

● AUGUST 2026

**Prairie Energy
Cooperative**
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**2026 Shine the Light
nominees announced**

**Students attend Youth Tour
in the nation's capital**

Cool and crisp recipes

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Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine (ISSN: 2770-8683) is published monthly by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, a not-for-profit organization representing Iowa's member-owned local electric cooperatives. Association address: 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. The phrase ***Iowa Electric Cooperative Living*** is a mark registered within the state of Iowa to the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. The magazine does not accept advertising.

Editorial Office
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. Telephone: 515-276-5350.

Email Address
editor@ieclmagazine.com. *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine does not assume responsibility for unsolicited items.

Website
www.ieclmagazine.com

Postmaster
Send address changes to *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine, 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. Periodicals Postage Paid at Des Moines, Iowa, and at additional mailing offices.

Change of Address
Every local electric cooperative maintains an independent mailing list of its members, so please send your change of address directly to your local electric cooperative's office. *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine cannot make an address change for you.

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Danielle Nasers, Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc. member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

A GRATEFUL FAREWELL: REFLECTIONS ON YOUTH TOUR

BY SHELLY YORK



As I look back on this year's Youth Tour, I do so with a grateful heart. This summer marked my 15th Youth Tour, and also my last, as I prepare to retire on Jan. 1, 2027.

While there is a natural sense of closing a chapter, I find myself returning often to a simple thought: Don't be sad that it's over; be glad it happened.

A journey worth celebrating

Since 2010, I have had the privilege of witnessing the growth, curiosity and leadership of Iowa's student delegates. Each year has brought new faces, fresh perspectives, unforgettable moments and tons of laughter. From exploring our nation's history to building lifelong friendships, these experiences have not only shaped the students but have deeply impacted me as well.

Youth Tour has a proud legacy in Iowa, dating back to 1958. For nearly seven decades, electric cooperatives across the state have invested in students by providing them with opportunities to see our nation's capital, better understand civic engagement and develop as leaders in their own right. No doubt this tradition will continue, and I am confident that an even brighter future lies ahead for the program and all who take part in it.

Thankful for the people who make it possible

None of this would be possible without the dedicated chaperones who have shared this journey with me over the years. Their commitment, encouragement and tireless energy have made each trip the best it can be. They have guided, supported and inspired students every step of the way, and I am thankful that I can now call each of them a friend.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to the electric cooperatives that believe in and support this program. Your investment in the next generation is powerful. By providing opportunities like Youth Tour, you are not only enriching individual lives but strengthening the future of our state.

As I step away from this role, I carry with me a collection of great memories, meaningful connections and immense

pride in what Youth Tour represents. While this chapter is ending for me, the impact will continue through each student delegate, each story and each future leader inspired by their Youth Tour experience.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this remarkable journey.

Shelly York is the director of administration and student programs for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.



EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN A WESTINGHOUSE PRESSURE WASHER

Tackle the toughest grime with the Westinghouse ePX3100 Electric Pressure Washer designed for an easy and convenient cleaning experience. Delivering 2300 max PSI of pressure (at initial discharge) with up to 1.76 GPM of water flow (without nozzle at minimum pressure), this electric pressure washer has the muscle to scrub away mildew, grease, oil, tar, mud, rust and more from all household surfaces with pure scouring force.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than Aug. 31. 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 Charbroil® electric grill from the June issue was **Max McCoy**, a **Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative** member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY AUG. 31!

UNDERSTANDING THE ENERGY COST ADJUSTMENT

BY TIM MARIENAU



In November 2016, Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) implemented an Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA) as part of its Tariff, which applied to all rate schedules. The ECA appeared as a separate line item on members' energy bills and resulted in either a charge or a credit, depending on changes in wholesale power costs from our power suppliers, Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

In May 2019, the PECO board of directors suspended the ECA when wholesale power costs were stable. However, over the past several months, PECO has experienced continued increases in wholesale energy costs and other power-related expenses. After careful consideration, the board of directors has made the decision to reinstate the ECA effective Aug. 1, 2026.



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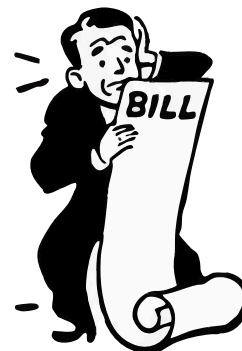
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ENERGY COST ADJUSTMENT EXPLAINED

LOCALLY OWNED COOPERATIVE UTILITIES ARE NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

When our utility charges members for power, there is no profit collected. The cost of power is passed through from our wholesale power supplier (Corn Belt Power) to our members.



HOW IT WORKS

1

THE COST TO GENERATE OR BUY ELECTRICITY FLUCTUATES.

This is due to the changing fuel costs, weather, equipment outages and the demand for electricity.



2

ADJUSTMENTS REFLECT THE TRUE COST OF POWER EACH MONTH.

Base rates are collected from members each month, representing our projected revenue requirements. An Energy Cost Adjustments charge accommodates monthly fluctuations in power costs.



3

MEMBERS' BILLS SHOW THE ADJUSTMENT UP OR DOWN.

This adjustment is made on the member's bill to reflect any changes for that month. This can be a charge some months and a credit other months.



OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to transparency and providing reliable energy to our members.

Beginning with the August energy bill (for July usage), members will see the ECA listed as a separate line item. The adjustment reflects changes in the cost of wholesale power and may vary from month to month. Depending on the actual cost of power, it may appear as either a charge or a credit on your bill.

PECO works hard to maintain reliable service and rates for our members. However, a significant portion of our costs come from wholesale power, and those costs are outside

of our control. In fact, more than 75% of our monthly fixed costs are related to wholesale power.

This year, PECO is also completing a Cost of Service Study to review our rates and ensure they continue to fairly reflect the cost of providing safe, reliable electricity to all members. We appreciate your understanding as we navigate these rising costs and continue working to serve you, our member-owners.

Tim Marienau is the CEO of Prairie Energy Cooperative.

NEW HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

Construction continues to move forward on Prairie Energy Cooperative's (PECO) new headquarters at 1511 Industrial Park Drive in Clarion, and we're looking forward to welcoming members into our new facility.

We anticipate moving soon; however, due to the remaining construction and final occupancy preparations, the exact move date was not available at press time. Rather than announce a date that could change, we've chosen to wait until everything is complete so we can confidently share our official transition date with members.

Until then, our current office will remain open, and members should continue visiting us at our existing location for payments and cooperative business. Once our move date is confirmed, we'll notify members through our website, Facebook page, local media outlets, email and other member communications. We'll also

share reminders about our new address, payment options and everything members need to make the transition as smooth as possible.

What to expect

Once we move, all member services, payments and cooperative business will be conducted from our new headquarters:

**1511 Industrial Park Drive
Clarion, IA 50525**

Our business hours will remain Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and our phone number will continue to be 515-532-2805. While our location is changing, members can continue to expect the same friendly service and commitment they've always received from Prairie Energy.

Payment information

A new drive-through payment drop box will be available at our new headquarters for your convenience.



If you've been using the payment drop box at our current office, don't worry – we'll continue checking that drop box through September to help make the transition as smooth as possible. After the move, members should use the drive-through drop box at our new headquarters or any of our other convenient payment options.

Thank you

Moving an entire cooperative is no small task, and we're excited to begin serving our members from a facility designed to support PECO for years to come.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we complete the final steps of this project. There may be a few minor adjustments along the way, but our commitment to providing safe, reliable service to our members remains unchanged.

PECO LINEMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN IOWA ELECTRICAL UTILITIES LINEMAN RODEO

Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) is proud to have employees participating in the 2026 Iowa Electrical Utilities Lineman Rodeo on Friday, Aug. 21, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Elwell Family Park during the Iowa State Fair.

Representing PECO in the apprentice division will be Cole Schisel and Asa Wayland, who will compete alongside apprentices from electric utilities across Iowa. PECO Journeyman Lineman Jade Pringnitz will also take part in the event, serving as a judge.

The Iowa Electrical Utilities Lineman Rodeo highlights the knowledge, skill and professionalism required to safely perform linework. Competitors complete a series of events designed to test the techniques they use in the field every day, with a strong emphasis on safety, accuracy and teamwork.



While the rodeo offers a friendly competitive atmosphere, its primary purpose is to promote ongoing training and reinforce the safe work practices that are essential to the line trade. Events like these allow lineworkers to sharpen their skills, learn from one another and demonstrate the commitment to excellence that members depend on every day.

If you're visiting the Iowa State Fair on Aug. 21, be sure to stop by Elwell Family Park to cheer on Cole and Asa as they represent PECO. We wish all the competitors and volunteers a safe and successful event.

YOUTH LEADERS VISIT NATION'S CAPITAL

Search for "Iowa Youth Tour" on Facebook or Instagram to see the group's recent adventures from 2026.

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN



"Going to Washington, D.C., was truly the best experience of my life! I wouldn't change it one bit, except maybe making it longer. I gained so many new friendships that will last a lifetime! Thank you, Guthrie County REC, for believing in me!"

Meranda Gruber
Guthrie County REC

"The electric cooperative Youth Tour 2026 to Washington, D.C., was unforgettable, celebrating our nation's 250th surrounded by towering monuments, heartfelt patriotism, incredible new friends and memories I'll carry forever. I've never been prouder to be an American."

Alena Wilhelm
Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative



Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives have been sending high school students to Washington, D.C., every June since 1958! This year, 35 high school students and six chaperones representing Iowa's electric cooperatives journeyed to the nation's capital for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's 2026 National Electric Youth Tour.

On the weeklong tour, students learned about electric cooperatives, American history and U.S. government and walked away with a greater understanding of their roles as American citizens. They participated in National Youth Day, visited with their elected legislators and explored the sights around the nation's capital.

Earlier in the year, students applied for the trip through their local electric cooperatives. The Iowa students joined students from cooperatives around the country for the national Youth Tour.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

2027 Youth Tour

June 16-22

www.iowayouthtour.com



2026 PARTICIPANTS

Isla Avery – Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative
Kennedy Backer – Butler County REC
Thomas Beaver – Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative
Sophie Berends – Grundy County REC
Carson Boswell – Southwest Iowa REC
Julianne Brown – T.I.P. REC
Lainey Cox – Harrison County REC
Garrett Elgin – Heartland Power Cooperative
Mason Ellington – Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative
Ben Gelner – Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative
Jenna Grovert – East-Central Iowa REC
Nora Grovert – East-Central Iowa REC
Meranda Gruber – Guthrie County REC
Kaylor Johnson – Consumers Energy
Liv Jones – Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative
Cassie Kakacek – Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative
Bryce Kelly – Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative
Morgan Knapp – Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative
Nat Macias – Lyon REC
Michidel Mercado – Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Gavin Merideth – Prairie Energy Cooperative
Maddie Morey – Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative
Elijah Oetken – North West REC
Jennifer Resch – Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative
Wyatt Schechinger – Nishnabotna Valley REC
Declan Spencer – Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Assoc.
Linzy Striegel – Access Energy Cooperative
Brenna Thronsdon – MiEnergy Cooperative
Jaxon Tribolet – United Electric Cooperative
Lucy Vonnahme – Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Alyssa Welbig – Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative
Kirah Whitney – Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative
Alena Wilhelm – Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative
Grace Wolterman – Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative
Emersyn Zehner – Midland Power Cooperative



SOME OF THE PLACES STUDENTS VISITED DURING THIS YEAR'S YOUTH TOUR:

- Air Force Memorial
- Albert Einstein Memorial
- American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial
- Arlington National Cemetery
- Ben's Chili Bowl
- Boat cruise on the Potomac River
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
- Holocaust Memorial
- Iwo Jima Memorial and Sunset Parade
- Korean War Veterans Memorial
- Lincoln Memorial
- National Archives
- Pentagon 911 Memorial
- Renwick Gallery
- Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center
- The National Mall
- The People's House
- Thomas Jefferson Memorial
- U.S. Army Museum
- U.S. Capitol
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- Washington Monument
- White House
- World War II Memorial





FRUIT SALAD FOR A CROWD

- 1 ripe pineapple
- 1 ripe cantaloupe
- 4 ripe mangoes
- 2 pounds fresh strawberries
- 4 cups seedless green grapes
- 1½ cups fresh blueberries
- 3-5 cups powdered sugar

Cut pineapple and cantaloupe into bite-size pieces. Peel mango with potato peeler and cut into pieces. Cut strawberries into pieces. Add all fruit to a large bowl and add powdered sugar. Stir to form juice. Adjust sugar to taste. Serves 20

Duane Musser • Parnell
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

DILL PICKLE PASTA SALAD

- 1 16-ounce box rotini pasta
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup sour cream
- ⅓ cup dill pickle juice
- 2 tablespoons dried dill
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups baby dill pickles, chopped
- 1 8-ounce block Colby Jack cheese, cubed
- 1 small white onion, finely chopped

Cook pasta according to package directions, drain water. In a large bowl, combine mayonnaise, sour cream, dill pickle juice (from the pickle jar), dried dill, salt and pepper. Pour dressing over pasta and stir. Add pickles, cheese and onions. Serve immediately or chill for 1-2 hours in the refrigerator. Serves 12

Andrea Youngblut • New Hampton
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

RHUBARB LEMONADE

- 4 cups fresh rhubarb, chopped
- 4 cups water, divided
- ¾-1 cup granulated sugar
- ¾ cup fresh lemon juice, 4-5 lemons
- ice cubes, for serving

In a saucepan, combine rhubarb, 2 cups water and sugar. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes until rhubarb softens and releases its color. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve, pressing gently to extract the liquid. Discard solids and allow the syrup to cool. In a large pitcher, combine the cooled rhubarb syrup, fresh lemon juice and 2 cups cold water. Stir well and taste. Adjust sweetness or dilution by adding more sugar or water as needed. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving with ice. Serves 6

Deanna Foreman • Rock Valley
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

SUPER SALAD

- 1 pound macaroni
- 1 large green pepper, chopped
- 4 carrots, shredded
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup vinegar
- 2 cups mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Cook macaroni, then drain and cool. Add remaining ingredients and stir. Serves 15-20

Norma Jean Gamble • St. Charles
Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

CRISP TUNA-CABBAGE SALAD

- 1 5-ounce can tuna, drained
- 2 cups green or red cabbage, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon Miracle Whip salad dressing
- 3 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- onion, finely chopped, to taste, optional
- garden-fresh tomato slices, optional

Mix tuna and cabbage thoroughly. Mix mayonnaise, Miracle Whip and yogurt thoroughly. Combine the two mixtures. Add salt and pepper. Add onion, if desired. Can be served on slices of tomatoes. *Serves 2*

Elaine Knoblock • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

COLESLAW — FRESH OR FROZEN

- 6 cups cabbage, shredded
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 ribs celery, chopped
- 1 small green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 cup white vinegar
- ½ cup water
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon celery seed
- 1 teaspoon mustard seed

Sprinkle salt over cabbage and let sit at room temperature for 1 hour, then drain. Add celery and bell pepper to cabbage. Refrigerate while mixing the dressing. In a saucepan, put vinegar, water, sugar and seeds. Bring to boil and then boil for only 1 minute. Remove from heat and let cool for 30 minutes before pouring over cabbage mix. Divide into 12 serving containers to serve fresh, or in freezer bags to freeze. Keeps 2 weeks in refrigerator. If frozen, remove coleslaw for 2 hours before serving. *Serves 12*

Tom and Sharon Sager • Seymour
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

GREEK SUMMER SALAD

- 4-5 potatoes
- 6 medium tomatoes
- 2 cucumbers
- 1 large onion
- 1 green pepper, optional
- ¼ cup salad oil
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- salt, to taste

Boil potatoes, then cool until cold. Dice all vegetables and mix in large bowl. Add oil, vinegar and salt, mix well. Adjust the amount of vinegar, depending on how tangy you like it. *Serves 6-8*

Matt Henry • Sumner
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

SUPER EASY CRISP RUTABAGA PICKLES

- 1 rutabaga
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 4 teaspoons salt
- jalapeño or dried chili pepper, optional

Wash rutabaga well, remove top and bottom and peel. Cut into four equal pieces, then slice into ¼-inch-thick pieces. Put rutabaga and remaining ingredients into a food bag. Shake to mix. Place in refrigerator to soak for 1-2 days, occasionally turning the bag upside down. Celery, turnips and radish would also be delicious. *Serves 4*

Erina Westphal • Guthrie Center
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

CLASSIC DELI WRAP SPREAD

- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup honey
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 8-inch tortillas
- Toppings: thinly sliced deli meat, shredded cheese, lettuce, assorted vegetables

Mix mustard, honey and cream cheese. Spread over tortillas and layer with preferred toppings. Roll up tortillas and slice in half. Secure with colored toothpicks.

Steph Messner • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

WANTED:

CHRISTMAS CANDY & COOKIES

THE REWARD:
\$25 BILL CREDIT FOR
EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is Aug. 31

The holiday season is for baking, sharing and spreading cheer! Send us your favorite **Christmas candy and cookie recipes** for a chance to be featured in our December issue. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.

EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com

MAIL: Recipes
Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48
Des Moines, IA 50322



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



SHINE THE LIGHT CONTEST NOMINEES ANNOUNCED



The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa are driven by our commitment to community.

To celebrate local volunteers, the Shine the Light contest returned for a sixth year and received 83 volunteer nominations during June. This year's entries came from 25 Iowa electric co-ops and one municipal utility served by Corn Belt Power Cooperative. Employees and member-consumers of Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives were invited to nominate someone who makes a positive difference in their community.

Three winners will be awarded a \$3,000 donation to their charity or community organization of choice and will be featured in next month's issue. Please join us in celebrating these nominees for their outstanding commitment to community. Learn more at www.iowaShineTheLight.com.

To follow are this year's nominees, listed alphabetically by electric cooperative.

2026 SHINE THE LIGHT NOMINEES

ALLAMAKEE-CLAYTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Jane Hasek from Harpers Ferry was nominated by **Marita Clark** for her work with **Harpers Ferry Area Heritage Society**.

BUTLER COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Mark Bohner from Tripoli was nominated by **Nancy Kappmeyer** for his work with **Waterloo Salvation Army Food Programs**.

Dave and Judy Bucknell from Ionia were nominated by **Jennifer Waddell** for their work with **Big 4 Fair**.

Stephanie Duhrkopf from Sumner was nominated by **Nancy Meyer** for her work with **Sumner Daycare and Learning Center**.

Shirley Wubbena from Bristow was nominated by **Deb McWhirter** for her work with **Wilder Park/Hospice of NE Iowa**.

CALHOUN COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

Stacy Corey from Lake City was nominated by **Elaine Lietz** for her work with **Goins Park Revitalization Committee**.

Alyson Dietrich from Rockwell City was nominated by **Joan Wagner** for her work with **Rockwell City Revitalization**.

Lynne Gentry from Rockwell City was nominated by **Monica Wuebker** for her work with **Calhoun County Historical Museum / Carnegie Project**.

Marlene Schossow from Pomeroy was nominated by **Nancy Olson** for her work with **William G. Pomeroy Foundation State Historical Society of Iowa**.

CHARITON VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Marilyn Colwell from Albia was nominated by **Jill Crall** for her work with **St. Mary's Church**.

Jim Owens from Albia was nominated by **Norm Major** for his work with **Welcome Home Soldier Monument**.

Belinda Seay from Moravia was nominated by **Sharon Cunningham, Pat Merrick and Marnie Starr** for her work with **Monroe County Helping Hands, Inc.**

Helen Theulen from Blakesburg was nominated by **Ilene Johnson** for her work with **Friends of the Blakesburg Public Library**.

Patty Yarkosky from Albia was nominated by **Vickie Wilkinson** for her work with **Welcome Home Soldier Monument**.

CLARKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Leslie Ruby from Murray was nominated by **Nathan Ruby** for her work with **Clarke County 4-H Extension**.

EAST-CENTRAL IOWA RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Ricky Davis from Marengo was nominated by **Joyce Davis** for his work with **Federal Building Veterans Food Pantry**.

Ronda Reid from Cedar Falls was nominated by **Connie Kaltenbach** for her work with **Otter Creek Animal Shelter**.

EASTERN IOWA LIGHT & POWER COOPERATIVE

Emily Eichelberger from Muscatine was nominated by **Sara Carlson** for her work with **NAMI Greater Mississippi Valley** and was also nominated for her work with **MakeltOk: Muscatine**.

Megan Gleeson from West Burlington was nominated by **Kathy Wunderlich** for her work with **Rally for Reid Foundation**.

Becky Hansen from Wilton was nominated by **Terry and Jeffrey Becker** for her work with **Wilton American Legion Auxiliary**.

FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (GREENFIELD)

Richard Bryson from Afton was nominated by **Retta Ripperger** for his work with **Afton Development Corporation**.

K'Lea Johnson from Afton was nominated by **Leonard and Laura Feld** for her work with **Afton Development Corporation**.

Iris Westphal from Greenfield was nominated by **Raedeem Bigelow** for her work with **Greater Greenfield Hygiene Pantry**.

FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Michael Bridwell from Hampton was nominated by **Vicki Claypool** for his work with **Hampton Senior Citizens Center**.

Patrick Palmer from Hampton was nominated by **Christy Mason** for his work with **Clean Up Closet - United Methodist Church**.

GRUNDY COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Chris Fleshner from Reinbeck was nominated by **Emma Fleshner** for his work with **Gladbrook Reinbeck FFA**.

Shane Lamb from Voorhies was nominated by **Kelvin Chvojka** for his work with **AMVETS Post 82**.

Derek Snakenberg from Parkersburg was nominated by **Allyson Miller** for his work with **Veteran Flagpole Initiative**.

GUTHRIE COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

Ellen Campbell from Panora was nominated by **Luann Waldo** for her work with **Stitch and Chatter Club / First Christian Church**.

Marlene Schossow from Pomeroy was nominated by **Mary Clancy** for her work with **William G. Pomeroy Foundation State Historical Society of Iowa**.

Kristi Sutherland from Adel was nominated by **Thomas Burkgren** for her work with **Panther Creek Church of the Brethren**.

HARRISON COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Jake Schaben from Dunlap was nominated by **Jill Schaben** for his work with **Dunlap Betterment Group**.

HEARTLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Karl Fox from Osage was nominated by **Josie Popp** for his work with **Mitchell County Fair**.

Allyn and Carol Milton from Osage were nominated by **Carol A. Anderson** for their work with **Shop on State**.

IOWA LAKES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Nancy Anderson from Estherville was nominated by **Lisa Dreeszen** for her work with **Emmet County Relay for Life**.

Roy Gage from Estherville was nominated by **Katie Harris, Rosie Harvey and Jennifer Sievert** for his work with **Emmet County Historical Society**.

Robin Hansen from Ringsted was nominated by **Jennifer Long** for her work with **Ringsted American Legion Post 0382**.

Nola Jensen from Spirit Lake was nominated by **Warren Jager** for her work with **Cherish Center**.

Dave Johnson from Aurelia was nominated by **Duane Kent** for his work with **Aurelia Community Foundation**.

Kevin Olson from Albert City was nominated by **Morgan Olson** for his work with **Albert City Fire Department**.

Karolyn Snedecker from Newell was nominated by **Anne Mohr** for her work with **BV Cat and Dog Rescue League and Kountry Kennels**.

MAQUOKETA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Eileen Chavez Bates from Anamosa was nominated by **Bri Huss** for her work with **Cultivate Anamosa**.

Bryson Bormann from Preston was nominated by **Brianna Lane** for his work with **Community Ambulance Service of Preston**.

Skott Gent from Monmouth was nominated by **Dean Engel** for his work with **Together We Build, Inc.**

Jenna Spain and Katelyn Hasenbank from Delmar were nominated for their work with **Maquoketa Therapy Dogs**.

Andy Kelchen from Cascade was nominated by **Matt Kurt** for his work with **Aquin Educational System**.

Teri Klaren was nominated by **Stacey Christiansen** for her work with **Delaware County Pay It Forward**.

Michelle Ries from Manchester was nominated by **Ellen Goldsmith** for her work with **Delaware County Pay It Forward**.

MIDLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Kim Adams from Ames was nominated by **Jan "Hondo" Warwick** for her work with **Boone Area Humane Society**.

John Bolton from Ogden was nominated by **Karren Dannen** for his work with **Ogden Food Pantry**.

Carol Cornelius from Ames was nominated by **Dawn Heaberlin** for her work with **Food at First**.

Bryce Duling from Madrid was nominated by **Richard Schneider** for his work with **Feeding the Kids**.

Carsten Geisler from Ames was nominated by **Dellisa Geisler** for his work with **Bailing Out Benji**.

Diane Howe from Johnston was nominated by **Pam Childers** for her work with **Johnston Partnership for a Healthy Community**.

Matt Johnson from Stratford was nominated by **Rashele Johnson** for his work with **Dayton Rodeo and Celebration Committee**.

EB Lawlor from Madrid was nominated by **Janice Gordon** for her work with **Friends of the Ledges**.

Ashley Platte from Ellsworth was nominated by **Heidi Eckers** for her work with **Ellsworth Community Association**.

Mindy Royster from Ames was nominated by **David Willett** for her work with **Seven Oaks Ski Patrol**.

Leo Timms from Ames was nominated by **Debra Timms** for his work with **Gilbert Community Schools Fine Arts Committee**.

Judy Whitney from Slater was nominated by **Carole Harmon** for her work with **Slater/Sheldahl Food Pantry**.

NEW HAMPTON MUNICIPAL

Jay and Beth Bobenmoyer from Lake View were nominated by **Katie Owen** for their work with **Caring Farms**.

NISHNABOTNA VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Pamela Clark from Treynor was nominated by **Doris Bane and Layna Bentley** for her work with **Non-Profit Tax Preparers**.

NORTH WEST RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Lisa Klein from Sheldon was nominated by **Sandra Voss** for her work with **Love INC of Greater O'Brien County**.

Andrea Penning from Remsen was nominated by **Shirley Schroeder** for her work with **Stuff a Stocking**.

Sheryl Storm from Archer was nominated by **Pam Thornton** for her work with **Conquering Cancer 4 O'Brien County**.

PELLA COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Rebecca Helland from Pella was nominated by **Jane Noteboom** for her work with **Sprigs 'n Sprouts**.

Sarah Treft from Pella was nominated by **David E. Way** for her work with **Many Hands**.

PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Kelly Kirstein from Clarion was nominated by **Kent D. Kirstein** for her work with **Chicks Ministry**.

Tyler Linn from Goldfield was nominated by **Haley Fitzpatrick** for his work with **Lazy J Rescue Ranch**.

Danielle Rogers from Fort Dodge was nominated by **Joyce Harms** for her work with **SALT (Shining A Light Together) Center**.

RACCOON VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Brady Boell from Carroll was nominated by **Jill Hannasch** for his work with **KB Project**.

SOUTHERN IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Lexis Frymoyer from Bloomfield was nominated by **Marissa Logterman** for her work with **Davis County Agricultural Society**.

Lynette Smith from Bloomfield was nominated by **Joye Lore-Lawson** for her work with **Davis County Tourism Corporation**.

T.I.P. RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Allison Gonyo from West Des Moines was nominated by **Marty McCoy** for her work with **Children's Cancer Connection**.

WESTERN IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Sheri Joyner from Soldier was nominated by **Amy Christensen** for her work with **Food4U**.

Jean Stadlander from Manning was nominated by **Tim and Joni Kienast** for her work with **Manning Heritage Foundation**.

WOODBURY COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Amy McFarland from Anthon was nominated by **Kevin Clausen** for her work with **Anthon Community Development Corporation**.

LOCAL TEEN PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Gavin Meredith of Fertile recently participated in the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., sponsored by Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO). He joined 34 other student delegates from Iowa for the trip in June.

For more than six decades, electric cooperatives have sponsored high school students for Youth Tour, a leadership development program that helps young people discover their voice, build confidence and expand their understanding of civic engagement. While in Washington, D.C., students met with elected officials, explored historic landmarks and even operated their own student-led snack cooperative, gaining hands-on experience in teamwork, responsibility and leadership.

The electric cooperative Youth Tour is a collaborative effort supported by locally owned electric cooperatives like PECO, statewide trade associations and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Gavin described the experience as unforgettable. “The Youth Tour was so amazing,” he said. “It was really cool to meet our elected officials and learn about politics up close. I also made new friends and experienced history firsthand. It made me think about what it means to be an American and showed me that people my age care about this country.”



In addition to touring the nation's capital, 2,100 students from across the country gathered for National Youth Day, hosted by NRECA, where they heard from inspiring speakers and public figures. This year's program featured Mike Schlappi, a four-time paralympic medalist and two-time world wheelchair basketball champion, who shared a powerful message

about perseverance and leadership: “Just because you can't stand up doesn't mean you can't stand out.”

Since 1958, Iowa's electric cooperatives have sponsored students through Youth Tour with opportunities to meet members of their U.S. congressional delegation, participate in leadership and advocacy sessions and explore our nation's capital.

For more information about how to apply for PECO's 2027 Youth Tour program, visit our website at www.prairieenergy.coop/youth-tour or visit www.iowaYouthTour.com. You can also find “Iowa Youth Tour” on Facebook or Instagram to see highlights from the 2026 trip.

OFFICE CLOSURE NOTICE

Prairie Energy Cooperative will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7, in observance of Labor Day.

MORE COMFORT, LESS WASTED ENERGY

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Everybody wants a comfortable home. Did you know energy efficiency upgrades not only help you save energy but can make your home more comfortable, too? If you find yourself continually returning to the thermostat on cold winter days or unable to find relief from the heat on summer days, these are signs your home may need an efficiency upgrade.

No matter the home, energy-efficiency upgrades often start with the same basic principle: Keep outside air from coming in and keep conditioned indoor air from leaking out. Insulation, air sealing and duct sealing, along with HVAC upgrades can dramatically improve your home's comfort.

Seal air leaks to improve comfort

A fully insulated home, including the attic, walls and floor, is more comfortable. It's like a blanket for your home. Air sealing is a lesser-known upgrade that keeps air from entering and exiting through cracks and gaps. Some air sealing can be done from inside the home, such as using expanding foam around plumbing pipes, adding gaskets to outlets on exterior walls, caulking around windows and weatherstripping doors.

Attics and crawl spaces offer additional opportunities to reduce air leakage. In the attic, sealing gaps around top plates, open soffit areas, cove ceilings and balloon framing helps keep conditioned air where it belongs. In the basement or crawl space, seal around plumbing pipes, vents and electrical wires. If you need help, contact a local contractor.

As a self-proclaimed energy geek, I wasn't surprised that my first project after my husband and I bought our first home was to air seal and insulate. We sealed and insulated the attic, walls and rim joists in the basement. The difference was immediate. Our house felt cozier, and the temperature swings from the furnace cycling on and off were dramatically reduced.



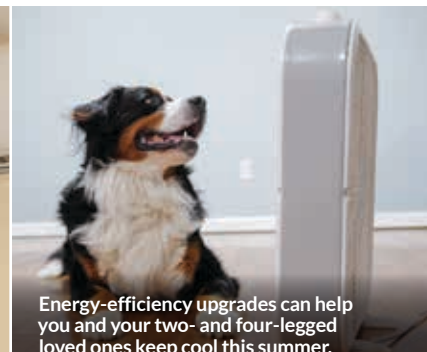
If you are in the market to upgrade your HVAC system, consider an energy-efficient heat pump.
Photo Source: Bonneville Power Administration

Another unexpected benefit was a noticeable reduction in outside noise. We lived about 15 minutes from the airport and close to a busy road. When the windows and doors were closed, we could barely hear the airplanes, and the traffic noise became almost unnoticeable.

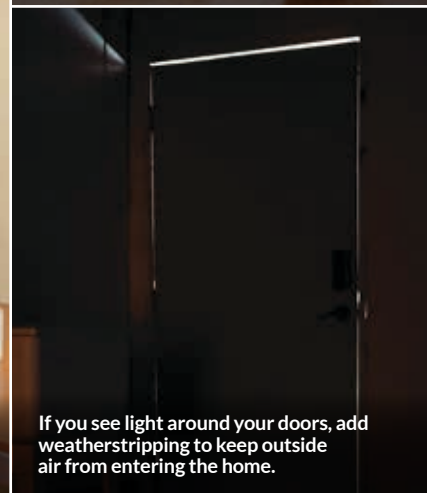
Upgrade your HVAC system for year-round comfort

Duct sealing can also improve your home's comfort. If there are leaks or disconnections in your ductwork, the air you paid to heat or cool may not reach the rooms where it's needed, creating hot or cold spots. An HVAC professional can inspect your ducts to make sure they are properly connected and sealed.

Air sealing and duct sealing can also improve indoor air quality by reducing the amount of dust, pollen, mold and other allergens entering your living space from the attic or crawl space.



Energy-efficiency upgrades can help you and your two- and four-legged loved ones keep cool this summer.



If you see light around your doors, add weatherstripping to keep outside air from entering the home.

Upgrading to a heat pump can also boost comfort and efficiency. Heat pump technology is often about three times more efficient than electric resistance heat because it moves heat with refrigerant rather than generating it. Whether you're replacing an electric or gas heating system, a heat pump can provide efficient heating and cooling throughout the year.

If you already have a heat pump or any forced-air HVAC system, schedule annual maintenance and change the air filter regularly to keep it operating efficiently.

Improving your home's comfort doesn't always require a major renovation. A few strategic energy efficiency upgrades can help your family stay comfortable year-round while lowering energy costs.

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

IOWA LINEWORKERS TO BRING POWER AND OPPORTUNITY TO GUATEMALA

This September, seven Iowa electric cooperative lineworkers will join fellow cooperative lineworkers from Colorado and Oklahoma on a mission that extends far beyond building power lines.

Together, the 18-member volunteer team will travel to rural Guatemala through NRECA International's electrification program, bringing electricity to two remote villages for the first time.

Their work will provide reliable electric service to approximately 100 homes, a school and a newly constructed health center, creating

opportunities for education, health care and economic development that many families have never experienced.

For these lineworkers, the trip is an opportunity to use their professional skills to make a lasting difference for families living in communities without access to electricity.

Electricity changes daily life in countless ways, from providing lighting for students to study after dark to allowing health care providers to refrigerate medicines and safely care for patients. Access to reliable electricity also creates

new opportunities for businesses and improves overall quality of life.

More than bringing power

The project's impact won't stop when the lights come on.

While in Guatemala, the team will also complete a community service project by helping equip an elementary school kitchen so it can prepare meals for local children and supplying a new community health center with much-needed equipment and resources. These improvements will continue serving families long after the lineworkers return home.

Iowa electric cooperative linemen selected for the Guatemala team:



Adam Hawkins
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative



Weston Held
Prairie Energy Cooperative



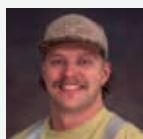
Jeremy Jochims
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative



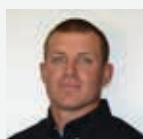
Scott Meinecke
Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (Iowa team leader)



Jackson Rice
Heartland Power Cooperative



Jeremiah Ruby
Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative



Cody Stackhouse
Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Cooperative members and friends can help support this effort by making a tax-deductible contribution to the Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Even a \$25 donation can help purchase supplies for the school kitchen and health center, directly improving life for families in these rural communities.

Donations may be made by mailing a check to:

Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation

PO Box 54309

Oklahoma City, OK 73154

Please write "Guatemala" in the check memo.

Readers can simply scan the QR codes accompanying this article to make an online donation or watch a short video showcasing the communities and the impact this project will have for local families.



Scan the QR code to make a donation.



Scan the QR code to watch a video.



A BRUSH WITH HOPE

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

The picture on Facebook caught my eye right away. There was my friend Lou Blanchfield, grinning by a colorful painting with a 2025 Iowa State Fair blue ribbon.

My first thought was, “Wow, what a cool cow picture. Good for Lou!”

I figured there was a story here. It all came out when I caught up with Lou last December. “The opportunity to paint was God’s gift to me,” Lou told me, as we enjoyed a cup of hot tea in her living room. “It gave me my life back.”

I was stunned as Lou shared her incredible saga. It turns out this dear, sweet lady I knew as a dedicated community volunteer is a tough survivor with a warrior spirit. Her award-winning watercolor embodies the gift of life itself.

Beyond the blue ribbon

Lou’s ordeal began in 2019, when she began experiencing unusual symptoms, including balance issues. “I’d be in the wooded area by our farm with our grandkids, and I’d fall,” said Lou, who was 70 at the time.

Lou also recalled the time she was sweeping the deck stairs, felt faint and fell into the garden mulch. Then there were the challenges with remembering names and dates. “I thought all this might just be part of getting older,” she told me.

Things only got worse. Climbing stairs became almost impossible. It was hard for Lou to interact with people. Medical checkups didn’t provide many answers. One doctor told her it was probably COVID-19. A doctor at the Mayo Clinic finally diagnosed her problem – idiopathic normal-pressure hydrocephalus (iNPH).

This treatable neurological disorder is caused by a buildup of cerebrospinal fluid in the brain. It affects older adults and is characterized by a trio of symptoms, including balance issues/



Roger and Lou Blanchfield at the Iowa State Fair in 2025.

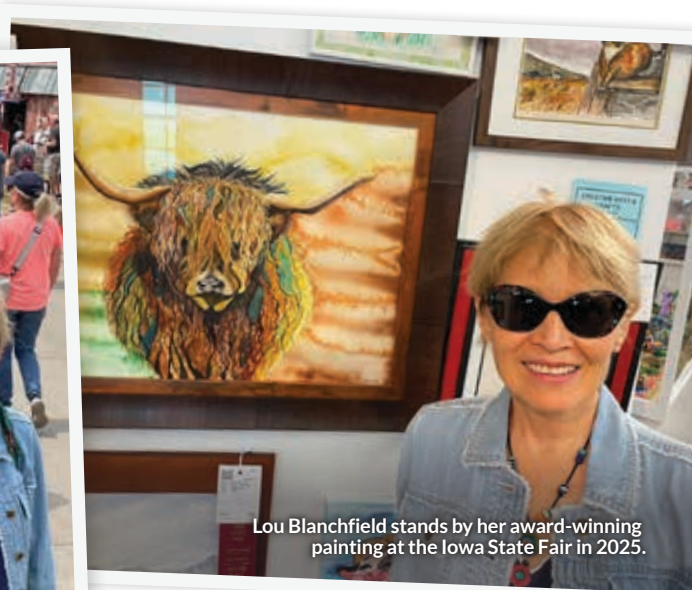
frequent falls, cognitive decline/ memory loss and urinary urgency. “I had all the symptoms – ‘wet, wacky and wobbly,’” Lou said.

While this diagnosis helped clarify some things, Lou’s health challenges weren’t over. In October 2022, Lou fell again. She’d been preparing some freezer meals during harvest and tripped on the dishwasher door. “I face planted,” said Lou, who suffered a subdural hematoma, a potentially life-threatening condition where blood collects between the layers of tissue that surround the brain, causing dangerous pressure. “I couldn’t walk. I couldn’t talk. I had difficulty thinking and lost my creativity.”

Lou told me of her fears after she met with a neurosurgeon at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. “He told me, ‘You’ll get a lot back, but there are no guarantees.’”

Perseverance, painting and a new chance at life

Still, Lou forged ahead. Her speech therapist at Stewart



Lou Blanchfield stands by her award-winning painting at the Iowa State Fair in 2025.

Memorial Community Hospital in Lake City gave her an assignment – paint “Starry Night,” the iconic artwork by Vincent van Gogh.

“How in the world can I do that?” Lou wondered. “But then I studied that painting, and all the brush strokes were shaped like the letter C. I knew I could do that.”

Lou also hired Susan Smith, an artist from Jefferson, to give her weekly painting lessons. All this led to the creation of “Clyde,” a free-flowing, vibrant depiction of a Highland bull. Lou thought it would be fun to enter her watercolor in an open class at the Iowa State Fair. “I was 77 years old when I became a first-time fair exhibitor.”

A blue-ribbon-winning exhibitor, I might add. Lou’s remarkable journey reminds me of the intriguing words of Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher who noted, “The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude.”

Perhaps no one understands this better than Lou. “God healed me. I’ve got blessings all over the place.”

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

Visit our website at www.prairieenergy.coop

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