Prairie Energy Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

APRIL 2023

iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Lineworkers and contractors are essential to reliability

Electric co-ops work to stay ahead of Mother Nature

Breakfast and brunch recipes

PECO board seeking directors ▶ See Page 13

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ON THE COVER Special thanks to Shirley Kellenberger, a Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive $100!

ELECTRIC CO-OPS WILL NEVER GAMBLE ON THE RELIABILITY OR AFFORDABILITY OF YOUR POWER

BY CHUCK SODERBERG

In late February, *The Des Moines Register's* editorial board published a reckless column calling for MidAmerican Energy and other Iowa electric utilities to abandon coal, *"even if doing so also means taking some gambles on brownouts and blackouts, price volatility and newer technology."*

I'm here to tell you that Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives will never gamble on our responsibility to provide reliable and affordable service to member-consumers. Our mission to power lives and empower communities guides the decision-making of our elected co-op boards, not a newspaper's editorial board.

Electricity has become an essential service in our lives. Your electric cooperative is committed to providing power around the clock for your elderly neighbor on a fixed income to the local ethanol plant and every other member in between. Your community relies on electricity to power critical services and the local economy, and we don't take that responsibility lightly.

We've talked before in the pages of this magazine about how the transition to a renewable energy economy will take decades. Last summer's generation shortfall warning from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) underscored the need for a diversified energy mix to ensure reliable electricity. And we all heard about the devastation that resulted from emergency blackouts during the February 2021 polar vortex crisis in Texas, as demand for electricity greatly exceeded supply.

Your electric cooperative uses an "all of the above" generation strategy to ensure the availability of power when you flip the light switch or turn the thermostat dial. Here are two realities we must work with in the electric industry today:

1. Many renewable energy sources like wind and solar are *intermittent*; they don't generate electricity when the sun doesn't shine or the wind doesn't blow. Other generation sources like coal, natural gas and nuclear are *dispatchable*, which means we can turn them on and ramp up production when needed.
2. Generally speaking, electricity must be simultaneously generated as it is consumed. This requires supply to be in constant balance with electric demand. We must be able to dispatch more electric generation quickly when needed, usually on very hot or very cold days as people increase the use of air conditioners or electric heat. Battery technology has yet to be developed that can adequately store electricity from intermittent sources on a utility-scale for a long range of time.

While we invest in battery technology advancements to make renewable sources more dispatchable for utility-scale, Iowa's electric cooperatives continue to maintain a variety of generation sources to protect the reliability and affordability of your power. Electric co-ops are transitioning to more renewable sources of generation when it is feasible to do so.

And we will continue to advocate for an "all of the above" energy strategy with state and federal policymakers because we refuse to gamble reliability, affordability or the trust you place in us.

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

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a Smart Lock!

ENTER ONLINE BY APRIL 30!

A smart lock is a secure, easy-to-install and convenient way to control who can access your home. The Ultraloq U-Bolt Pro Wi-Fi Smart Lock contains a biometric fingerprint scanner, a keypad and a traditional keyway that hides behind a fold-down faceplate.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later April 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 CTECHi Portable Power Station from the February issue was Dennis Moon from T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative.

SEEKING MEMBER INPUT

SURVEY TO TAKE PLACE IN APRIL

Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) is a member-owned cooperative with the purpose of providing you with safe, reliable and affordable electric service. As a member-owned entity, we rely on your feedback to ensure we meet your needs and provide the best service possible. This is why surveys are important.

Surveys provide PECO with valuable insights into how our members feel about the services we provide. By surveying members, we can identify areas where we excel and areas where improvements are needed. This feedback can be used to make important decisions about allocating resources and improving operations.

In April, many of you will be randomly selected to participate in a satisfaction survey. The anonymous survey will help us better serve you. If you are selected, please take the time to share your honest feedback. By understanding your needs, we can provide stronger service and ensure the long-term success of PECO. If you have questions regarding this survey, please contact our office at 515-532-2805.

Prairie Energy Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Facebook: facebook.com/PrairieEnergyCooperative

Website: www.prairieenergy.coop

LINE CREWS AND CONTRACTORS: HOW WE ENSURE RELIABILITY

Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) takes pride in providing safe and reliable electric service to its member-owners. With the expectations of the cooperative and membership in mind, the co-op's Operations and Engineering Department develops and executes an Inspection and Maintenance Plan. This plan is approved by the board of directors and is filed with the Iowa Utilities Board annually.

The goal of the Inspection and Maintenance Plan is to identify areas of your electric distribution supply lines that are in need of maintenance, repair or replacement. Vegetation management falls under the umbrella of maintenance as part of the plan. When areas in need of work are identified by PECO inspectors and crew members, service orders are generated and the work is scheduled.

Leveraging contractors

Service orders are reviewed to determine the full scope of work that is required. PECO crews work in conjunction with contractors to safely complete the tasks and projects in a timely manner. Delegating such work to contractors is often the most cost-effective option.

Contractors are frequently utilized when work to be done requires specialized equipment or expertise. Tasks that your cooperative typically retains contractors for include vegetation management, ground line pole inspection/treating, trenching and boring, underground line locating and power line construction.

Vegetation management and ground line pole inspections occur as it fits in the contractor's schedule. These contractors must complete the work they are assigned within the calendar year as described in the Inspection and Maintenance Plan. In contrast, trenching and boring and underground line locating is scheduled and coordinated around work that your line crews will complete.

Contractors often perform work that is required before a job starts or is needed to finish. PECO hires a power line contractor to aid in completing construction and work plan projects and assist with emergency restoration during storms. The work performed by co-op line crews and many contractors are a vital and integral part of the cooperative's day-to-day operations.

We invite you to watch for contractor and line crew features in future issues of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living*.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED

Riley Walker, daughter of Kristine and William Walker of Webster City, was chosen as Prairie Energy Cooperative's winner of the $1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship.

Walker is a senior at Webster City High School and is involved in FFA, National Honor Society, student government, 4-H and volleyball. Her future plans include attending Iowa State University to major in ag business. Congratulations, Riley!

DEAR LINEWORKERS: WE APPRECIATE YOU!

Lineworkers serve on the frontlines of our nation's energy needs. On April 10, Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) will honor our very own linemen who work in challenging and often dangerous conditions to keep the lights on.

We are proud to recognize all electric lineworkers for the services they perform around the clock in difficult conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety. Lineworkers are the first responders of our electric cooperative. They're always ready to get the job done, day or night, 24/7, year-round, no matter what crazy outdoor conditions are thrown at them.

Whether they're restoring power after a major storm or maintaining critical infrastructure to our electric system, lineworkers are at the heart of everything we do. Conditions can be dangerous, but they power through to ensure reliable service for our member-owners.

PECO is proud to honor the 15 lineworkers that maintain close to 2,100 miles of power lines spanning our 11-county service territory.

We invite all co-op members to take a moment and thank a lineworker for the work they do. On April 10, use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support for the men and women who light our lives.

YOUR PECO LINE CREW:


Steve Jackson


Tim Slaichert


Hunter Venz


Pat Reiland


Andrew Stupka


Wes Held


Scott Scheffel


Scott Muhlenbruch


Matt McDermott


Jesse Furman


Nate Hughes


Trey Swaney


Brayden Leerar


Jade Pritnitz


Levi Bolinger

YOUR FUTURE HOME NOW

BY LES O'DELL

Even in smaller homes, kitchens are growing as social gathering spaces with large islands for people to gather around.

Our homes used to be simply a place to sleep, eat, relax and keep our belongings. But in recent years, they've transitioned into true "lifestyle centers," where we work, work out, play and entertain.

Admittedly, some of our residences are more up-to-date than others, featuring modern touches as well as the latest trends and designs, but what about those to come? What does it take to live in your future home now?

Experts say there are a variety of things to make your residence "future-ready" – everything from the appliances we choose to the spaces we create.

Andrew Brindley, owner of HE Homes, says how people look at their homes and their function has changed. As a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic, he says people are seeing their homes as more important than ever and spending more time in them.

"Where a home historically may have been just a stopping point for people, we've seen a change to where now people are putting a much larger importance on prioritizing families and people being together," Brindley says.

Multiple generations and a variety of spaces

A desire for togetherness has even spurred a shift toward designing homes as intergenerational residences, Brindley says.

"Homeowners are asking for more spaces for their mother-in-law to come stay with them or for their son to come home for a couple of years after college to save money," he says. "These are things that up until the last few years might have been seen as a little bit negative or even a bit taboo, but they are becoming a sense of comfort for families to have the ability for everyone to be together and to take care of their family."

That means new designs often include wider hallways, bigger doors and fewer stairs. Others are dedicating spaces for specific activities. Brindley says home theater rooms and areas for singular activities are popular.

"We're seeing homeowners create dedicated spaces for some of their hobbies and interests. They actually are giving time, energy and effort

Photos: Andrew Brindley, HE Homes

into the things that give value to their families' lives," he explains.

In a post-pandemic world, home offices are extremely valuable. With more and more people working remotely from home or in hybrid arrangements, dedicated workspaces are a must.

Less square footage but more living space

At the same time, however, many new homes are more compact. It might be a function of interest rates, but sizes are coming down and builders are trying to be more efficient with space.

That means the open-concept floor plan continues to be popular because it lends itself to being more comfortable in a small home.

Even in smaller homes, kitchens are growing. Designers say people are using their kitchens more, eating at home more often and entertaining regularly, making the kitchen a center of attention. Larger kitchen spaces with huge islands that people can gather around are gaining popularity.

Pantries are also getting bigger – even becoming, in some cases, stand-alone rooms or walk-in closets. Many appliances that used to clutter kitchen countertops are finding a new home in the pantry, becoming almost a secondary kitchen. Adding a second dishwasher is also growing in popularity.

Smart homes

With all the technology in our offices, cars and pockets, it is no surprise that our homes are also becoming tech savvy. In this sense, the homes of the future are being built now, says Donna Youngquist, owner of R&D Custom Homes.

"We're doing a lot of smart homes with security systems, sound systems and LED lighting. People want all of this as well as smart appliances in the kitchen," says Youngquist. "They want smart thermostats and smart doorbells. Honestly, many want to be able to do everything with their phones."

And by everything, she means *everything*. Consumers can now dim the lights, raise the window blinds, start the dishwasher, answer the door, turn on sprinklers and lower the thermostat, all with apps on their phones.

Homes – and the electronics in them – are becoming so smart that some builders are even leaving things out of homes. Just a few years ago, it was not uncommon to wire the home with Category 5 internet networking jacks and to make sure coaxial cables for televisions were in practically every room. Not anymore, thanks to wireless internet technology.

"Smart homes mean different things to different people, but people are seeing the added value of things like smart doorbells, smart thermostats and other convenience items," Brindley says. "These items have become an expectation of homebuyers. They want to be able to look on an app and see if their garage door is opened or closed, for example, and if they forgot, they want to be able to close it remotely."

Even little things make homes future-ready. Incorporating USB outlets throughout the home, especially in bedrooms, living spaces and the kitchen, is worthwhile. Some designers even include "technology closets" in homes as a place for modems, routers and other technological bases.

Energy consumption and solar

All that technology requires electricity, and consumers are keeping energy efficiency in mind as they look to build, remodel or replace existing appliances and lighting.

Consumers are asking for the most energy-efficient products and appliances that they can afford. And solar power continues to pique homeowners' interests.

Even if homeowners are not utilizing solar power now, some designers are encouraging them to plan for later adoption by considering the orientation of their home and by making their rooflines ready for solar panels.

Experts still stress more traditional approaches to reducing energy use. Energy efficiency practices, such as sealing windows and incorporating LED light bulbs, are low-hanging fruit homeowners can do to save energy.

It is all part of making homes future-ready. With a little extra care and foresight, homeowners can plan spaces that work for their families now and in the future.

Les O'Dell is a professional journalist and a guest contributor to this month's issue of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living.

Newer homes are being designed to entertain inside and outside.

Rooms with flexible spaces are becoming more popular. What used to be delegated as a bedroom, might be an office during the day and music studio at night.

BREAKFAST & Brunch RECIPES

EASY EGG BAKE

- 4 slices bread, cubed
- 3 cups ham or sausage, cooked
- 1 cup Swiss cheese, shredded
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 8 eggs
- 3 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- dash salt
- dash pepper
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup corn flakes, crushed, optional
- 2 tablespoons butter, optional

Place bread cubes in bottom of 9x13-inch pan. Add meat and cheese on top of bread. Beat eggs, milk, mustard, salt, pepper and Worcestershire sauce. Top with cereal and butter, if desired. Bake at 325 degrees F for 70 minutes. Can be made the night before. *Serves 10-12*

Ardine Dillingham • Hartley
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.

HOLE IN ONE BREAKFAST

- 1 round bakery bun or roll, unsliced
- 1-2 eggs
- 2-3 slices bacon
- spinach
- shredded cheese
- pepper, to taste
- seasoning, to taste

Make a well in the bread by removing the top center of the bun, without breaking through the bottom. Fill this hole with egg, bacon and spinach. Top with cheese and spices of choice. Bake at 350 degrees F for 30-35 minutes. Add your choice of vegetables as desired. *Serves 1*

Jane Person • Batavia • Access Energy Cooperative

MAKE-AHEAD BREAKFAST ENCHILADAS

- 1 pound bulk breakfast sausage
- 1 medium red pepper, diced
- 1 small onion, diced
- ½ cup green onions, chopped
- 2½ cups cheddar cheese, shredded, divided
- 10 flour tortillas
- 2 cups half and half
- 6 eggs
- 1 tablespoon flour
- salsa
- sour cream

In a large pan, brown sausage along with peppers and onions. Cool slightly and combine with 2 cups cheese in a large bowl. Scoop out 1/3 cup mixture onto a tortilla. Roll up tortilla and place seam side down in a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Repeat with remaining tortillas, squeezing them all into dish. Whisk together half and half, eggs and flour. Pour over tortillas, then cover with foil and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, bake covered at 350 degrees F for 35 minutes. Remove foil and sprinkle remaining ½ cup cheese over enchiladas and bake uncovered for an additional 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve with salsa and sour cream. *Serves 10*

Susie Reiling • Carroll
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

BLUEBERRY BREAKFAST COBBLER

- **4 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen)**
- **1½ cups plus 2 tablespoons sugar, divided**
- **1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- **½ cup butter, softened**
- **2 eggs**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla**
- **1¼ cups flour**
- **1 teaspoon baking powder**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **2 tablespoons butter, melted**

Lay blueberries in a 9x13-inch pan. Mix ½ cup sugar and cornstarch, then mix into blueberries. Mix ½ cup softened butter, 1 cup sugar, eggs, vanilla, flour, baking powder and salt. Drop mixture over blueberries. Drizzle with melted butter and sprinkle with 2 tablespoons sugar. Bake at 350 degrees F for 40 minutes.

Lauren Zollinger • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

EASY BREAKFAST SMOOTHIE

- **1 banana**
- **¼ cup peanuts, almonds or walnuts**
- **1 cup milk**
- **¾ cup rolled oats**
- **1½ teaspoons combined spices: cinnamon, ginger, allspice, cardamom**
- **1 tablespoon maple syrup, optional**

Put all ingredients in container and let sit overnight. In the morning, the oats and nuts will be softened. Blend with food processor, blender or hand blender. Can substitute nuts for ¼ cup peanut butter. *Serves 2*

Jeffrey Hedquist • Fairfield
Access Energy Cooperative

BREAKFAST IN A JIFFY

- **1 pound sage breakfast sausage**
- **2 cups apples, cored and sliced, but not peeled**
- **1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded**
- **2 extra-large eggs**
- **1 cup milk**
- **1 package Jiffy corn muffin mix**

Cook sausage, drain and crumble. Place sliced apples in rows to cover bottom of greased 8x8-inch pan. Cover apples with cheese and sprinkle sausage over cheese. Beat together eggs and milk. Place corn muffin mix into a small bowl and pour milk mixture over it. Blend well and pour over apples, cheese and sausage layers. Bake at 350 degrees F for 30-35 minutes or until lightly browned. *Serves 6-9*

Jeannie Stall • Huxley • Consumers Energy

HOT FRUIT COMPOTE

- **1 can Mandarin oranges**
- **1 jar maraschino cherries**
- **1 large can sliced peaches**
- **1 medium can pineapple chunks**
- **1 stick butter or oleo**
- **¼ cup flour**
- **½ cup sugar**
- **brown sugar**

Drain fruit juices, saving all the cherry juice and 1 cup of the other combined fruit juices. Place fruit in baking dish. In a pan, melt butter or oleo. Add flour and cherry juice. Add the other fruit juice and sugar. Simmer until thick then pour over fruit. Sprinkle with brown sugar. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15-20 minutes, until bubbly. *Serves 8-10*

Barb Rich • Mount Pleasant
Access Energy Cooperative

BACON EGG CUPS

- **8 eggs**
- **salt and pepper, to taste**
- **½ cup cheddar cheese, shredded**
- **12 slices bacon**

Whisk eggs, salt, pepper and cheese. Spray muffin tin cups with non-stick spray. Wrap each slice of bacon around the insides of muffin tin cups. Fill each bacon-lined muffin cup ¾ of the way with egg mixture. Bake at 350 degrees F for 30-35 minutes or until eggs are golden brown. Serve warm. Can be saved and warmed up in microwave for 30 seconds per cup. *Serves 12*

Arie Schiller • Donnellson • Access Energy Cooperative

WANTED:

DESSERT RECIPES

THE REWARD:

$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is April 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

STAYING ONE STEP AHEAD OF MOTHER NATURE

BY JENNAH DENNEY

Drones fly very close to utility assets to take the clearest images and provide data to help keep an eye on how close vegetation is to equipment.

Mother Nature tends to have a mind of her own. In Iowa, we witness this with tornadoes, derechos and ice storms. Utility power lines are constantly at risk from severe storms – particularly fallen and overgrown tree limbs, which can lead to power outages. It's estimated that 50% of outages can be attributed to overgrown vegetation, which is why Iowa's electric co-ops regularly trim and maintain their local systems.

This tried-and-true method requires a significant amount of on-the-ground labor, including manual data collection, in which dozens of workers assess the vegetation that needs to be cleared while walking below the infrastructure. It also takes manual verification of work quality and completion by contractors.

This is how co-ops have handled vegetation management for the past few decades. It has been an effective method, but in the era of extreme weather events and accelerating digitalization, electric co-ops are looking to innovative vegetation management methods to improve power reliability for the members they serve.

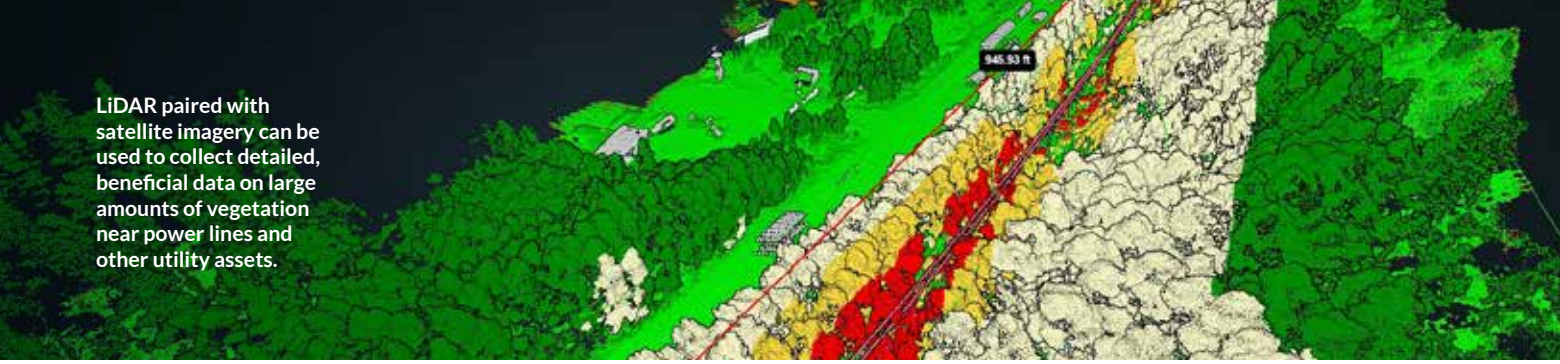
Leveraging new technologies

Technology advancement will continue to impact vegetation management, and electric co-ops are committed to staying informed and undertaking modernization efforts. By utilizing technology, co-ops may be able to dispatch crews to perform trimming at the ideal moment and location, preventing additional outages while enhancing productivity, cutting costs and providing better service. Timely monitoring and maintenance are necessary to identify assets prone to sustaining damage or catching fire, so co-ops are tasked with selecting the right technology to make this process more efficient.

The ideal technology will ensure a consistent supply of energy while managing the environment. Today, there are several cutting-edge vegetation management tools, each with its advantages.

Light detection and ranging

LiDAR, which stands for "light detection and ranging," gives exact, three-dimensional data about the shape of the surface around utility



LiDAR paired with satellite imagery can be used to collect detailed, beneficial data on large amounts of vegetation near power lines and other utility assets.

assets. LiDAR is a popular way to scan portions of forests to determine how tall trees are and acquire information about their health, like whether a tree has leaves. LiDAR doesn't provide data on how healthy plants are in general, but the technology can be paired with high-resolution multispectral satellite imagery to obtain accurate information about the health of the plants surrounding power lines. Timely data like this is extremely beneficial and can help electric co-ops make more proactive planning decisions.

Satellite data

Satellites provide coverage 24 hours a day and can supply two kinds of images: a wide macro view of the area near utility assets and a more detailed micro view. Satellite data can often be used in place of other monitoring methods. With satellite technology, co-ops can learn a lot about local vegetation, including:

- **Health:** This knowledge makes it possible to predict vegetation growth based on actual conditions rather than guesses.
- **Dryness:** This information is valuable for determining the likelihood of a wildfire – and how to protect wildlife around utility infrastructure. While wildfires aren't typical in Iowa, recent major events as close as Missouri showed us they could also occur here.

Satellites are always in orbit around the Earth, so data can be updated quickly, in real-time. This makes it possible to act more precisely and on time.

Today, satellite images can have a spatial resolution as small as 1.6 feet, which makes it easy to spot when vegetation is growing in the right of way near power lines and utility equipment. Typically, satellites can speed up the process of inspecting power lines because they give the utility a solid foundation for making data-driven decisions about vegetation management. Drones and helicopters are effective but can take longer to fly along a network of power lines. A satellite can take pictures of the same area in just a few hours.

Fixed-wing aircraft and drones

Electric co-ops are also using fixed-wing aircraft and drones to keep an eye on and control the growth of trees and plants near power lines. Drones fly very close to assets so they can take the clearest images, provide data on how close vegetation is to equipment and check the health of trees to see if they are likely to fall.

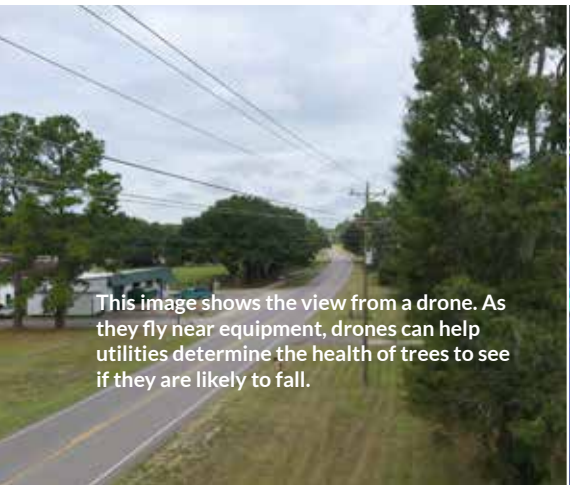
Many co-ops utilize drones with cameras, which began as a novelty tech for utilities but are now considered essential tools. When it comes to taking care of surrounding vegetation, drones are often used for detailed surveys rather than large-scale monitoring like satellites. Once LiDAR or satellites (often together) have collected data on a large amount of vegetation near power lines, drones are used to inspect a single area and do all the necessary checks without putting operators in danger.

Finding the best fit

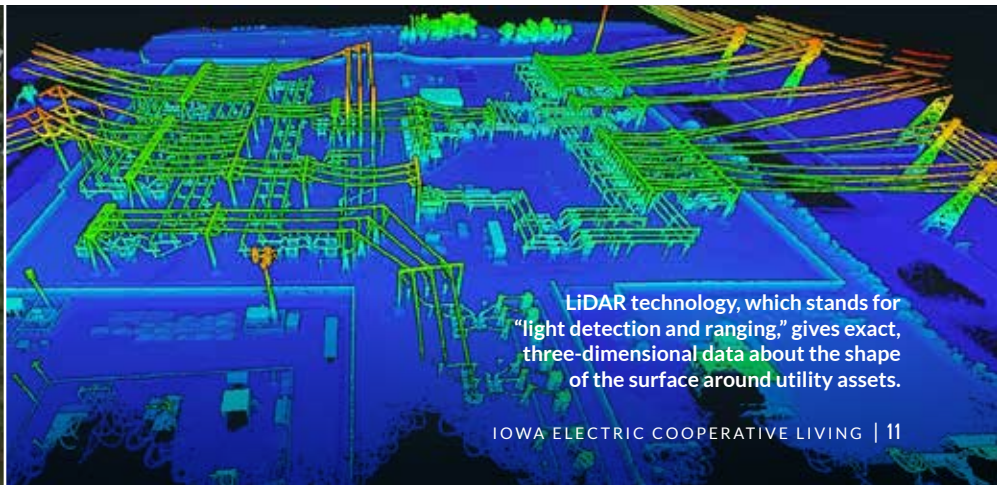
Electric co-ops place a high focus on vegetation management. It is the most crucial tool for reducing the likelihood of power outages. A thorough understanding of the vegetation's past, present and projected future is essential for a successful approach to reducing these risks.

The growth of LiDAR, drone and satellite data presents an opportunity to close the loop with continuous data-driven vegetation management intelligence and to increase the power line system's dependability and safety. Ultimately, all three technologies for managing vegetation serve different purposes, and electric co-ops choose the ones that work best for them.

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



This image shows the view from a drone. As they fly near equipment, drones can help utilities determine the health of trees to see if they are likely to fall.



LiDAR technology, which stands for "light detection and ranging," gives exact, three-dimensional data about the shape of the surface around utility assets.

Energy Trail Tour 2023

Prairie Energy Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative invite you to join us for one of two Energy Trail Tours being offered this summer. This three-day adventure will allow you to view, firsthand, how your power providers convert energy from water, wind and coal into electricity. View coal being mined and see how those mines are, then, returned to productive farm and native grasslands. Learn how the energy industry is evolving to become more dependent on renewable power generation and glimpse into the future of carbon capture technology. Enjoy the fellowship of other cooperative member-owners on a comfortable motor coach journey to North Dakota's Energy Loop. $100 per couple covers your lodging, meals and entry fees. The remainder of your tour costs are covered by Prairie Energy Cooperative.

Two lucky couples from Prairie Energy Cooperative will be selected at random from those who sign up.

☑ YES, please enter our names in the drawing for the trip. We understand that if our names are drawn, we will be billed $100.

Our first and second choice of dates:

June 28-30 1st 2nd (please circle)
July 26-28 1st 2nd

I/we ☐ have ☐ have not participated in this tour in the past.

First Person _____

Second Person _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

Clip this coupon and return to cooperative by May 15, 2023.

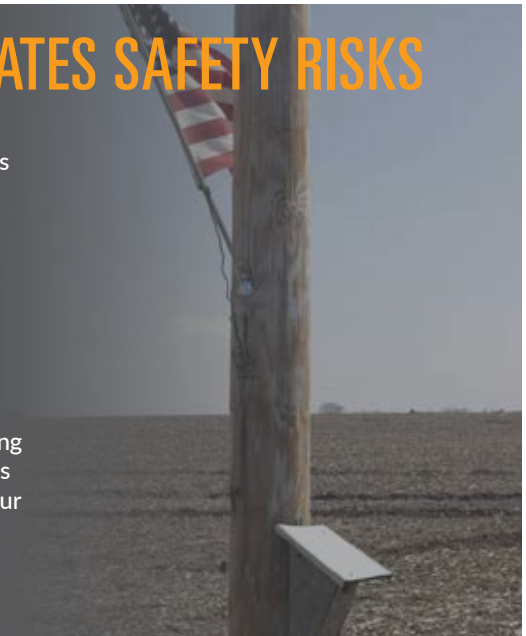
POSTING ITEMS TO UTILITY POLES CREATES SAFETY RISKS

Signs, flyers and other materials on utility poles are dangerous – even life threatening – to the linemen who maintain your vital lines of electricity.

The clamped safety boots used by line workers to climb poles are vulnerable to becoming snagged on staples and nails embedded in posts. Foreign objects can also tear utility workers' protective clothing, which is the first line of protection from an electric shock. They can also injure workers despite the safety gear they wear to avoid contact with rough surfaces.

Posting items to power poles can also be a public safety hazard. The materials posted on the poles not only distract people as they drive, but they also degrade the quality, effectiveness and stability of the wood.

It is also important to avoid tampering with or disrupting the guy wires that surround utility poles. Inform children not to play or swing on the wires, and maintain your distance when performing yard work. If you see poles or guy wires that have been disrupted, please call our office immediately.



TWO POSITIONS ON PECO BOARD OPEN FOR ELECTION

Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) is a member-owned cooperative governed by a board of directors that you elect. As a member, one of your most important roles is to participate in the election of directors, and you can become more involved in your co-op by serving on that board.

Two positions on PECO's seven-member board of directors will be open for election in 2023. The three-year terms of Ryan Eekhoff, District 2, and Marion Denger, District 5, will expire. Both directors have accepted nominations to serve another term.

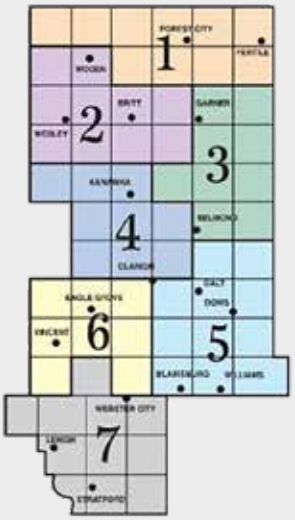
If you are a member in District 2 or 5 and are interested in serving on the board of directors, contact one of the nominating committee members listed to the right.

District 2: Mark Conway
660 170th St
Kanawha, IA 50047
515-341-6927

Dave Lampe
490 220th St
Britt, IA 50423
641-860-1653

District 5: Jerry Norris
PO Box 307
Dows, IA 50071
515-852-4499

Ron Lentz
3112 Washington Ave
Dows, IA 50071
515-571-4399



To learn more about director requirements and expectations, visit our website at www.prairieenergy.coop.

ANNUAL PECO MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY!

- Bucket rides, displays, GIVEAWAYS for kids and adults!
- Enjoy a delish meal on us from Smokee Heights
- The Olde Creamery Garner will be there too!

HOMEMADE ICE CREAM
THE OLDE CREAMERY
& GIFT SHOPPE

Wednesday, July 19 ■ 4-7 p.m.
The Red Shed Event Center ■ Clarion

ENERGY-EFFICIENT FARMING EQUIPMENT

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

The importance of farms cannot be understated. Farmers feed our families and keep Iowa and the country running. But the business brings many challenges, including risk and uncertainty. Finding ways to use less energy can reduce costs and result in energy savings for years to come.

When looking to improve farm energy efficiency, consider the following areas.

Motors and pumps

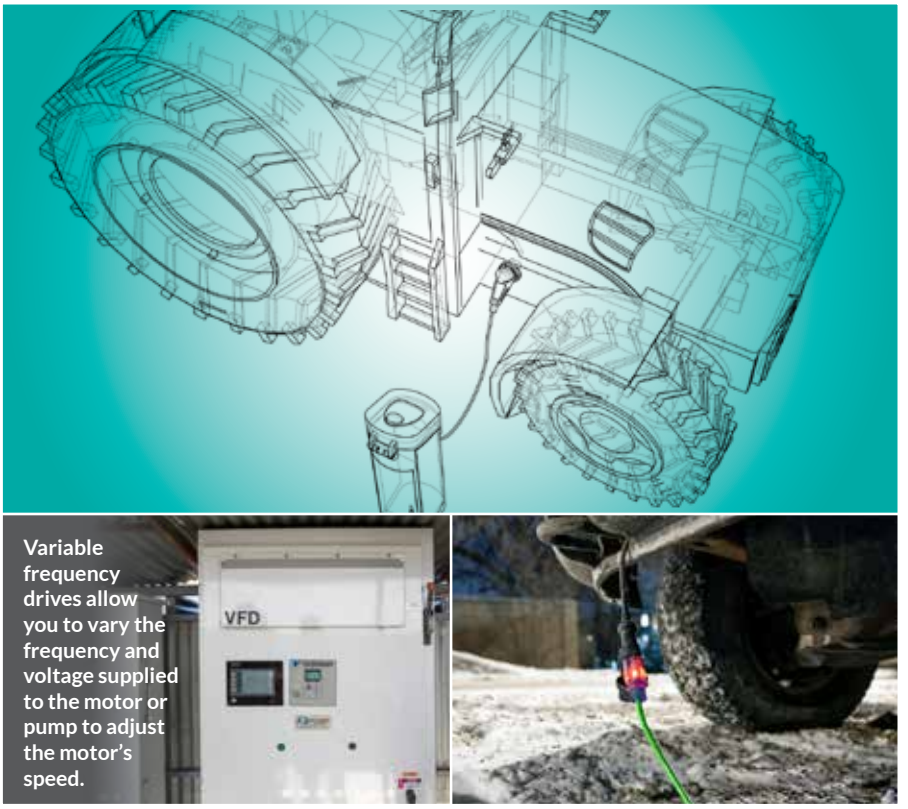
Because motors and pumps account for a significant amount of energy use on a farm, replacing inefficient motors with efficient models can save energy and reduce costs. Adding variable frequency drives (VFDs) allows you to vary the frequency and voltage supplied to the motor or pump to adjust the motor's speed. This saves kilowatt hours and reduces load by only operating at the needed capacity. VFDs can be used in place of a phase converter, which allows the use of three-phase power equipment where there is only access to single-phase power.

Irrigation

Upgrade irrigation equipment to use less water, which means less pumping and reducing the amount of water and energy consumed. The goal is to get the right amount of water where it is needed, which can be accomplished by reducing evaporation through system design and fixing leaks in the system. GPS and geographic information system technologies allow for more specific irrigation targeting. Monitor and test systems regularly to ensure maximum efficiency.

Lights

The longer lights are on, the higher the potential for savings. Prioritize replacing incandescent or fluorescent exterior lighting on photocells or lights that stay on all night. LED lights last two to four times longer than fluorescents and 25 to 35 times longer than incandescents. That means less frequent replacement, which saves on materials and labor costs.



Variable frequency drives allow you to vary the frequency and voltage supplied to the motor or pump to adjust the motor's speed.

Heater controls

In climates where engine block heaters are used to keep vehicle engines warm enough to start, adding engine block heater controls with temperature sensors and timers will reduce electricity use. To keep water from freezing on farms with livestock, save energy by using stock tank heaters with thermostatic controls, which operate only when needed instead of running constantly. Insulated stock tanks may eliminate the need to heat water.

Emerging technology

New farming technologies that offer efficiency possibilities include electric tractors, space heating and water heating. Equipment with information technology capabilities can aid efficiency by monitoring conditions and automating farming tasks. As with home efficiency practices, consider the equipment used most and the savings potential from upgrading or modifying existing equipment.

Rebates

About 80% of U.S. farms are located in counties served by electric cooperatives. Check with your local electric co-op to see if they offer rebates on farming equipment and energy-efficiency projects that help reduce energy use. Improving efficiency on the farm can result in less energy use, lower bills and improved farming success during challenging financial times.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

RAMBLIN' ON

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

I've recently learned about survivor cars, which are an exceptional anomaly in the world of classic vehicles. A survivor car hasn't been altered since it was built and still has its original paint job, original interior and parts, and maybe even documentation about when and where it was first purchased.

There's something compelling about a survivor car. These are time machines, after all. When I found out my friend Steve Quick of Huxley owns one (a straight six 1961 Rambler Classic super sedan with 56,000 miles), I wanted to know all about it. More than a survivor car, this Rambler reflects a remarkable Iowa story that spans generations and geography.

Steve Quick of Huxley owns a 1961 Rambler Classic super sedan, which is known as a survivor car.

A time machine to the 1960s

"I remember that car from the time I was about 13 years old," says Steve, a retired hardware store owner and current director with Consumers Energy Cooperative, based in Marshalltown.

The car's journey began around Memorial Day 1961 in Steve's hometown of Burlington. A couple from Wall Lake, Roy Frank and his wife Minnie (fondly known as "Grandma Min"), were visiting their son Don in Burlington. On May 31, 1961, the Franks decided to buy a new 1961 Rambler Classic from the Thomas Motor Company in Burlington, where Don had worked.

Thousands of Ramblers were manufactured during this era, and people either loved them or hated them, Steve says. While Ramblers weren't exciting, high-performance cars, they were a favorite of families and grandparents across America who appreciated their affordability and dependability.

In the early 1960s, Ramblers started around $2,098 (about $30,000 in today's dollars) for the four-door sedan.

"Everyone knew that seafoam green Rambler was Grandma Min's car," says Warren Frank, Roy and Minnie's grandson and Steve's childhood friend. "The Rambler wasn't a showstopper, but it was a good, basic car."

The Rambler was always around each November when Warren and Steve visited the Franks and enjoyed pheasant hunting in the Wall Lake area when they were young teenagers.

Becoming a family heirloom

Grandma Min drove the Rambler for years before the car was passed along in 1981 to Don and his wife Ilene, who named the car "Hoopie" for some reason now lost to history. One time, when the Franks were driving their beloved Rambler around town, a Burlington police officer pulled them over for not wearing their seatbelts, Warren recalled. When the couple explained that the Rambler didn't have seatbelts, they avoided a ticket.

After Don died in 2005, Ilene became the Rambler's caretaker. Keeping history alive was a passion for Ilene, who was a wealth of local genealogy, thanks to her nearly 50-year career as a hairdresser in Burlington and her volunteer work at the Des Moines County Historical Society.

Before Ilene died this year on Jan. 23, at age 96, she decided to sell the Rambler to Steve. It was a natural fit since he is such a car guy, says Warren, who now lives in the San Francisco Bay area. Ilene had known Steve all his life since his mother Margie had worked with Ilene at the West Hill Beauty Shop for years.

"The Rambler was always part of our family, but it means the world to me that Steve has it now," Warren says.

Steve plans to drive the Rambler in parades and classic car rides and exhibit it at car shows. No doubt the storied, seafoam-green sedan will stand out wherever it goes.

Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at www.darcymaulsby.com.

Prairie Energy Cooperative
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IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine for members of Iowa's electric cooperatives.

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