

WITH MEMBERS OF PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Prairie Energy works to strengthen cybersecurity

By *Tim Marienau, CEO*

Iowa cooperatives participating in the RC3 self-assessment study for the next two years. Once the program is complete in Iowa, a report will be provided to the participants as well as NRECA to review and create additional opportunities to enhance cybersecurity initiatives. In addition to providing Prairie Energy with a baseline to improve upon, it will also create other opportunities for your cooperative, its members and communities, as well as Iowa as a whole.

Examples of these opportunities would be to partake in cybersecurity summits to foster peer-to-peer interactions that would also inform participants about cybersecurity threats and increase awareness of resources currently available to the co-op community, allowing the creation of new cybersecurity tools for co-ops to use including information sharing and anomaly detection, and receiving help testing/deploying these tools.

Another opportunity would also be creating education and

training materials designed to address the unique needs of cooperative staff, assessing new cybersecurity technologies and investing in research and development that will advance those technologies, and providing opportunities for cooperative staff to participate as industry advisors to help the success of the RC3 program.

The National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program (RC3) Self-Assessment program is dedicated to promoting a culture of security and resiliency within the electric cooperative community across the country. The results from the assessment gives a baseline to improve our vulnerabilities and/or weaknesses as cybersecurity is ever evolving. It will increase our security posture and keep us aware of what is happening in Iowa and across the nation, at no cost to our member-owners.

Cyber and physical infrastructure safety and security are critical as electric cooperatives invest in and deploy all kinds of new technology to help maintain a viable and prosperous rural Iowa. Prairie Energy Cooperative is one of 26



Butch Norem, Chad Chapman, Bill Hicok, and Tim Marienau participate in a cybersecurity assessment with the help of consultant Dan Dogendorf.

New employee joins cooperative

Sue Golwitzer joined Prairie Energy on January 18th of this year as the new Manager of Human Resources & Payroll. Sue comes to the co-op with an extensive background of HR and payroll expertise, as well as a master's degree related to the field. "I decided to work at Prairie out of many other offers due to the positive interaction I observed between leaders during my interview process," says Golwitzer. "Another factor was great reviews of the employees by people I know in the surrounding communities. I hope to be a part of that positive culture moving forward."

Sue and her husband of 35 years live in Wesley and have three daughters, and three very close to her heart grandchildren, who all live too far away. (Texas, Florida, Wisconsin) Her hobbies include reading, fishing, traveling, gardening, and spending time with family and friends. Congratulations and welcome to the crew, Sue!



What happens behind the scenes during a power outage?

In the U.S., we are fortunate to have an advanced power grid in place. Power transmission and distribution is reliable in our country, and we are proud to deliver the electricity you depend on each day.

Excluding outage times attributed to major weather or other catastrophic events, electricity consumers in our country typically experience only about two hours of total power interruptions per year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). When outages due to major events are taken into consideration, the EIA reports the total outage time at six hours a year.

What happens on our end when your power goes out? Rest assured we swing into action in a safe and efficient manner. How long restoration takes depends on several factors: the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and how long it takes for our work crews to safely access the storm-damaged areas. We are careful to follow standard restoration procedures to ensure safety and to get the job done right by:

- Assessing damage to utility equipment.
- Addressing immediate safety risks, including downed power lines.
- Ensuring that essential public health and safety facilities are operational.
- Prioritizing repairs to restore power to the greatest number of people first.
- Assessing and repairing (in this order) substations, distribution lines, and service lines to properties.

Thank you for your patience during power outages. Know that in the event of an outage, we are working hard to restore it as safely and efficiently as possible.



POWER OUT?

22 WAYS TO UNPLUG



If you are trying to keep yourself (or others) entertained during a power outage, save the battery power on your phones and other electronics for emergencies or weather updates, and consider some of these “unplugged” activities instead.

FUN FOR KIDS

- Read a book
- Play board or card games
- Look at old photos
- Tell ghost stories
- Make shadow figures
- Make a fort out of boxes and blankets
- Sing your favorite songs
- Play Simon Says

GET CREATIVE

- Write a story.
- Make up jokes.
- Draw or paint a picture.
- Set up an indoor bowling alley with plastic cups as pins.
- Fix something around the house.

PRACTICE SELF CARE

- Take a nap.
- Paint your nails.
- Go for a run or hike.
- Check in on your neighbors.
- Practice a skill, such as a second language, sewing, knitting, or tying knots.

AROUND THE HOUSE

- Clean and organize your house
- Rearrange your furniture
- Fold laundry or organize your closet
- Plant seeds or tidy up your yard

Safe Electricity.org®

DIYers: Call pro for electrical repairs

Working with electricity is risky business. Anyone who tinkers with wiring or circuits could suffer electrocution or shock or could start a fire. High-voltage items are especially dangerous to work on, even for professionals.

DIYers should not take any chances when it comes to electrical repairs. Licensed electricians are trained not only in the skills needed to work with electrical circuits and components, but in how to stay safe during the job, how to adhere to electrical codes, and how to prevent fires. They also know which permits are required to do the work legally.

Homeowners should also consider the following before attempting to do their own electrical repairs:

- Some homeowner's insurance policies do not cover fires that start as a result of a DIY electrical repair gone wrong.
- Electrical work requiring city or county permits can result in fines for a DIYer who does not obtain those permits.
- Selling a home whose electrical work has been done by a DIYer can be a challenge. Potential buyers usually hire home inspectors, who could flag faulty repairs and force the homeowner to pay for a professional do-over.
- Even when you hire a professional electrician, insist on a license, proper permit, and an inspection.





**WE ARE
MEMBER
OWNED.**



Prevent frozen pipes by keeping your house warm

A mid-winter getaway seems like a dream during a pandemic, but if your family has found a safe destination and is heading out of town for a couple of weeks, leave the heat on at home.

It might seem like a waste of energy and money to heat an empty home, but the cost of cleaning up after a water pipe that has frozen and burst will be far more costly than leaving the thermostat set high enough to prevent the problem.

When the water inside of a pipe freezes, it expands and puts pressure on the pipe. That pressure can cause the pipe to crack or break, and water can gush out, leading to a non-stop flood of water and massive damage to your property.

Here are some precautions to take before you leave:

- **Shut off the water** at the cut-off valve.
- **Remove garden hoses** from outdoor faucets. Then, drain those faucets and leave them in the “on” position.
- **Leave the heat set** at around 50 degrees.
- **Open cabinet doors under sinks** so the heat can circulate around the water pipes.
- **Shut off the water** to your washing machine if it is in an unheated garage.
- **Insulate pipes** in the attic and in crawl spaces using a product designed specifically for pipes.
- **Give your house key** to a trusted neighbor who can check for frozen pipes while you're away.



Let's connect *By Anne Prince, NRECA*

When we say that we live in a “connected” world, most of us think about technology—our smart phones and other devices and gadgets. But as a member of an electric co-op, there's so much more to being part of our connected co-op community.

We depend on you because you power our success, and when your cooperative does well, the community thrives because we're all connected.

We greatly value our connection to you. And we'd like to help you maximize the value you can get from us through a variety of programs, products, and services that we offer our members. For example, we can help you save money on your energy bill by asking you questions about how you use energy, and we also offer a number of rebates. In addition, when you download our SmartHub app, you can monitor and manage your home energy use, pay your bill online, and access a menu of additional options for potential savings and more.

Follow us on social media to stay up-to-date on power restoration efforts, tree trimming planning, co-op director elections, and more. You'll also see photos of our line crews in action and our employees helping with community service projects.

Your electric cooperative relies on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, and up-to-date contact information from our members helps ensure that we can provide the highest level of service that you expect and deserve.

Updated contact information can even speed up power restoration during an outage. That's because when you call to report an outage, accurate information helps our outage-management system predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

We hope you will connect with us whenever and wherever you can. Your cooperative exists to serve members, and when we're better connected to you and our local community, we're better prepared to answer the call.

We look forward to connecting with you!

Seeking candidates

At the June 2, 2021, annual meeting of the members, director terms in Districts 1, 4, and 6 will expire. To be considered eligible for election, members must 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 one of the following nominating committee members:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| District 1: | Gary Ludwig
20306 340th St
Forest City IA 50436
(641) 590-1802 | Bernal Hanna
2125 300th St
Forest City IA 50436
(641) 590-1006 |
| District 4: | Austin Charlson
2531 190th St
Belmond, IA 50421
(515) 290-7437 | Rodney Legleiter
1767 130th St
Kanawha IA 50447
(515) 320-1678 |
| District 6: | Zachary Klaver
3213 Franklin Ave
Woolstock IA 50599
(515) 689-1026 | Kelby Ryerson
2876 Baxter Ave
Eagle Grove IA 50533
(515) 293-0856 |

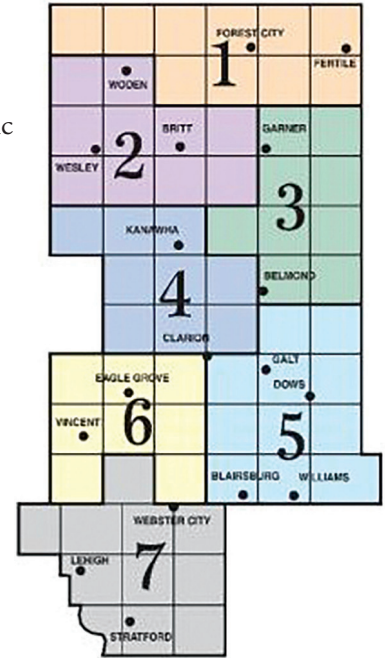
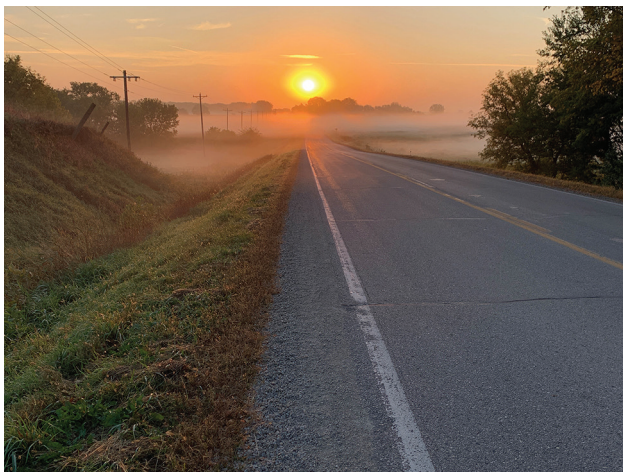


PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Thank you to all the members who submitted photos during Prairie Energy's recent photo contest! The winners were credited \$25 for their photos. Congratulations!



First Place: Lisa Pleggenkuhle



Second Place: Allison Lycke



Third Place: Jostin Heimer

iNtouch® is the official publication of Prairie Energy Cooperative
2099 Highway 3W • Clarion, Iowa 50525-0353
Phones answered 24/7: (515) 532-2805 • Pay-by-Phone: 844-241-0265
Offices hours: Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Tim Marienau, CEO



Follow us on Facebook at
<https://www.facebook.com/PrairieEnergyCooperative>

smart choices

See the latest issue of our e-newsletter at www.prairieenergy.coop



Pay your bill online
with SmartHub

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.