

● JUNE 2025

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



**Your blueprint for an
energy-efficient new home**

**“Shine the Light” on
a community volunteer**

Camping recipes

Save the date for PECO Member Appreciation Day ▶ See Page 12

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Nate Fluit, 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!

TAKING OUR MESSAGE OF POWER RELIABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

BY ETHAN HOHENADEL



Electric cooperatives exist to improve quality of life for our member-consumers, plain and simple. A big part of our success over the decades has been our ability to advocate for rural Iowa priorities on state and federal levels.

At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), we organize legislative fly-ins to Washington, D.C., each year so electric cooperative leaders can talk face-to-face with our elected legislators about timely issues and concerns. We have built a strong reputation for effective grassroots advocacy, and these fly-ins help ensure that Iowa electric co-op employees and directors can speak directly to policymakers about how federal legislation impacts our member-consumers and communities on the local level.

In late April, IAEC coordinated a group of nearly 30 advocates who were able to meet with all six members of the Iowa congressional delegation, including Sen. Chuck Grassley, Sen. Joni Ernst, Rep. Randy Feenstra, Rep. Ashley Hinson, Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks and Rep. Zach Nunn. Our discussions during the individual meetings centered on these issues:

- Asking our legislators to optimally fund the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. Over the decades, Iowa's electric cooperatives have served as resourceful intermediaries for these grants and loans, which boost rural economies and create or retain local jobs.
- Requesting continued funding of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Electric Loan program. Electric co-ops repay these loans with interest as they build a more resilient grid.
- Asking our legislators to oppose cuts to USDA and U.S. Department of Energy infrastructure grant programs as electric co-ops work to deploy new energy technologies, build a more resilient grid and defend against cyber threats.
- Imploing legislators to support Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster recovery programs and mitigation programs that are essential for electric co-ops as they restore power and rebuild the electric system following major storm events in Iowa.
- Asking legislators to support and pass additional permitting reform legislation, so we can keep electricity reliable and affordable for the member-consumers we serve.

We are grateful to all members of the Iowa congressional delegation and their staff for taking time out of their busy schedules to meet with us in their D.C. offices. We were able to share local stories of how federal programs help keep power affordable and reliable for the members we serve, and our group also provided specific examples of rural development success.

It takes a lot of effort to organize these meetings each year, but IAEC's policy and advocacy team believes in the adage that if you're not at the table, you could find yourself on the menu. We are proud to carry on our statewide legacy of advocating for Iowa's member-consumers at the legislative table.

Ethan Hohenadel is the director of policy and advocacy for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN A BLACKSTONE CAMPING GRIDDLE!

Satisfy your hunger for amazing food with this Blackstone 22-inch Adventure Ready propane griddle. This Blackstone also comes with a matching hard cover to help keep your griddle clean between uses.

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 Cuisinart® electric skillet from the April issue was **Abby Schulz**, a **Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** member-consumer.

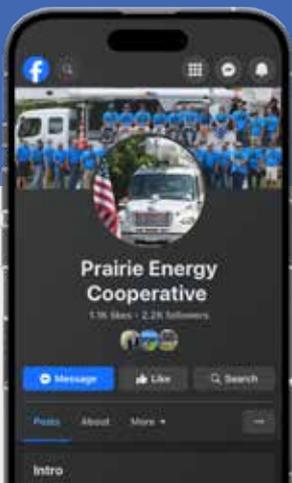


ENTER ONLINE BY JUNE 30!

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK



Stay connected with Prairie Energy Cooperative on Facebook! By following us, you'll get timely safety tips, real-time outage updates and details about events like our annual Member Appreciation Day – all in one convenient place. Don't miss out on important news and community highlights!



PECO CONNECTS WITH FUTURE WORKFORCE AT LOCAL CAREER FAIR

Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) recently took part in a regional career fair hosted by Hancock County Economic Development at Garner-Hayfield-Ventura High School. The event brought together students from Garner-Hayfield-Ventura, West Hancock, Belmond-Klemme and Forest City high schools to explore career paths and connect with local employers.

Students had the chance to meet face-to-face with representatives from a variety of businesses across north central Iowa, including PECO. Our team was excited to engage

with these future professionals, sharing insight into the wide range of career opportunities available in the electric utility industry.

It was inspiring to see such strong participation, and we appreciated the interest many students showed in learning more about our work and mission.

Events like these are vital – not only for students beginning to plan their futures but also for local businesses seeking to build meaningful connections with the next generation of talent. We're proud to be part of that conversation.



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Pictured from left: Prairie Energy Cooperative staff, including Lead Lineman Andrew Stupka, Operations Administrative Assistant Erin Dreessen, Human Resources Manager Maggie Smith and Member Service Representative Chad Chapman.

PRAIRIE ENERGY EARNS AN ACSI® 2025 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AWARD



Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) is honored to have earned a 2025 Customer Satisfaction Award from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) based on our member survey results. Members were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with us, how well we lived up to their expectations and how well we measured up to their ideal co-op experience. While these were not the only questions in the survey, we included these specifically because they are the core components of the proprietary ACSI methodology.

PECO's ACSI score of 90, which is in the top 25% nationally, substantially outperforms the industry average score earned by publicly measured utilities reported in the 2025 ACSI Energy Utility Study. This award is a testament to PECO's ongoing



efforts to provide the best possible member experience.

The 2025 Customer Satisfaction Award affirms that PECO's hard work has been noticed by its members. PECO is grateful for its members and will continue to strive for excellence through constant dedication to improvement.

Award criteria are determined by ACSI and are based on customers rating their satisfaction in a survey independent of the syndicated ACSI Energy Utility Study. For more about the ACSI, visit www.theacsi.org. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.

RICARDO NOH SELECTED TO REPRESENT PECO ON YOUTH TOUR



Clarion-Goldfield-Dows sophomore Ricardo Noh has been selected to represent Prairie Energy Cooperative

(PECO) on the 2025 electric cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Each year, electric cooperatives from across the country send high school students to the nation's capital for a week of learning about American government, history and the role of cooperatives.

"Being selected for this Youth Tour is something that I want to accomplish because I want to be a part of something bigger," Ricardo shares.



"Being part of this program, with more than 1,000 students from different states, would be a great achievement for me."

A history enthusiast, Ricardo has chosen history electives throughout his time in high school. He's eager to deepen his understanding of the past through this unique experience.

"This Youth Tour educates students on the history of the U.S. that is found in the capital, and I want to learn more," he says.

PECO is proud to support tomorrow's leaders through opportunities like the Youth Tour and congratulates Ricardo on this well-deserved honor.

Happy 4TH OF JULY

Prairie Energy Cooperative will be closed on Friday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day.

If you experience a service issue during this time, please call us at 515-532-2805.

Our phones are answered 24/7. We will resume normal business hours at 7:30 a.m. on Monday, July 7.



YOUR BLUEPRINT FOR AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT NEW HOME

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Prioritizing energy efficiency when building a new home can create future savings and make living more comfortable. It might cost a little more upfront, but it will pay off in the long run.

Let's explore two approaches: Following an energy efficiency certification plan or adding energy-efficient designs and equipment to your construction project.

There are several efficiency certifications available for new-construction homes that may qualify for discounted homeowner's insurance, tax credits and other incentives.

Boosting savings of efficiency certifications

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification ensures the home uses less energy while prioritizing sustainable resources and healthy indoor air quality. LEED-certified homes use 20% to 30% less energy than the average home – with some homes saving up to 60% – and can cost the same as non-LEED homes with proper planning, according to the U.S. Green Building Council.

Passive House Certification requires the home to be so efficient it needs little to no heating and

cooling equipment while remaining comfortable for its occupants.

To achieve up to 90% less energy use than the average home, the certification focuses on maximizing the efficiency of the building envelope – all components that separate the indoors from the outdoors – including proper insulation levels, air sealing and high-efficiency windows.

ENERGY STAR® NextGen Certification for New Homes recognizes houses that are 20% more efficient than the average home and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 80%.

Although various certifications are available, you don't have to follow a set guide.

Incorporating efficiency principles

In addition to integrating a certification into your home, consider adding these energy efficiency principles to your new home build.

- **Advanced framing.** Advanced framing techniques maximize the amount of insulated area and save on material costs in wood-framed homes. This technique can save up to \$500 for a 1,200-square-foot home and \$1,000 for a 2,400-square-foot home on material costs, between 3% to 5% on labor costs and up to 5% on annual heating and cooling costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Choose a contractor who is familiar with these techniques, and check with your local building officials to ensure compliance with local codes.
- **Orientation to the sun.** The importance of a home's orientation is often overlooked. According to the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors, homes oriented to the sun's path use less energy for heating and cooling to reduce energy bills and improve comfort.

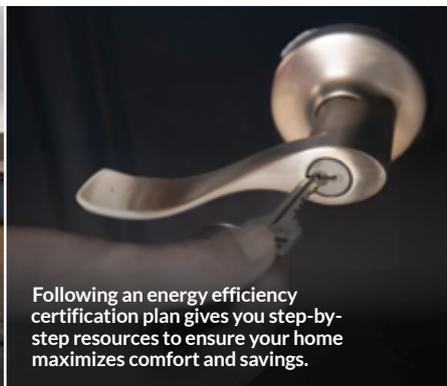
- **Attic insulation.** If you are building or buying a new home that doesn't allow options for orientation or framing, you might be able to request higher insulation levels in the attic. Increasing the insulation levels likely won't cost much more for materials and labor, but it can help you use less energy and save money in the long run.
- **Heating and cooling equipment.** By using energy modeling tools that calculate the home's heating and cooling needs, equipment can be purchased in the correct size. Investing in a more efficient building envelope that is well-insulated and air-sealed can reduce the home's heating and cooling load, making it possible to have a smaller, less expensive heating and cooling system. This saves money on equipment costs and lowers energy use.

Optimizing the efficiency of a new home requires a whole-house approach. Analyze all systems and how they work together to ensure maximum efficiency for a safe and comfortable home.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Properly insulating while building a home can reduce the expense of your heating and cooling equipment and lead to long-term energy savings.



Following an energy efficiency certification plan gives you step-by-step resources to ensure your home maximizes comfort and savings.



Consider framing techniques, insulation levels, and heating and cooling equipment to maximize your new home's energy efficiency.

EFFICIENCY ESSENTIALS FOR YOUR NEW HOME PLAN

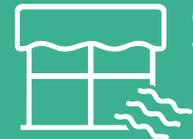
A few thoughtful additions to your building plans can make a big difference in how efficiently – and comfortably – you'll live for years to come.



Seal it tight.

Thorough air sealing around doors, windows and ductwork prevents drafts

and reduces energy loss. Proper air sealing can lead to savings on heating and cooling costs and improve indoor air quality.



Choose the right windows.

Select ENERGY STAR®-certified windows with a low U-factor

and the appropriate solar heat gain coefficient for Iowa. This helps enhance insulation and can lower energy bills.



Plan smart lighting.

Use LED lighting throughout the home, and install fixtures with occupancy sensors or smart switches. These strategies can reduce lighting energy consumption by 10% to 90%.



Select efficient appliances.

Choose ENERGY STAR-rated appliances, such as refrigerators, dishwashers

and washing machines, to decrease energy use by 10% to 50% and reduce utility costs.



Add a programmable thermostat.

Installing a programmable or smart thermostat can save up to 10% annually

on heating and cooling expenses by adjusting temperatures when you're asleep or away.

CAMPING RECIPES



BREAKFAST HASH

- 1 16-ounce package bacon, chopped
- 1 20-ounce package hash browns
- 16 ounces shredded cheddar cheese
- 2-3 red and green peppers, chopped
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 3-4 eggs

Cook chopped bacon in cast iron skillet over campfire or stove on high heat. When cooked, drain some grease, if desired, then add hash browns. Continue cooking, adding cheese and peppers. Stir occasionally until hash browns are almost ready and cheese is melted. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add eggs and stir, cooking eggs until set. *Serves 3-4*

Ben Sinclair • Brooklyn
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

HAMBURGER MEAL IN A PACKET

- 1 large ground beef patty
- 1 slice onion
- ¼ cup carrots, cut small
- ½ cup potatoes, cut small
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon margarine
- 1 teaspoon water

Put beef patty on a large sheet of aluminum foil. Top with onion, carrots and potatoes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add margarine and water. Close packet and grill or bake at 350 degrees F for 50 minutes. *Serves 1*

Pat Lynch • New Hampton
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

HICKORY SMOKED BAKED BEANS

- 1 pound hamburger
- 1 pound bacon
- 1 32-ounce can pork and beans
- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans, drained
- 1 cup ketchup
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 3 tablespoons liquid smoke

Brown hamburger and fry bacon separately. In a large bowl, combine both beans, hamburger and bacon and mix well. Add remaining ingredients and cook 6-8 hours in slow cooker.

Anna Domnick • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

SAUSAGE AND PEPPERS FOIL PACKS

- 8 Italian sausage links
- 4 bell peppers, thinly sliced
- 2 large onions, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- fresh parsley, chopped

Heat grill to high. Grill sausages 3 minutes per side, until charred. Divide sausage between four sheets of foil. Top with peppers and onions. Drizzle each with olive oil, then season with salt and pepper. Fold foil to close into packets and grill for 13-15 minutes, until peppers and onions are tender and sausage is cooked. Garnish with parsley. *Serves 4*

Marta Smigowska • Marshalltown
Consumers Energy

CAMPERS' DELIGHT

- 2 envelopes instant chicken and noodles soup mix
- 5 cups water or chicken broth
- 1 can chicken
- 2 cups Bisquick mix
- $\frac{3}{8}$ cup milk
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Mix the chicken and noodle soup mix with water or broth until dissolved. Add the canned chicken and bring soup mixture to a rolling boil in a large camping pan, 6 quarts or larger. Meanwhile, mix the Bisquick with milk and vegetable oil following the biscuit recipe. Drop the dough on top of the soup by spoonful. Lower the temperature, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

Mark Smith • Osceola
Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.

CRESCENT ROLL CAMPFIRE TREATS

- 1 package crescent rolls
- butter
- filling options: pudding, pie filling, whipped topping, chocolate, peanut butter, etc.

Butter the end of a dowel rod. Press a crescent roll around the buttered end, sealing any holes by pressing the dough together. Roast over the campfire until golden brown and the dough slides off the dowel rod easily. Fill with your choice of filling. Be creative!

Hana Hartter • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

BASQUE REGION POTATOES

- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound bacon, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 1 12-ounce package Little Sizzlers link sausages, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 8-10 medium size potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 2 12-ounce cans/bottles beer
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Heat a cast iron Dutch oven over campfire. Add bacon, sausages and onion. Fry until cooked through. Stir in the potatoes and peppers. Add one can of beer and cover. Stir often and add additional beer as needed. Serve when potatoes are tender. Salt and pepper as desired. Serves 6-8

Deb Foster • Greene
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

BEST BURGERS

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon ketchup
- 1 pound ground beef
- condiments
- buns

Mix all ingredients together and form into four patties. Cook on grill or stove top. Serve with condiments and buns. Serves 4

Debra Bartholomew • Ollie
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

Visit www.ieclmagazine.com and search our online archive of hundreds of recipes in various categories.



CAMPFIRE DUTCH OVEN SCRAMBLE

- 1 pound ground breakfast sausage
- 1 dozen eggs
- 3-4 potatoes, cubed
- 1 8-ounce package shredded cheddar cheese
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Cook sausage in the bottom of an open Dutch oven over a fire. No need to drain the grease. Meanwhile, beat eggs in a bowl. Add potatoes on top of sausage and pour eggs on top. Cover with cheese. Place lid on Dutch oven, cover with coals and bake for 25-45 minutes, depending on the heat. Check the doneness of the eggs after 25 minutes and cook longer if needed. Potatoes can be substituted with sweet potatoes or one bag of shredded hash browns. Serves 8

Tefna Greiner • Packwood
Access Energy Cooperative

CAMPING BISCUITS AND GRAVY

- 1 pound bulk breakfast sausage
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon butter
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 8 premade biscuits

Crumble sausage and cook in frying pan on stove or campfire. Add flour, stir and cook for 2 minutes. Add milk, stirring constantly. Bring just to a boil, then lower to medium heat and continue to stir until desired thickness. When ready to serve, add butter and thoroughly stir into gravy. Season with salt and pepper if needed. Split biscuits and spoon hot gravy on top. Serves 8

Richard Foreman • Birmingham
Access Energy Cooperative

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POWERING ON: BEHIND THE SCENES OF A MAJOR RESTORATION EFFORT

BY ANGELA CATTON

When Winter Storm Nyla's ice, snow and gusty winds toppled 11 miles of transmission lines and rendered 20 substations inoperable on March 19, the staff at Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) knew they were facing one of their most significant challenges in recent history.

NIPCO – a generation and transmission cooperative – supplies wholesale electric power to seven distribution cooperatives covering 6,500 square miles in western Iowa. These distribution cooperatives supply retail power to more than 30,000 member-consumers.

“We started getting reports of damage Wednesday morning,” explains Matt Washburn, NIPCO executive vice president and general manager. “By noon, we realized this wouldn't be a typical outage response.”

The storm wreaked havoc across Crawford, Harrison, Monona, Shelby and Woodbury counties, with Harrison and western Monona counties bearing the brunt of the damage. Thousands of member-consumers served by NIPCO member cooperatives faced outages lasting up to 84 hours, including those in Onawa and surrounding areas.

The restoration effort would require strategic and well-timed behind-the-

scenes coordination across multiple departments at NIPCO and tapping external partners. While NIPCO routinely updates and practices its documented emergency response plan for widespread damage and prolonged outages, carrying it out in a real-world situation felt both familiar and unnervingly unpredictable.

Glimmers of hope in the darkness

As soon as the weather cleared, NIPCO crews began assessing the damage. The cooperative contracted with a local pilot to get aerial views of damaged lines in harder-to-access areas. Washburn immediately recognized the co-op would need extensive support.

“In a situation like this, you quickly realize the value of the cooperative model,” Washburn explains. “A few phone calls set in motion a cascade of support that would have been impossible to coordinate without our existing relationships.”

Support arrived from East River Electric Power Cooperative (Madison, South Dakota) with eight crew members and Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Humboldt) with 15 crew members. Contractors from Watts Electric were redirected from routine upgrade work to restoration efforts, bringing the total to 43 transmission lineworkers. Each team provided specialized equipment to

navigate difficult conditions like thick mud from melting snow and ice.

Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), based in Cedar Rapids, and L&O Power Cooperative, based in Rock Rapids, offered access to their surplus replacement poles, conductors and specialized equipment inventories, helping NIPCO overcome supply challenges.

Spotlighting communications efforts

NIPCO's communications team informed member cooperatives and the public through news releases, social media and a storm update page on their website.

At the end of the first day, there were a lot of end-users still in the dark, both literally and figuratively. The communications team asked Washburn if he would livestream a message via NIPCO's Facebook page. It was raw, unedited and authentic.

Within hours, Washburn's video update was viewed nearly 3,000 times; by the next morning, that number had more than doubled.

Washburn became the face of the restoration effort, recording twice-daily video updates from the field shared across social media, with some updates garnering almost 25,000 views.

Seeing the work being done and showing that getting the power back on was personal to the entire team working on the restoration built a strong coalition of support from those without power. The team's commitment to keeping crews safe was on display, and the videos gave member-consumers information, hope and heroes to root for throughout the storm's aftermath.

Support from state partners

By the second day, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) contacted state emergency management officials to request a disaster declaration.

"The response from the state was immediate," notes Scott Meinecke, IAEC director of safety and loss control. "Gov. Reynolds issued a disaster proclamation on March 20 for five of the heaviest-hit Iowa counties that gave us access to additional resources and established a clear channel for ongoing state support."

The proclamation temporarily suspended regulatory provisions related to hours of service for disaster repair crews and transportation requirements for disaster repairs.

Let there be light

NIPCO's transmission network was designed with multiple pathways to

deliver power, allowing operators to reroute electricity around damaged sections. However, NIPCO's Vice President of Engineering and Operations Jayme Huber explains, "Winter Storm Nyla brought down three transmission lines that support the looped system, rendering the system serving western Monona County and Harrison County inoperable."

By Saturday evening, crews had repaired the transmission mainlines, restoring power to several substations by redirecting electricity through intact portions of the system while repairs continued. This redundant design feature allowed NIPCO to announce system functionality at 9:10 p.m. on Saturday, March 22, less than four days after the monumental storm.

Power and gratitude

At its April 29 meeting, NIPCO's board of directors unanimously passed a resolution of appreciation for all who contributed to the restoration.

"These aren't just workers; they're neighbors helping neighbors," says NIPCO Board President Louis Reed, who also serves on Western Iowa Power Cooperative's board. "Some of these folks put cooperative members before their own families. That deserves more than just a thank you."

As NIPCO completed final repairs in early April, staff began documenting lessons learned to improve future emergency response.

"Every crisis teaches you something," reflects Washburn. "This experience truly reinforced that the cooperative difference isn't just marketing language – it's a tangible advantage when facing challenges of this magnitude."

For the communities served by NIPCO and their member distribution cooperatives, that advantage meant the difference between days and potentially weeks without power. As one Onawa resident commented on social media: "There are not enough THANK YOUs to say for all you are doing ... After seeing the downed lines between Turin and Onawa today, it could have been so much worse. Situations like these only make us stronger. Go Team Power!"

That spirit – embodied in NIPCO's "Power On" message throughout the crisis – represents both the literal restoration of electricity and the enduring resilience of rural Iowa communities coming together to support the cooperative model that serves them.

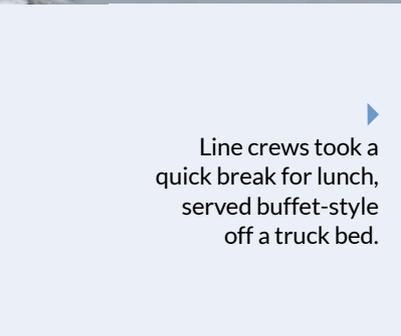
Angela Catton is the vice president of communications and development for Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative.



Heavy coatings of ice on transmission lines paired with high winds produced galloping lines that brought down scores of transmission structures in the NIPCO system.



Melting snow and ice created muddy conditions that trapped trucks and slowed restoration efforts.



Line crews took a quick break for lunch, served buffet-style off a truck bed.



Transmission structures were snapped in half and lying on the ground in west Monona County.



Save the date

MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

The Red Shed Event Center
908 2nd St NW, Clarion

**THURSDAY
JULY 17
4 - 7 P.M.**



Free meal



Fun for the whole family



Prizes for adults and kids



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Cooperative**

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IOWA VENTURE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Each year since 1989, Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) and its electric cooperative members have recognized the entrepreneurial spirit and capital investment of growing businesses and the leadership of organizations that support Iowa's rural economy.

With a new presentation format, three of this year's Iowa Venture Award recipients were honored in early April in conjunction with the annual meetings of Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Corn Belt Power). These winners join an impressive list of 293 entities who have been honored with this distinguished award.

Phil Dornbier Trucking, Inc.

Nominated by Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO)

Founded in 2004 by Phillip and Michelle Dornbier, Phil Dornbier Trucking started at home. As the company grew, it expanded to a commercial space in downtown Garner in 2018. However, the Dornbiers knew the next step in their vision was to build a dedicated facility for their operations and acquired land in Garner's Touchstone Energy Park in December 2023. The new headquarters was designed to consolidate the firm's operations under one roof and support their growing team and fleet. This modern facility, completed in 2025, features updated offices, an in-house repair shop and a wash bay as well as an area dedicated to drivers during their rest breaks.

To help this growing business, PECO and their power provider, Corn Belt Power, teamed up and utilized the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan Program to provide financial backing.

Fairfield by Marriott Sioux Center

Nominated by North West Rural Electric Cooperative

Founded in 2001 by Henry Byl and Randy Vreugdenhil, Summer

View Partners has grown into a successful hotel management company, now overseeing eight properties with 170 team members across Iowa and Minnesota. The company was nominated for their commitment to delivering exceptional hospitality and contributing to the economic vitality as part of the recent construction of the Fairfield by Marriott in Sioux Center. This 76-room hotel features meeting rooms, a wellness center and pool.

The new hotel, which opened in May 2024, significantly enhances Sioux Center and the surrounding area, providing high-quality accommodations for visitors and supporting local businesses, schools and organizations.

North West REC installed Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations as part of its infrastructure support for the facility.

Iowa Central Community College – Storm Lake

Nominated by Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative

Established in 1966, Iowa Central Community College (ICCC) is dedicated to providing high-quality education and training to residents throughout the region. ICCC has grown to serve communities across Fort Dodge, Storm Lake and Webster City, with five campus locations. With 85% of students staying in the region after taking classes and training, ICCC provides vital support to businesses throughout the region.

ICCC was recognized for both their vision and the accomplishment of constructing a new \$10 million, 24,000-square-foot state-of-the-art learning center in Storm Lake. The new learning center has become a vibrant hub for both education and workforce skills development. It prominently features ICCC's advanced nursing program. The facility also hosts a daytime career academy for high school students, evening adult literacy programs and



Fairfield by Marriott Sioux Center was honored for its new hotel.



Phil Dornbier Trucking, Inc. was honored for its new facility in Garner's Touchstone Energy Park.



Iowa Central Community College was honored for building a state-of-the-art learning center in Storm Lake.

has future growth plans for welding and electrical trades training.

Leveraging the USDA Rural Development Grant and Loan Program, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative sponsored two successful applications to help secure \$2.3 million in low-interest funding, which helped the center become a reality.

Honoring the winners

A video dedicated to each of these recipients can be found as part of IADG's Venture Award Hall of Fame at www.iadg.com/hall-of-fame.

As part of the award's new format, IADG will present one additional Venture Award at an annual meeting later this year.

NOMINATE A COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER BY JUNE 30

Your nominee could win \$3,000 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 \$3,000 check to their local charity or community organization.

"We've been truly inspired by the growth of this contest in our first five years," 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 \$3,000 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. Nominees from previous years can be nominated again for another chance to win.



Step 1:

Go to www.iowaShineTheLight.com from June 1-30 to make a nomination and to review the contest rules. You can also learn about past winners of the contest.

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 difference in the community, and how might their local charity use the \$3,000 donation?

THANKS, DAD

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

There's a saying that almost any man can be a father, but it takes someone special to be a dad. I've been thinking a lot about my dad lately as I take a more active role in the management of my family's Century Farm in Calhoun County.

Growing up on the farm, my dad was always teaching me. Sometimes this involved rural culture appreciation – also known as tagging along to the farmers' co-op in Lake City or Snyder Implement.

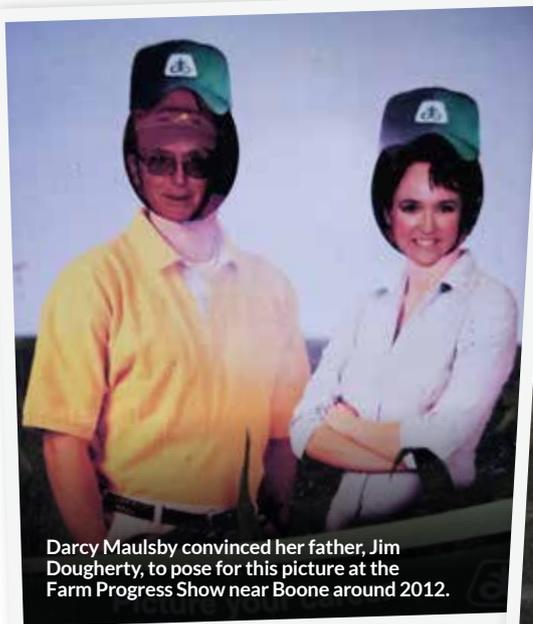
Often, his lessons revolved around tough love. I'll never forget one muddy, cold afternoon at chore time. It was my job to feed the hogs that lived in a dirt lot southeast of the barn. I put on my muck boots, filled two 5-gallon buckets with corn, and prepared to run the gauntlet. Hungry hogs show no mercy.

I was nimble – until I heard that dreaded sucking sound. When I lifted my foot up to take the next step, my boot stayed behind. I plunged face-first into an ooze of mud and manure. Those hogs trampled me in their delight to devour the spilled corn. Shocked, stunned and scared, I could think of nothing better than yelling and crying.

“Be a man!”

My dad came running from the barnyard to see what was wrong. After sizing up the situation, this flustered, annoyed farmer did the only thing he knew to do. “Be a man!” he shouted. In some circles, this unconventional advice is better known as “cowboy up.” No matter what you call it, this taught me the power of grit, instead of crumbling when life gets tough.

You'd think I'd have taken this to heart, but you'd be wrong. Part two of my dad's lessons in tough love



Darcy Maulsby convinced her father, Jim Dougherty, to pose for this picture at the Farm Progress Show near Boone around 2012.

occurred following an incident at Mark's Super Valu in Lake City when I was in high school. I was shopping by the milk cooler when a crazed customer crashed a shopping cart into my back and my ankles. Ouch is an understatement, although I was more surprised than hurt.

I told my dad about it when I got home. In my naivety, I assumed he'd show exceptional concern and compassion. Instead, he said, “Didn't you hear it coming?” Yeah, I admitted, I had heard a strange ruckus. “Well then, pay more attention to your surroundings.” Message sent; message received. Situational awareness is a skill that still serves me well.

Leaving a legacy

Through the years, I learned it was probably smart to listen to my dad. When I went to college, I didn't know what I wanted to study, although I showed some ability with writing and communication. My dad (an Iowa State University alum) suggested I enroll at Iowa State and study ag journalism. He figured my experience as a farm kid would help me carve a niche.



Jim Dougherty (1937-2019) and his dog, Libby, took a break on the front steps of his farmhouse in 2014.

He was right. That education helped prepare me for a career that has allowed me to generate an income, launch a side gig as a book author, enjoy lifelong learning, take advantage of opportunities for travel (across Iowa and around the world) and build friendships I treasure.

Lest you think my dad knew everything, not all his advice was solid. “Stay off that damn internet,” comes to mind.

I can still hear my dad's voice in so many ways. Although he died at age 82 in October 2019, I'm grateful a part of him lives on through me. That's how it should be. Good fathers provide and guide. The best leave a legacy of wisdom and love that endures.

Do you have stories of your father? Share them with me at yettergirl@yahoo.com.

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



IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine
for members of
Iowa's electric
cooperatives

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Visit our website at www.prairieenergy.coop

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