



Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



2011 Committee of Nominations

The Committee of Nominations met on December 30, 2010 to select Director Candidates for districts five, six, and seven. Information about each candidate and pictures will be in our March issue of News Flashes. Annual Meeting packets (including voting ballots) will also be mailed in March. Members unable to attend the Annual Meeting should vote absentee by mail or by returning the ballots in person to your Cooperative office, if you so desire.

Committee of Nominations: Standing L to R – Derrick Methner, Jerry Straight, Roger Dozark, Blair Baughman; Seated L to R – Raymond Brown, Ron Thomsen, Rick Grote, Calvin Hulsebus



Employee Volunteers Donate 8,560 Hours

Employees of Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative, along with employees at other western Iowa cooperatives donated more than 8,500 hours in volunteer service to their communities during 2010.

The utilities are all part of Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative's service area and are Touchstone Energy cooperatives. Because commitment to community is one of our four core values, NIPCO has recognized the employee volunteers for their service. Each of the employees who volunteered at least 25 hours during the year received a Touchstone Energy logo item of their choice.

Volunteer service completed by coopera-

tive employees includes blood donation, city council and other city government boards, hospital and church boards, volunteer fire-fighting, leadership of church, community and youth group activities, refereeing sports contests, and working on community celebrations.

The number of hours donated from each cooperative include: Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative, 486; Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, 3,150; Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative, 1,496; Western Iowa Power Cooperative, 876; Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, 798; North West Rural Electric Cooperative, 1,342; Woodbury

County Rural Electric Cooperative, 301; Anthon Municipal Utility, 55; Manning Municipal Utility, 58.

NIPCO, a Touchstone Energy cooperative headquartered in Le Mars, is a wholesale electric generation and transmission cooperative owned by six rural electric cooperatives, and by a full-service municipal electric cooperative serving six western Iowa towns. Touchstone Energy is a national alliance of local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives providing high standards of service to customers large and small. More than 680 Touchstone Energy cooperatives in 46 states deliver energy and energy solutions to more than 40 million customers every day. Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve their members with integrity, accountability, innovation and a long-standing commitment to communities.



Pictured L to R are Lori Barry, Jim Andersen, Linda Williams, Dave Stevens, and Joe Farley

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“Tis the Season” for Higher Electric Bills

The holidays are over and our thoughts are now returning to normal everyday living. There are likely very few members who did not experience a higher utility bill last month and likely again this recent billing period. This is the season for those higher bills and the culprit is Mother nature!

Winter came in with a blast in December. Did you know that last December was an average 17 degrees colder than November? It is no wonder that most electric bills were higher. Your heat source was required to work much harder to keep you and your family warm during Mother Nature’s fury which continued into January of 2011.

We have received a lot of calls from members who are concerned about higher utility bills. Please take time to compare your bill to last year’s billing over the same time period to see why your bill may be higher. It is not a good comparison to deem your bill is higher if you are comparing it to the previous month. Last year, usage was estimated for billing due to the severe weather and inaccessibility to meters. However, you can figure an average for each month (December, January, and February) by adding those month’s billings and dividing that total by three.

It is also not correct to compare your bill to that of your neighbor. Usage patterns are different. You may not have the same square footage of living area, comparable insulation, and efficient windows and appliances which all have an effect on your utility bill.

We are still receiving many phone calls inquiring about the Power Cost Adjustment

(PCA) factor. This is nothing new and we are certainly aware of your concerns. The PCA has been applied to electric bills since November of 2008. This cost varies from month to month due to the variance in our wholesale power costs. This is why it varies on your bill. The PCA mechanism has been addressed many times in the newsletter. The newsletter is intended to keep you, the member, informed. Knowledge is power. Please take the opportunity to read your newsletter for important information we provide you. You should note that the PCA was lower for the month of December than November. The cold weather caused usage to be higher and the power cost variance was spread over more kilowatt-hours.

It is also wise to note that plugging in space heaters rather than utilizing your primary heating system is not a practical way to reduce your electric bill. Did you know that a space heater averages 1.5 kWh per hour? That amount of usage over a 24-hour period amounts to 36 kWh per day or approximately \$3.85 added cost to your bill per day! Also, this type of load is also being metered on your main meter and not the sub meter you may have if you are on the interruptible/controlled rate.

We have received numerous inquiries from members who thought they would experience lower bills because they have gone all electric. If you had previously been heating with propane, you may not have the propane bill any longer, but your new all electric

heat pump does consume electricity to operate. However, a good example to consider is that if you have an air to air heat pump with electric resistant backup, and that rate is currently \$0.035 per kWh, it would require propane to be purchased at \$0.42 per gallon to be as affordable. Propane was recently priced at \$1.84 per gallon. Another example is pure electric resistance heat. A comparable cost with propane would be \$0.84 per gallon which is still more than 50% below current costs. Electricity is still the best value, hands down. Further, although bills seem higher, the price of electricity is never as volatile as fossil fuels such as propane, natural gas, and fuel oil.

We realize how difficult it is to stay warm during frigid months. We are here to help you understand your electric bill and will provide any information we can that may assist you to control your electric usage. We also offer budget billing which keeps your monthly billing amount constant throughout the year so you do not have the inconvenience of a much larger bill to pay each month. We can also provide contact information should you need assistance in paying your energy bill.

We have also engaged C.H. Guernsey & Co., a national rate consulting firm, to assist us in a Cost of Service study to examine our rates and revenue requirements. This is your cooperative and we are continually working to provide you with the service and affordability you expect.

Experience the 2011 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) is sponsoring the 2011 Youth Tour Contest with one student receiving an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. This year’s trip is scheduled for June 11-16, 2011.

Sons and daughters of Harrison County REC member/consumers, who are at present juniors in high school, are eligible to participate in the contest.

If you are interested in applying for this year’s youth tour, send in the registration form below and an application form will be sent to you, or email Linda Williams at lwiliams@hrec.coop and she will return an application to you.

All Youth Tour Contest completed appli-

cations should be in the Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative office no later than Monday, March 7, 2011.

We strongly encourage all who are eli-

gible to apply for this fun-packed, exciting, educational opportunity. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Williams, 647-2727 or 800-822-5591. Good Luck!

2011 Youth Tour Contest Registration

Please send me a Youth Tour application form.

Student Name: _____ REC Account #: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ School: _____

MAIL TO: Harrison County Rural Electric Co-op • ATTN: Linda • P.O. Box 2 • Woodbine, IA 51579-0002

Siouxland Home Show

Look for representatives from Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) at the 54th annual Siouxland Home Show February 24-27 at the Sioux City Convention Center.

Participating in the show is another way the cooperative takes its energy efficiency message to both its members and other electric consumers. You'll be able to talk to staff from Harrison County REC and other western Iowa Touchstone Energy® cooperatives about ways to save energy around the house with appliances, heating and cooling equipment, water heating devices, and construction methods.

We'll look for you at the Siouxland Home Show. Hours are 1-9 p.m. February 24 & 25, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. February 26, and noon to 5 p.m. February 27. Tickets will be available at the door.

Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative will read meters February 25th, 26th, and 28th

Swap Column

FOR SALE: McGuffey Eclectic Readers, eight volumes, 1836, new, \$50 (\$51-\$85 on Amazon.com); used books: Eaton's True Blue Speller, 1931, \$20 & Elson Gray Basic Readers, 1930 \$4. Other early readers from 1903 @ \$4; Call 712-644-3065



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

By replacing your five most-used lightbulbs with ENERGY STAR-qualified bulbs, you could save \$70/year.



3 GREAT DAYS OF EDUCATION AND FUN

can be yours on the Energy Trail Tour, sponsored by Harrison County REC and NIPCO. Learn how water and coal are used to make electricity. See mining area returned to productive land. Enjoy the fellowship of other cooperative member-owners in a comfortable motor coach. Lodging, meals and entry fees are included. Nine lucky couples from Harrison County REC will be selected at random from those who sign up. You might be one of them, so sign up today!

Your cost: just \$50 per couple!

YES, please enter our names in the drawing for the trip. We understand that if our names are drawn, we will be billed \$50.

Our first and second choice of dates:

July 13-15	1 st	2 nd	
July 27-29	1 st	2 nd	(please circle)
Aug. 10-14	1 st	2 nd	

I/we have have not participated in this tour in the past.

Name _____
 Spouse's Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 Phone _____

Clip coupon and return to REC office by May 6, 2011

Pay by Bank Draft

Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative offers a program to have your electric bill automatically deducted from your bank account on the 26th day of each month. Complete the following authorization and return it with your VOIDED check. The process will begin in approximately one month. When you receive your monthly bill the words BANK DRAFT will appear beside the total amount due.

AUTHORIZATION AGREEMENT FOR DIRECT PAYMENTS

I (we) hereby authorize Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative, hereinafter called Company, to initiate debit entries to my (our) account indicated below at the depository financial institution named below, hereinafter, called Depository, and to debit the same to such account.

Bank Name: _____
 Branch: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Bank Routing Number: _____
 Account Number: _____

Check one please:
 Checking Account _____
 Savings Account _____

This authorization is to remain in full force and effect until the Company has received written notification from me of its termination in such manner as to afford Company and Depository a reasonable opportunity to act on it.

Please Print:
 Name: _____
 Company Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Signed: _____
 Date: _____

Return completed form with your current bill or mail to: Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative; P. O. Box 2; Woodbine, IA 51579-0002



Wind Power Agreement

Please specify the total number of 100 kilowatt-hour blocks you wish to purchase each month. Remember, each block is an additional \$.20 investment in not only the environment, but in the future of renewable energy.

Number of blocks at \$.20 per month _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail Address (optional) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

I understand my commitment is for one year and will continue on an annual basis until I notify you in writing to end my participation in the Prairie Winds program.

Sign up for the Prairie Winds green energy program

Harrison County REC members can sign up to contribute to the development of alternate energy production facilities, such as wind energy. All money collected from members participating in the green pricing program is used to develop alternate energy production facilities.

Members can buy 100 kWh blocks of wind energy for \$.20 per block per month, in addition to your regular electric utility charge. The billing will appear each month on your REC utility bill as WINDPOWER with an amount following according to the number of blocks you've requested. You are obligated to participate for a minimum of 12 months.

Call 647-2727 or 800-822-5591 with any questions concerning wind energy, or complete and return the following coupon to Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative and then watch your utility bill for the blocks you've requested to be billed.

Safety Tips when using Space Heaters

Space heaters can be very dangerous if used improperly and many people turn to them as a convenient source of warmth in winter months. Please pay close attention to these tips for using your electric space heater safely:

1. Do not use any kind of space heater as a substitute for central heating. Temporary heating only.
2. Never leave a space heater running or unattended overnight.
3. Choose a space heater that has been safety tested and UL approved in making your purchase.
4. Electric space heaters should not be placed in heavily traveled areas or in children's reach. Always select one with a safety guard around it.
5. If you're forced to use a space heater with an extension cord, be sure that cord is rated for use with that type of appliance.
6. Never place a space heater near water. Wet space heaters will certainly shock you or worse.
7. Follow care and use instructions closely from the manufacturer.

News Flashes

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Operations Alert

By David Stevens, Director of Operations

Spring will be upon us before we realize it. The FEMA construction activity continues toward the letting of bids and the engagement of private contractors to perform the necessary repair and line strengthening in areas of our system that were weakened by the previous ice storms.

Staking crews have nearly completed the first 80 miles of design, surveying, and the actual staking of the lines to be addressed in our initial contract. Bid requests will be released to contractors in mid-February. It is anticipated that a contractor will be awarded and material such as

poles, hardware and conductor will be purchased and delivered by April. We are hoping to have construction work in progress by mid-April.

ALERT:

During the construction of new line, the existing lines in many locations will be kept energized (hot) and poles will be leaned towards the field side of road right-of-ways. This is to make room on the county road right-of-way for new poles to be set and new lines to be strung safely. Please keep this in mind when working in fields next to the road rights of way with farm equipment this spring. Large planters with long

row markers could come in contact with the old lines or the poles that are leaned inward toward the fields.

Please bear in mind that this is a TEMPORARY situation but could present an obstacle to be aware of during planting season. Please keep a watchful eye to avoid the poles and wires.

Contact the office if you have concerns or questions or if these conditions remain for an extended period of time.

This work will result in much stronger distribution lines and improved reliability.

BE AWARE! LOOK UP FOR SAFETY.