

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

June 2021

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Patronage returned to members

When you began receiving power from Prairie Energy Cooperative, you became a member of the co-op. This means that you share in the co-op's excess revenue. While other businesses return their profits to investors/stockholders, we return that excess revenue, called patronage to you.

Prairie Energy's board of directors approved a \$983,356 capital credit retirement for its members due to our wholesale power supplier, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, retiring a portion of the capital credits that Prairie Energy was allocated in 2020. This retirement will be returned in the form of a bill credit for those who were members of the co-op and purchased electricity in 2020. Your June bill will show this as "Patronage Dividend Refund." Those who were members that have moved off our lines will receive this retirement in the form of a check.

Call the office with any questions you may have about your patronage.

Scholarship awarded

Marissa Eekhoff, daughter of Ryan and Lori Eekhoff of Kanawha, was chosen as Prairie Energy's winner of the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship employee pool.

Marissa will be entering into her sophomore year at Iowa State University, where's she plans on obtaining her bachelor's degree in animal science.

"I am looking forward to hopefully attending veterinary school to focus on production animal medicine. I have enjoyed my first year at Iowa State and look forward to interning at the vet clinic in Belmond this summer. I enjoy being active in different campus organizations and gaining more experience in any way that I can," says Eekhoff. Congratulations, Marissa!



Member wins \$25 bill credit

Congratulations go out to Kathy Carter of Williams, Iowa! Kathy's recipe was featured in the May issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa*, featuring "Rhubarb & Asparagus Recipes."

See Kathy's recipe below in case you missed it, and submit your own recipes to *Living with Energy in Iowa* by following the directions found in the magazine.

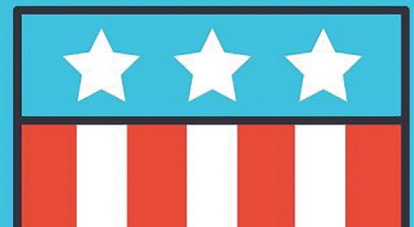
Rhubarb Dump Cake

- 1 pound rhubarb, chopped (3-4 cups)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 package strawberry Jell-O (3 ounces)
- 1 package yellow cake mix
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

Spread rhubarb evenly over bottom of a greased 9x13-inch cake pan. Sprinkle sugar over the rhubarb, then the dry Jell-O, then the cake mix. Pour water and melted butter over the top. Do not stir. Bake at 350 degrees F for 45 minutes or until rhubarb is tender. This comes out like a cobbler.



HOLIDAY CLOSURE



Prairie Energy Cooperative will be closed on Monday, July 5, in observance of Independence Day. To report an outage or problem with your service, call 515-532-2805 or toll-free at 1-800-728-0013. We will resume regular business hours on Tuesday, July 6.

Have a happy and safe 4th of July!



Suds and savings in the laundry room

By Abby Berry, NRECA

Your clothes washer and dryer account for a significant portion of energy consumption from major appliances. Follow these Department of Energy tips for saving on suds:

Wash with cold water. Switching from warm water to cold water can cut one load's energy use by more than half.

Wash full loads when possible. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy.

Use the high-speed or extended spin cycle in the washer. This setting removes more moisture before drying, reducing your drying time and the extra wear on clothing.

Dry heavier cottons separately. Loads will dry faster and more evenly.

Make use of the "cool down" cycle. Your clothes will finish drying with the remaining heat in the dryer.

Use lower heat settings to dry clothing. Regardless of drying time, you'll still use less energy.

Use dryer balls. Dryer balls help keep clothes separated for faster drying, and they can help reduce static, so you can eliminate dryer sheets.

Switch loads while the dryer is warm. This allows you to take advantage of the remaining heat from the previous cycle.

Clean the lint filter after each drying cycle. If you use dryer sheets, remember to scrub the filter once a month with a toothbrush to remove excess buildup.

Purchase ENERGY STAR®-rated washers and dryers. ENERGY STAR®-rated models rating use about 20% less energy than conventional models.

To learn about additional ways you can save energy at home, visit your Touchstone Energy cooperative website.



BUILT by our community.
SHAPED by our community.
LED by our community.

**WE'RE PROUD TO
POWER YOUR LIFE.**

Brownouts: What are they, and why do they happen?

The lights flicker and dim. Your computer screen goes dark. As soon as you start to wonder when or if you clicked save, the lights become brighter and everything seems to return to normal.

When these events occur simultaneously, it could mean that you have experienced a brownout. But what is a brownout, and how is it different from a blackout — also known as a power outage?

A brownout means that energy is reduced by 10 to 25 percent, where a blackout is a complete shutdown of power. Brownouts typically occur when outdoor temperatures are extreme, causing a significant spike in energy demand. This heightened demand can cause electricity production to be near or at capacity.

To prepare for high-energy demand, we recommend:

- Keeping your home stocked with flashlights, batteries, water, non-perishable food, and other emergency items in the event of an extended outage.
- Installing point-of-use surge protectors.
- Considering a whole-home surge protector, installed by a qualified electrician, which helps protect all your home's electrical devices.
- Having a fully charged portable power bank on hand. It is also good to have a fully charged cell phone on hand in case of an emergency.

During high-energy demand, we recommend:

- Unplugging unessential appliances. If done in multiple homes, it may help shorten the length of the brownout.
- Unplugging computers and high-end electronics to protect them from potential damage caused by power sags and surges.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Safety first: Take cover when a storm is brewing

Sometimes a storm pops up or changes direction without any warning, while other times it is forecast days in advance and follows its predicted course. In either case, knowing what to do can help to keep you safe.

When a storm hits

- Never seek shelter under tall objects.
- Immediately vacate elevated areas.
- Get away from ponds, lakes, and other bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity—wires, fences, golf clubs.
- Never lie flat on the ground.
- Pick a safe place in your home, away from windows and doors.
- Know the difference between a weather watch and a warning. A watch means that the weather is possible in and near the area. A warning means that severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar.

After the storm

- Never step into a flooded basement or other standing water or touch (or use) electrical appliances, cords, wires, or switches while you are wet or standing in water.
- Never go near a downed line. If you see one, call 9-1-1.
- If you encounter a downed power line while driving or after an auto accident, do not get out. Call 9-1-1 to report the downed line (pull over first if you are driving). If you must exit your vehicle after an accident because of a fire or smoke, make a solid, clean jump out, landing with both feet together. Make solid hops with your feet together, hopping as far away as you can.
- If your home has been damaged by a flood, turn off the power to your house if it is safe to do so.
- If the wiring, electrical system, or appliances have been damaged by water, have your home inspected by an electrician; also, have appliances serviced by a qualified technician before using them.

For more information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR AFTER A STORM

When the skies clear and the birds sing, know that the storm's fury could have created **electrical hazards that you may or may not be able to see**. Conditions in which stray electricity could energize the area, a person or objects include:

DOWNED POWER LINES

- On the ground.
- Under storm debris.
- Draped over or touching a metal fence.
- Covered by standing water.
- Across or by the road.
- Hidden in tree branches.

OTHER POSSIBLE DAMAGE

- Drooping or sagging lines (never try to move one).
- Split or broken utility poles.
- Damage to a padmount transformer (green box).
- Lightning strike to a substation transformer.
- Damaged or unstable guy wires.

NEVER GO NEAR downed power lines or other damaged electrical equipment to assess damage or clean up the area. **STAY AWAY** and call 9-1-1 to report damage.

Power lines and other electrical equipment **do not have to be sparking, arcing (giving off a flame) or on fire to be energized**.

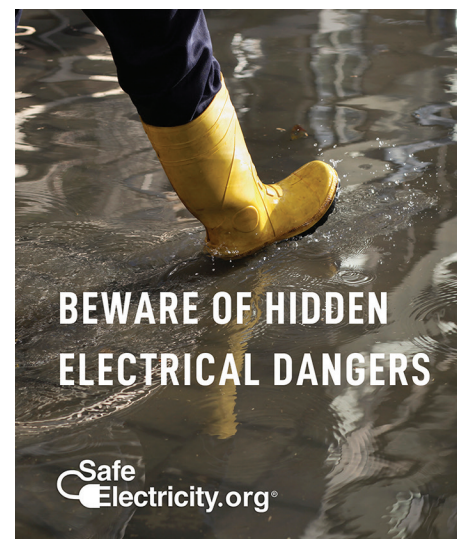
 Safe Electricity.org®

SHINE THE LIGHT



Nominate a local volunteer and they could win \$1,500 for their charity!

Contest entries accepted during June at IowaShineTheLight.com





(L to R) Franklin REC employees Scott Muhlenbruch, lead lineman, and Chad Chapman, member service representative, provided utility career information at the Hancock County Economic Development career fair.

Prairie Energy represented at career fair

By Chad Chapman, Member Services Representative

Hancock County Economic Development recently held a career fair at the Garner-Hayfield-Ventura High School for students of the Garner-Hayfield-Ventura, West Hancock, Belmond-Klemme, and Forest City school districts. These young adults were able to talk with representatives of many companies in the north central Iowa area, including Prairie Energy Cooperative, giving students the opportunity to learn about career options and about each company.

Health safety protocols were in place, and the students were sent through the venue in a couple of different groups. It was great to see so many students involved, and several of them stopped by the Prairie Energy booth to discuss the different careers available at electric utilities. This has a huge impact on the community, both for the students and the companies represented.

Linemen receive training

Education, training, and information is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that is important for not only you, our members, but also for our employees.

Last month the operations department participated in training with a Dynatel representative. Dynatel is a cable/fault locator/marker that incorporates advanced digital signal processing techniques to locate faults quickly and efficiently, and trace the path of underground cables, both copper and fiber optic.



Prairie Energy linemen receive training from a Dynatel representative.

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