

Share your photo and win!

Calling all photographers—hobbyists and professionals alike—to enter Prairie Energy’s photo contest now through November for a chance to win one of three \$25 electric bill credits and your photo featured in an issue of *InTouch* magazine! Contest rules:

- Each PECO member may submit up to five photos.
- All submissions must include the photographer’s name and location of the photo. For PECO contact purposes only, please include your email and phone number.
- All submitted photos must be taken within PECO’s service territory and have an electric utility theme (poles, powerlines, linemen, trucks, etc.).
- The contest is only open to PECO member-owners.
- Submissions must be high-resolution, digital images in .jpg or .pdf format.
- Prints will not be accepted.
- The contest will be judged by Prairie Energy employees.



The deadline to submit photos is Friday, November 27, 2020. Email your high-resolution photos to solson@prairieenergy.coop with the subject line “Photo contest.”

By submitting photos to this contest, you give PECO the right to use those photos in the *InTouch* magazine and its affiliates, on the Prairie Energy Cooperative website, and on social media.



How to clean your thermostat

If we’ve learned one thing from the pandemic, it’s how important it is to keep surfaces clean.

Killing germs on the thermostat’s surface is only one reason to regularly clean it, however. Often, a malfunctioning thermostat is simply dirty. Dirt can force the thermostat to use more energy than normal. A clean thermostat is more energy-efficient.

Cleaning your thermostat when the seasons change from warm to cool and then again when they change back can extend the life of the device as well.

Here’s how:

- Remove the cover. You might have to remove screws, but most covers snap off.
- Using a clean, soft paintbrush and a gentle touch, dust the inner workings of the thermostat. For grime or debris at points where the electronic components touch, slide a piece of paper or dental floss between them to loosen and remove it. An alternative tool is compressed air.
- Inspect the device for loose or corroded wires. If you find them, call an electrician. Repairing a thermostat is not a do-it-yourself job.
- Replace the batteries.
- Dust the cover and put it back on.
- Smart thermostats do not need interior cleaning.



HAPPY
Labor Day

Prairie Energy will be closed
Monday, September 7th
in observance of Labor Day.

To report an issue with your
service, please call
800-728-0013.

Have a fun & safe holiday!

The everyday value of electricity

Most people don't think much about the electricity they use. We expect the lights to turn on when we flip the switch and the coffeemaker to work each morning. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out or maybe when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our lifestyle, it's a great value, especially when compared to other services and expenses. Think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline or groceries 20 years ago. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat.

Most of us have a cell phone, and we pay for television channels. Many of us consider these necessities. Maybe it's because we can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the cost of medical care increased 3 percent from 2014-2019 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). Education was not too far behind at 2.6 percent. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4 percent.

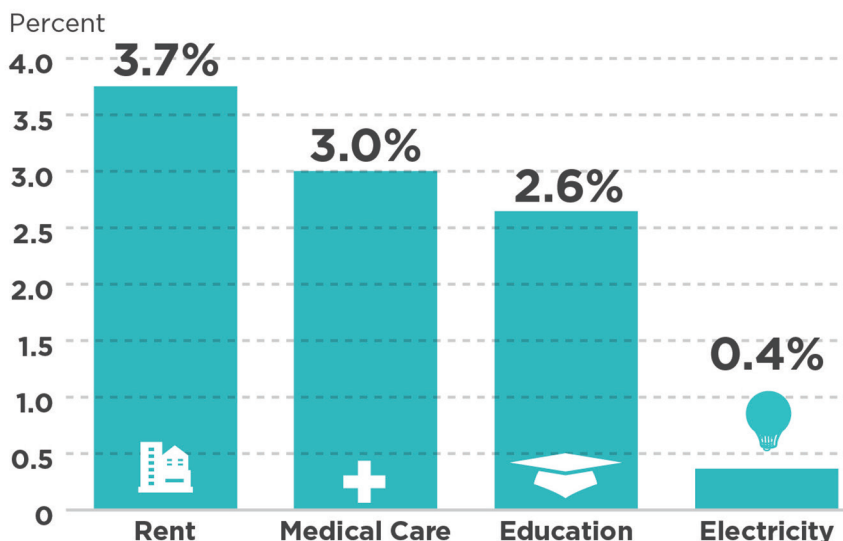
Your electric cooperative provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as a valued member of the co-op. And as your trusted energy advisor, we want to help you save energy and money.

The past few months have been challenging for many of our members and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy, please give us a call. We are your electric co-op, and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's everyday value.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Run ceiling fans to save energy

Ceiling fans don't actually cool the air in a room. Instead, they circulate the air. Anyone who is in the room while one is running will feel a sort of breeze. That makes the person feel cooler, so there's no point in running a ceiling fan in an empty room.

But for rooms that are usually occupied, a ceiling fan can make the room feel like it's almost 10 degrees cooler than a room without one. And because the fan circulates cool air, it gives the air conditioning system a break.

In fact, with a ceiling fan running, you can turn your thermostat up by about four degrees without sacrificing comfort, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

A few tips for getting the most energy savings from ceiling fans:

- In the summer, ceiling fans should rotate counter-clockwise to push cool air down. In the winter, they should rotate clockwise, to draw warm air up to the ceiling and recirculate it.
- Hang the fan seven to nine feet above the floor and about a foot below the ceiling.
- Fan blades should be at least eight inches from the ceiling and 18 inches from the walls.
- Fans with an ENERGY STAR label are about 20 percent more efficient than standard models.

Duane Arnold Energy Center to cease operations

In 1969, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, Central Iowa Power Cooperative and Iowa Electric Light and Power Company, broke ground on the construction of a 550 MW capacity nuclear power plant - the Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC) near Palo, Iowa. At the time and ever since, Corn Belt Power has been a 10-percent stakeholder in the plant.

Today, Iowa's electric providers prepare for the imminent closure of the facility.

The construction on the nuclear power plant spanned several years, with commercial operation commencing in February 1975. It was the state of Iowa's largest single construction project at the time.

The plant's consistent and reliable operating strategy, along with \$1 billion in additional investments over the years, led to a series of upgrades increasing DAEC's capacity from 550 MW to 614 MW, today's generating capacity. The plant's successful operation was never on greater display than in 2008 when it survived the 500-year historic flood. Through thoughtful planning, the plant sits at 20 feet above the Cedar River, providing the protection needed from the flood. In 2008, with the river cresting at record levels, DAEC's operation

continued without faltering.

"The plant was an important generator for Corn Belt Power in the 80's, 90's and early 2000's," said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president and general manager, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. "For years it has been one of the best run nuclear facilities in the country. It has provided affordable and reliable power to Iowans for decades."

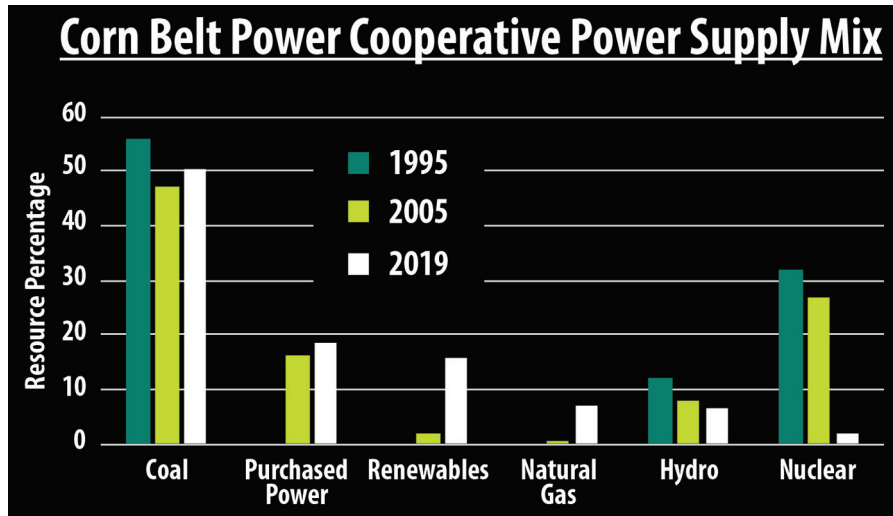
fired generation, in early 2018, NextEra Energy – the company that purchased Iowa Electric Light and Power's (Alliant) 70 percent share of DAEC in 2005 - announced a likely end to production at DAEC in 2025 when Alliant Energy's purchase power agreement (PPA) ended, despite having a license to operate through 2034.

Ultimately, NextEra Energy released Alliant Energy from the PPA early. NextEra Energy, as the majority owner, made another announcement in July 2018 that the plant would cease operations in October 2020.

"Having joined Basin Electric, we are well positioned to absorb the closure of DAEC," Kuyper said. "It's important to remember that we

now rely on a vast amount of generators to supply power to Corn Belt Power members. Gone are the days of just having three or four resources. Today we have an all-of-the-above strategy, which makes our power supply more reliable and flexible in the future."

Duane Arnold will cease operations later this year. It will take years before the area where the plant is located will return to green fields. Until that time, plant employees will still be monitoring and guarding the facility.



Before Corn Belt Power joined Basin Electric Power Cooperative as a Class A member, Duane Arnold made up a large portion of energy supplied to members. Since joining Basin Electric, Corn Belt Power's generation mix has diversified. Today, the co-op's 10-percent stake or about 62 MW makes up only 1.6-percent of power supplied to members.

With increasing regulations on nuclear plants putting pressure on the cost of operations, and enhanced competition from lower cost natural gas-

UPDATE: FARM PROGRESS SHOW

Due to COVID-19 concerns, the 2020 Farm Progress Show, scheduled for Sept. 1-3, has been cancelled.

Your Touchstone Energy cooperative encourages you to **MOVE OVER AND SLOW DOWN** when you approach a vehicle with flashers on.

Let's make sure everyone arrives safely!



MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN

Help keep utility workers safe in roadside work zones

Most electric line workers do their jobs roadside, often elevated high overhead to work with energized power lines and conductors. More and more often, they are sharing the road with distracted drivers, which adds even more hazards to an already dangerous job.

Prairie Energy urges all drivers to slow down when approaching a work zone and pay extra attention when you see the orange cones and signs that say, "Utility Work Ahead."

Utility crews are not the only workers putting their lives on the line. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration:

- 1 work zone crash occurs every 5.4 minutes
- 70 work zone crashes result in injuries each day
- 12 work zone crashes result in fatalities each week

Drivers are often in a hurry, multitasking, or believe the orange work zone signs are meant for other people. Leave home in plenty of time and be considerate of utility crews and other workers near or on the roadway. Frenzied drivers or big rigs going too fast could brush or rattle a utility truck. Even the slightest movement could cause a line worker up in a bucket to move unintentionally, putting that life in danger while working on equipment that is often energized.

Eating, adjusting the radio, talking on the phone, and putting on makeup are among the many driver distractions. If you use your cell phone while driving, you are 23 times more likely to be in an accident. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, in 2018 distracted driving claimed 2,841 lives.

Prairie Energy reminds you that distracted driving injures and kills utility crews and other workers who put themselves in danger every day by sharing their workspace with vehicles on the road. There isn't a text or a phone call that is worth a life. Your makeup can wait. Read that newspaper article at a rest stop. Respond to that text later. Even a hands-free conversation distracts. If you don't drive safely, you could be the reason someone doesn't make it home.

Remember to move over, slow down, and zone-in on safety and save lives.



DO YOUR PART TO HELP KEEP LINEWORKERS SAFE



Never plug a generator into an indoor or outdoor wall outlet, which can cause voltage to back feed.



Workers need to efficiently and safely restore power when it goes out; please be patient.



Do not post signs on a utility pole, especially with staples and nails, which can puncture protective gear.



Slow down and move over in utility work zones. Crowding workers can cause accidents.

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