritz Crackers, crushed, divided
- 1 cup plus 8 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 8 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened
- 1 quart lime sherbet, softened
- 4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 2 eggs, well-beaten

Mix $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups crackers with 8 tablespoons sugar and 8 tablespoons melted butter. Pat the mixture firmly in a 9x13-inch cake pan. Mix ice cream and sherbet, then add on top of the crust. Freeze. Cook lemon juice, 1 cup sugar, 6 tablespoons butter and eggs over low heat until thick, stirring constantly. Let cool, then spread over frozen ice cream mixture. Sprinkle remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crackers over top. Freeze. Remove 10-15 minutes before serving. Serves 12-15

Rhonda Poppe • Ionias
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

BUTTER PECAN ICE CREAM

- 2 cups pecans, chopped
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 12-ounce cans evaporated milk
- 2 3.75-ounce packages instant vanilla pudding
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts 2% milk

Sauté pecans in butter on low heat, stirring constantly for about 5 minutes or until toasted. Set aside to cool. Combine remaining ingredients, mixing well. Pour into $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2-gallon freezer can with dasher. Freeze about 10 minutes or until ice cream starts to thicken. Remove dasher and add pecans. Stir into the bottom. Return dasher and freeze until firm. Let soften about an hour. Serves 12-15

LuAnn Lauters • Garner • Prairie Energy Cooperative

PUMPKIN ICE CREAM

- 21-22 gingersnaps
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pecans, chopped
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream

Arrange 19-20 whole gingersnaps over bottom and sides of 9-inch pie plate. Crush remaining gingersnaps. Combine pumpkin, sugar, salt and spices. Mix well. Stir in pecans. Chill in refrigerator 2 hours. Fold chilled mixture into softened ice cream. Spoon into the gingersnap-lined pie plate. Sprinkle gingersnap crumbs over top and freeze.

Marilyn O'Brien • Geneva
Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative

WANTED:

GAME DAY RECIPES

THE REWARD:

\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is June 30

Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions. Also provide the number of servings per recipe.

EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com

(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

MAIL: Recipes

Iowa Electric Cooperative Living • 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992



ELECTRIC CO-OPS ARE BUILDING TOWARD AN EV MOBILE FUTURE

BY DERRILL HOLLY



With dozens of electric SUVs, pickup trucks and vans scheduled to debut over the next few years, public charging availability will become a priority for consumers, especially in rural areas where stations are scarce.

Utilities, including locally owned electric cooperatives, will be serving new EV loads and extending the reach of public charging networks now under development or proposed for major

transportation corridors.

“Electric vehicles are evolving rapidly and, as they do, use and charging patterns are shifting and consumers are getting a better understanding of how they can use the vehicles,” says Brett Smith, director of technology for the Center for Automotive Research. The non-profit organization conducts independent research on behalf of the global mobility industry.

Understanding charging infrastructure needs

Still, one of the major challenges facing market acceptance remains a lack of charging infrastructure in many parts of the country. As of December 2021, there were about 113,000 charging ports available at 46,090 public charging stations nationwide.

“You’re going to see the need to really invest in infrastructure over the next

HOW IS IOWA CHARGING UP?

According to Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Iowa Economic Development Authority, nearly 6,000 EVs and hybrids are registered in Iowa.

Polk, Dallas, Linn, Johnson and Scott are the top five counties for EV registration.

Anyone with an EV in Iowa must pay a special registration fee in addition to the annual vehicle registration fee to

the Iowa DOT. Beginning Jan. 1, 2022, the battery electric (BEV) fee is \$130 and the plug-in hybrid electric (PHEV) is \$65.



Plugshare is one of the most accurate EV charging station maps. Drivers can download a free app or visit www.plugshare.com to find charging stations, leave reviews and connect with other plug-in owners.

5 to 10 years,” says Smith. He adds that some buyers who have the option of home charging have not reached the comfort level essential to use EVs for longer trips.

“They don’t see the infrastructure out there. You’re probably at some point going to need to make it seem like overinvestment, because you have to make the consumer comfortable,” Smith explains.

The federal government estimates that 500,000 public chargers will be needed by 2030, and it is currently investing \$7.5 billion to help build a network of public chargers along major highways and in rural areas. The funding comes from the bipartisan infrastructure bill passed by Congress and signed into law last November.

According to the Department of Energy (DOE), the majority of ports now being deployed for public use are DC fast chargers that provide 60 to 80 miles of range for 20 minutes of charging time, compared to four minutes at the pump for most gasoline-powered vehicles. Smith says it may be feasible to charge EVs up to 80% of capacity in about 15 minutes.

“Whether that’s perfect for everybody or not, if it becomes a standard or an accepted practice, I think people could become comfortable with that,” he says.

Collaborating to build a charging network

The Joint Office for Electric Vehicle Charging and Infrastructure operated by the DOE and the Department of Transportation (DOT) is developing a grant program to help states and local

partners, including electric co-ops, develop public charging facilities.

“The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and electric cooperatives formed the Community Approach to Vehicle Electrification funding interest group. This group of co-ops is focused on using their detailed knowledge of local needs to address vehicle electrification and charging infrastructure,” says Brian Sloboda, NRECA’s director of consumer solutions.

Across the U.S., many electric cooperatives are already in regular contact with their state DOTs to discuss current and proposed Alternative Fuel Corridors. These corridors will be the areas eligible for federal funding. State DOTs must submit an EV infrastructure plan to the federal government by Aug. 1.

“Electric co-ops can help their state DOTs by identifying areas of the service territory where EV charging infrastructure could be placed in an economic manner that overlaps with current or proposed Alternative Fuel Corridors,” says Sloboda.

Under the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, public EV charging infrastructure should be located every 50 miles along major travel corridors, and no more than 1 mile from the highway.

“The focus on local needs will ensure that the college tailgate parties, national parks, highway interchanges, local businesses and county fairs are adequately represented,” says Sloboda. “They will place the

infrastructure where the people and local businesses are.”

Among the greatest concerns are charger availability during peak travel periods, which include holidays, the beginning and end of academic terms, and major sports and entertainment events that attract highway travelers. If wait times at available charging ports average 15 minutes per vehicle, the cumulative effects of several EVs in a waiting line could cause substantial delays.

Bringing ideas into reality

The DOE’s Alternate Fuels Data Center has developed a Station Locator Tool (SLT) mobile app. During the government’s 2021 fiscal year, the SLT site attracted 6 million page views and topped 3,900 downloads. According to the DOE, the site provided more than 1.3 million searches for EV charging stations for the fiscal year.

Energy officials contend that placement of fast chargers at restaurants, shopping malls and other locations where consumers shop, work and play could offer multitasking opportunities. Organizations like the National Association of Convenience Stores are now providing technical assistance and resources to convenience store operators to help promote installation and availability of fast charging equipment to meet growing demand.

While DC fast charging units now range in price from \$10,000 to \$35,000 per unit, federal and state funding initiatives could drive down the costs, increasing incentives to add them.

Derrill Holly writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENTS PLANNED

Like many other businesses around the world over the last two years, Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) has adapted and learned how to do business differently. One of the biggest changes we'll be carrying forward is a shift away from in-person annual meetings.

"Dwindling member attendance the last several years as well as the financial footprint of hosting an in-person annual meeting are two of the main reasons for this change," says Marion Denger, PECO board president.

The board and staff at PECO are committed to member-owners and still want to provide opportunities for in-person engagement. With this shift away from an in-person annual meeting, we are excited to host engaging member appreciation events at various times and locations.

"This change gives us the opportunity to connect with more members than we have experienced with a single annual meeting date," he adds.



Member Appreciation Day

**at the Garner service center
910 N State Street**

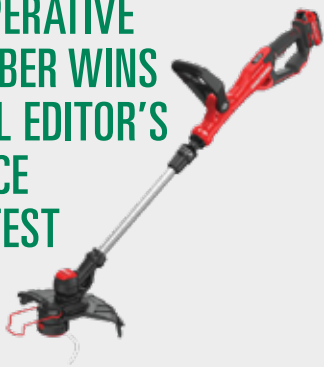
July 29, 2022 • 1-3 p.m.

Enjoy a meal and say hello to the employees and directors of your cooperative

 **Prairie Energy Cooperative**
A Tachewas Energy Cooperative

Mark your calendars for the first member appreciation event of the year on Friday, July 29. It will be held at the Garner service center from 1-3 p.m. Come enjoy a meal on us, take home some PECO swag and say hello to the employees and directors!

PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE MEMBER WINS APRIL EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST



Congratulations to William Kelly of Vincent! He was the lucky winner of a cordless 20-volt Craftsman string trimmer, courtesy of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine. Be sure to follow our Facebook page and check the *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* website for a new Editor's Choice contest every month.

OFFICE CLOSED

Prairie Energy Cooperative will be closed Monday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. Our phones are answered 24/7, so call 800-728-0013 if you need to report an issue with your service. We will open at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, July 5. Have a fun and safe holiday!



LESSONS LEARNED FROM LINE CREWS DURING POWER RESTORATION

BY PAUL WESSLUND

Whether the lights go out because of weather or squirrels, safety comes first for lineworkers. You can learn a lot about power outages and restoration by watching a utility crew at work – from a safe distance, of course.

The first thing you'll notice is the deliberate, careful pace. They deploy signs to alert motorists and mark the work area with orange cones. Always in hardhats and fire-protective clothing, anyone working on a power line pulls on heavy, machine-tested rubber gloves and spreads insulating blankets over the wires.

And there's more you won't see. That morning, they likely huddled at the back of a truck to discuss tasks for the day, with an emphasis on safety protocols. It's a best practice in the industry – so common it's often called a "tailgate meeting" or "toolbox talk."

Making safety a habit

There are a lot of reasons your electricity might go off, with weather by far the leading cause. But to a lineworker, all power outage repairs have one thing in common – safety.

Safety may be common sense, but it's not taken for granted and line crews never compromise on safety. Cooperative leaders make it clear that skipping any safety measure or procedure is a firing offense. Line crews receive constant training to stay up to date with safety protocols.

Replacing and upgrading equipment

The next thing you can learn from a line crew is watching what task they're doing. There's a good chance they're replacing old equipment. Poles and transformers wear out, and failing equipment is one significant cause of power outages. The crew you watch could be restoring an equipment outage, or they might be switching out an old device to prevent a future outage.



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You might also see them replacing a downed utility pole, a painstaking process of removing the old and hauling in and raising the new, using trucks specifically designed for the job.

The pole might be down because a motorist ran into it, or it could be weather related. Wind, ice and fires cause about 80% of power outages. One characteristic of those natural disasters is that the damage can be widespread. If one pole is down, many others could be as well. That means crews will be repeating the pole-replacement process, one job at a time.

That's why bringing the lights back on after a major storm with widespread outages can take days or even weeks.

Nature versus power lines

It's also likely the crew you're watching will be trimming trees. Trees are beautiful but a common cause of outages as wind and nearby branches can lead to wires getting knocked to the ground. Electric cooperatives devote a lot of time and resources to urging and

enforcing limits on planting anything too close to power lines.

One fairly common cause of outages that requires crews to make repairs is wildlife. Squirrels and other critters routinely crawl around utility equipment, occasionally making a connection between high-voltage wires. Snakes that slither into an electric substation bring consequences – for lineworkers and the utility. Sometimes crews need to investigate and correct the cause. Often the system will reset itself after only a brief power interruption.

So, what lessons can you learn from lineworkers? Outages can be caused by a variety of factors. Restoring power is an intricate process in a complex utility system. And safety – for crews and the community – will always be the top priority.

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

NOMINATE A COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER BY JUNE 30

Your nominee could win \$2,000 for their local charity

Iowa's electric cooperatives are excited to announce the return of a statewide contest, which celebrates our cooperative commitment to community. Called **Shine the Light**, the contest will accept nominations in June and award three winners with a \$2,000 check to their local charity or community organization.

"We're excited to once again provide this cooperative effort to shine the light on local volunteers," says Erin Campbell, director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. "So many people throughout the areas served by Iowa's electric cooperatives deserve to be recognized for making a positive impact."

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the Shine the Light contest will accept contest entries online during the month of June. In addition to receiving a \$2,000 donation for their charity or nonprofit of choice, the winners will also be featured in the September issue of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine.

How to nominate

Member-consumers, employees and retirees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers. If you receive electricity from an electric cooperative in Iowa, you're a co-op member-consumer and invited to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.



Step 1:

Go to www.IowaShineTheLight.com from June 1-30 to make a nomination and to review the contest rules.

Step 2:

As a nominator, provide your contact information and answer the following question in 500 words or less.

How has your nominee made a positive difference in the community, and why do they deserve to be recognized?



BEAN WALKING ETIQUETTE

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

When I was growing up, one of the only ways for a 13-year-old to make money on the farm was to walk beans. This was before the days of weed-resistant soybean hybrids, and my crew's job was to clear those fields of buttonweeds, stray corn stalks, cockleburrs and what we called "waterweeds."

In Pella, most of the kids willing to do this work signed on with a local farmer who owned many acres. From the first of July until the end of the month, we labored six mornings a week from 7 a.m. to noon.

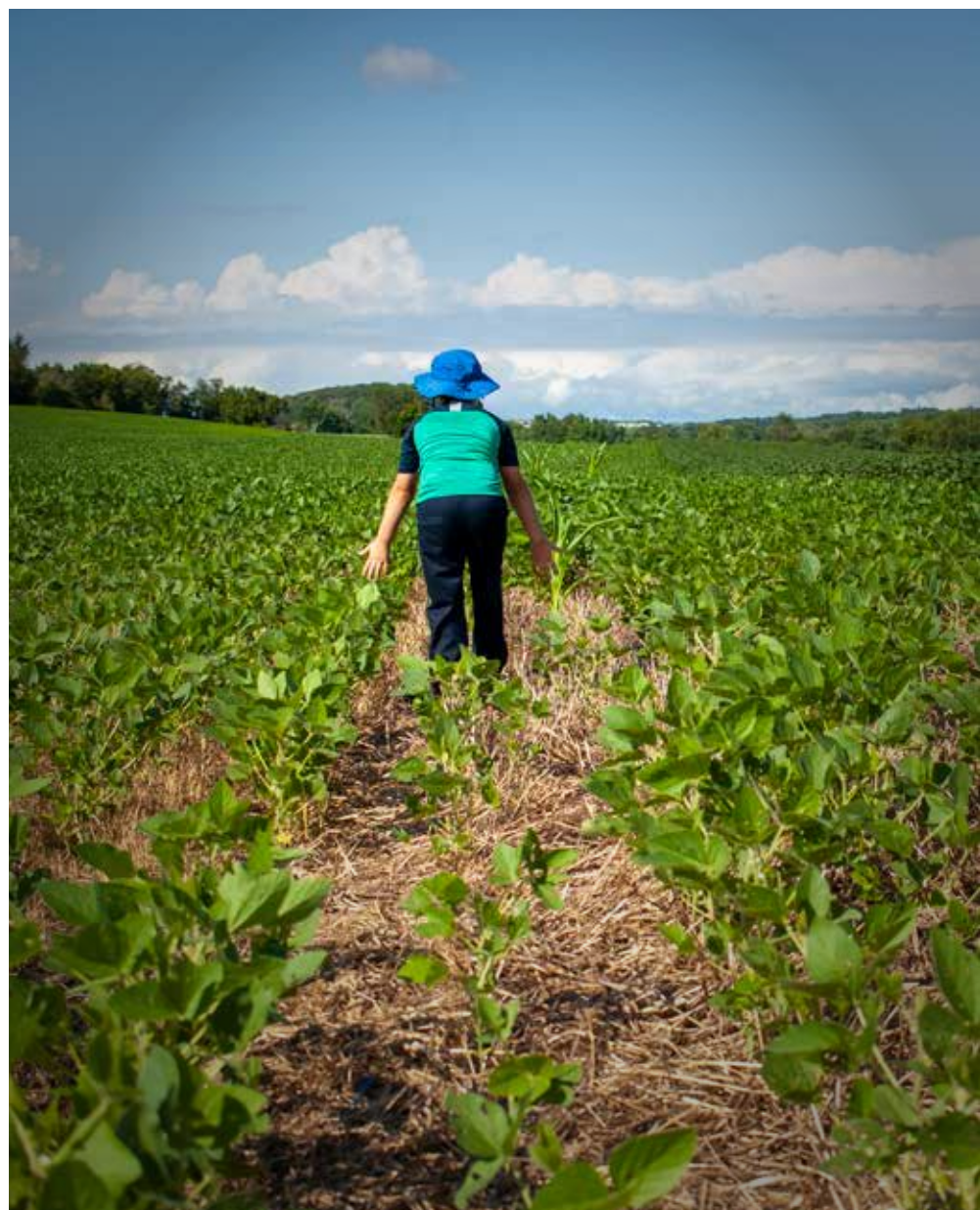
A strategic approach

Lest you think that this seems very straightforward, there is very much a technique to walking beans. A person was placed in every other row; your job was to keep an eye on the inside of the rows you were walking between and then the outside of each row beside you. In all, you were patrolling four rows of beans.

We carried hoes, but our crew leaders warned us against using them very often. It was easy to hack out the weeds, but in the process, we usually took out more beans than the weeds warranted. A few city-slicker kids brought what were called "bean hooks," which someone told them would be helpful, but ended up being pretty worthless. The best method was your gloved hands and your back, as you pulled from the roots. If it was really root-bound, you called someone over from an adjoining row to help.

Some fields were a dream; you could walk for yards without running into the enemy. Other acres were riddled with horseweed, corn or the vine-like waterweeds. Often, we were reduced to crawling through the rows, especially when cockleburrs were prevalent.

If you were finished with your rows before everyone else, bean etiquette required that you "dig out" someone who was still a way back by working up



their rows until the two of you met. At the end of each row, we'd grab a drink, take a little rest and gird our proverbial loins for the next round.

Fields of teenage entertainment

Occasionally a farmer in the area would informally hire a few kids to walk a smaller plot of fields. We'd show up with 4 to 6 girls, all in tube tops to get a great tan, and parade through the aisles. Without overseers, hijinks commenced – clod fights, pulling down

someone's tube top, dripping ice water onto an unsuspecting walker while she was resting for a few moments.

In this era of beans that are largely weed-free, there's not much call for bean walkers. That's probably a good thing. I haven't worn a tube top for 40 years.

Valerie Van Kooten is a writer from Pella who loves living in the country and telling its stories. She and her husband Kent have three married sons, two incredibly adorable grandsons and a lovely granddaughter.



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