



(From left to right) Matt McDermott, Scott Muhlenbruch, Tim Slaichert

Celebrating milestone years

Three Prairie Energy Cooperative linemen were recently recognized for their years of service.

Tim Slaichert, assistant operations coordinator/staking technician, started with the cooperative on Mar. 2, 1998, and celebrated 20 years of service. Matt McDermott, lineman, who started with the co-op on Mar. 6, 2013, and Scott Muhlenbruch, lineman, who started on May 6, 2013, both celebrated five years of service.

Congratulations Tim, Matt and Scott!

Prairie Energy welcomes new employee

Jared Hannasch, apprentice lineman, started on Jan. 2 of this year. Originally from Glidden, Iowa, Jared graduated from Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon with an associate of applied science degree as well as a powerline certificate.

He has been familiar with the cooperative world since his mother, Jill Hannasch, works at Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative. When asked why he wanted to be employed at Prairie Energy, he replied “I grew up on a rural electric cooperative’s line and was around the lineman since my mother works at the cooperative. I wanted to utilize my education and work for a co-op that cares about their members and the services they provide.”

Jared enjoys snowmobiling, trapshooting and watching movies.



Jared Hannasch, Prairie Energy's newest apprentice lineman



CEO Tim Marienau (right) presents Tanner Riedesel with a certificate.

Riedesel takes on new role

On Jan. 1, 2019, Tanner Riedesel was promoted to foreman at Prairie Energy. Tanner started his employment at the cooperative on Apr. 3, 2006, and will supervise the crew working out of the Garner service center. Congratulations Tanner!



CEO Tim Marienau (right) presents Andrew Stupka with a certificate.

Stupka promoted

Andrew Stupka acquired his journeyman/lineman status by successfully completing the apprentice program at Prairie Energy on Jan. 3, 2019. Andrew started his employment at the cooperative on Sept. 15, 2014. Congratulations Andrew!

You are more than a customer

As a cooperative, we have a different “bottom line.” While our priority is always to provide reliable and safe energy, your well-being and that of the larger community that we serve are equally important. That is one advantage of being a member, not a customer.

We were founded to fulfill a vital need in our community that would not have otherwise been met. For most people, our founding and its circumstances have been long forgotten. Over time, folks in the community may have come to think of us as simply another energy provider.

But we are not. We are a co-op that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and we are able to do this because of our members.

Since our inception, we have sought feedback and engagement from you and that of the larger community to guide our long-term decisions. These are two reasons why we hold annual meetings.

In addition, we’re always looking to explore more options that will help you manage your energy use and seeking to keep pace with the changing energy environment, evolving technology and shifting consumer



expectations.

While the times may have changed, our mission and outlook have not. Working together, we can accomplish great things for our cooperative community.

Home automation for more control

Home automation systems are placing the power of control in the hands of co-op members, but many questions remain about the best ways to use them to save money and energy.

“Most smart home technology is about comfort and convenience. Consumers interested in saving money on monthly energy purchases should look at internet-connected thermostats first,” said Brian Sloboda, program and product line manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

“Around half of all thermostats sold today are smart thermostats. These devices can learn your preferences and adjust the thermostat when you are not home,” Sloboda said. “They have the potential to reduce air conditioning energy consumption by 10 percent. During winter months, the thermostats could save 7 percent on energy used to heat the home.”

Sloboda is particularly interested in identifying ways to enhance efficiency and potential savings for co-op members.

“Laundry, dishwashing and water heating can be set to occur outside of your co-op’s peak demand periods, which typically are during weekday business hours,” said Sloboda.

Making connections

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that interest in connected or smart appliances is trending upward among consumers, and manufacturers are responding with a growing list of products.

“If you are thinking of purchasing a smart appliance or thermostat, look for one that is ENERGY STAR®-certified with connected functionality,” according to EPA officials.

Besides smart thermostats, the products available now include, room air conditioners, refrigerators and freezers, laundry equipment, light bulbs and fixtures and power strips.

“While owning a smart product doesn’t automatically save you energy, if you are smart about using them, they can make a significant difference in your home,” wrote the EPA.

GET SMART ABOUT ENERGY SAVINGS

“Smart” devices and appliances save time and offer convenience – but not all save energy. The guide below shows how several trendy smart home technologies stack up when it comes to energy savings.



Smart Energy Savers

- Thermostats
- Washing machines and dryers
- Dishwashers
- EV charging stations
- Pool pumps
- Air conditioners
- Light bulbs and fixtures
- Power strips



Just Smart

- Virtual assistants (like Amazon's Alexa or Apple HomeKit)
- Smart alarms
- Smart video security cameras

Today, more than **4,000 smart devices** are available to consumers.



Insulate your attic to help warm your home and save energy dollars.

Put a hat on your home

Just as you wear a hat, scarf and gloves to help keep you warm in winter, remember there are ways to warm your home as well, including insulation.

If your home could use more insulation, always start at the top since the majority of heat loss in a home is through the roof. Work your way down through the walls and then to the basement or crawl space.

While addressing your home's insulation is one of the more expensive outlays you can make to save on your utility bill, it's the biggest bang for your energy buck, paying for itself in the long run.

Other warm-up measures include:

- **Installing a programmable or smart thermostat.**
- **Caulking windows and door frames that leak air.**
- **Bundling up and turning down your thermostat.**

Don't forget that we offer insulation rebates and **FREE** energy assessments to evaluate your home's overall efficiency. Contact us for rebate forms and to schedule your walk through.

We are your source for energy saving solutions!

Your generator could generate trouble

When the lights go out, it's a relief to have a generator on hand, whether portable or permanent, but misusing one is dangerous.

When using a portable version, there are two ways to connect it to a home: 1) with a powered circuit panel that has a power transfer switch installed by a qualified electrician, or 2) to plug in a limited number of home appliances directly into a fuel-powered portable generator with heavy-duty extension cords.

Never plug a generator into a wall outlet. It could electrocute a neighbor or an electric lineman working to restore power. This is called back feeding. A permanent generator must have a transfer switch installed by a qualified electrician to avoid back feeding. The switch is required by the National Electrical Code.



The primary hazards of using a portable generator include carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock or electrocution and fire, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). A permanent or standby generator also has significant risks if not installed by a qualified electrician. Installing one is extremely dangerous and definitely not a DIY project.

Additional important safeguards to take when using a generator:

- Operate a portable generator in well-ventilated locations outdoors away from all doors, windows and vent openings to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Turn the generator on before using it. Once it's running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit.
- Never use a generator in standing water and never touch with wet hands.
- Never use or install a generator in an attached garage.
- Turn off portable generators and let them cool down before refueling.
- Store fuel for your portable generator in a container intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the containers outside of living areas.
- Keep children and pets away from all generators, especially portable ones.

Using a generator is serious business and shouldn't be done in haste. Learn more about using electricity safely and efficiently at SafeElectricity.org.

Are you ready for a new electric water heater?

Contact us for information on the Marathon water heater, offering durability, lightweight design and a limited lifetime tank warranty.

Generous rebate available!



Seeking candidates

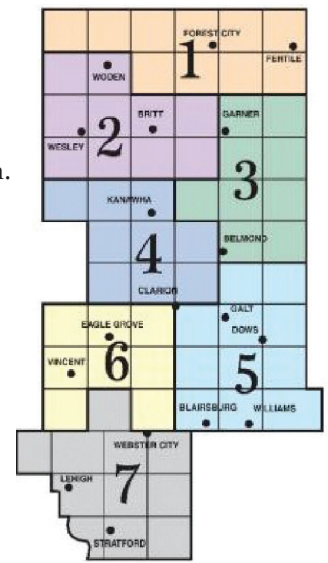
At the June 5, 2019, annual meeting of the members, director terms in Districts 3 and 7 will expire. To be considered eligible for election, members must reside or receive electric service from Prairie Energy at a location within the district in which they are seeking election. If you are interested in serving on the board of directors, contact or send information to one of the following nominating committee members:

District 3: Leroy Cooper
1575 130th St.
Goodell, IA 50439
641-762-3542

Gary Steenblock
1465 130th St.
Kanawha, IA 50447
641-762-3238

District 7: Darrell Moenck
2809 270th St.
Lehigh, IA 50557
515-570-6005

Sharon Mitchell
2496 Swallow Ave.
Duncombe, IA 50532
515-351-7281



Space heaters need space

Like any electrical appliance, personal space heaters need their space. It's especially important to locate space heaters pretty far away from anything that could catch on fire. Although the handy appliances come with lots of safety features, it's up to you to make sure they don't get close enough to catch something on fire.

Here's how important that is: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that more than 25,000 residential fires every year are associated with the use of space heaters, causing more than 300 deaths.

To use a space heater safely, use it wisely. Follow these tips for smart use:

- Stick with space heaters that carry the UL mark; those models will offer the most current safety features
- Keep all objects, bedding, people and pets at least 36 inches away from the space heater
- Replace your space heater if it seems to short out or if its electrical cord is frayed or otherwise damaged
- Look for safety features like automatic shut-off in case the device tips over
- Place your heater on the floor, not on a stand or a desk, where it could get knocked over
- Choose a space heater with a thermostat to avoid overheating the room
- Always plug space heaters directly into an outlet, never an extension cord



Move over, red— have a green Valentine's Day

Who knew saving energy with your sweetheart could be so romantic? Celebrate this year's Valentine's Day at home with energy efficiency in mind!



- **Eat at home:** Save on gas—and reduce emissions—by cooking your Valentine's Day meal at home
- **Shop locally:** Buy locally grown food for your home-cooked meal That supports your neighbors and ensures that your food hasn't traveled to reach you—which takes extra energy
- **Save time and energy by fixing your feast in an energy-efficient slow-cooker:** Toss the ingredients in the slow-cooker in the morning
- **Flip the light switch:** Candlelight is romantic and doesn't cost a penny of electricity
- **Turn the heat down a notch:** Cozy up with your sweetheart under a fluffy blanket to keep warm

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Tim Marienau, CEO



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