

MARCH 2022

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Understanding  
your energy bill

Harnessing the power  
of battery storage

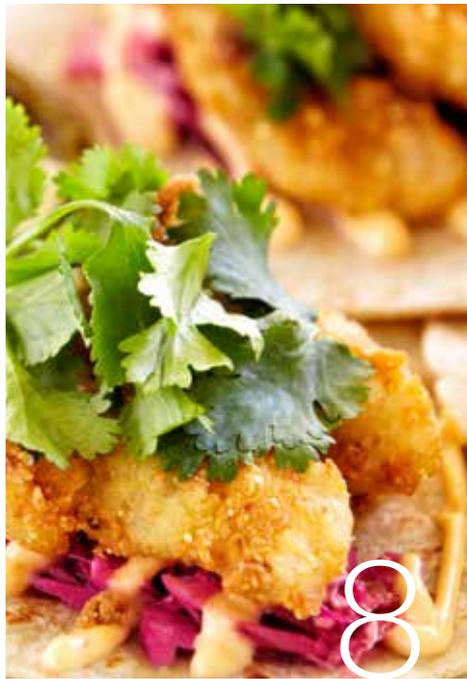
Favorite fish recipes

Tips for safe digging and planting trees ▶ See Pages 12-13

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Jim Hirschberg, a Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could win \$100!

# COOPERATIVE MODEL HELPS SUPPLY CHAIN

BY MATT BRANDRUP



The equipment needed to power our homes, farms and businesses is an afterthought for some. We simply flip a switch or press a button, and we have power. We don't think of the

power grid and labor needed to deliver electricity. And without the necessary materials to ensure power delivery, routine maintenance, emergency work (especially during storm seasons) and new utility-related projects could come to a standstill.

An adequate inventory of power cable, transformers, utility pole hardware and other products is vital, especially in times of supply chain disruptions and inflationary challenges. That's why 37 electric cooperatives in Iowa are members of the Rural Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO) to ensure equipment and materials are readily available, regardless of the circumstances.

## Delivering wholesale equipment and materials for generations

Founded in 1936 in response to the challenge rural electric cooperatives faced in acquiring equipment and materials, RESCO is a member-owned, not-for-profit electrical wholesaling organization. Its members are rural electric cooperatives in the Upper Midwest, extending from Michigan to Montana, including Iowa.

RESCO operates under a not-for-profit membership model, like the cooperatives it serves. This model enables RESCO to work with its manufacturer partners to



deliver extremely competitive prices, which in turn allows its cooperative members to stay within their expense budgets and, ultimately, pass these savings to their own members. And just like electric cooperatives, any "profits" RESCO makes are returned to members in the form of patronage credits.

In addition to cost savings, RESCO's cooperative model helps ensure that electrical equipment damaged during storms and other weather-related emergencies is addressed and repaired in a timely manner. RESCO operates a warehouse in Ankeny for quick distribution of products and materials, 24/7.

## Addressing the impact of supply chain disruptions and inflation

No industry has been immune to the disruptions caused by ongoing supply chain issues. For electric cooperatives, the impact could delay the start of new projects or postpone scheduled maintenance. High inflation rates have also contributed to operational challenges, stretching budgets and potentially requiring cooperatives to pass some of these increases on to their members.

Fortunately, RESCO is effectively managing these challenges by carrying a record amount of inventory. This gives members the peace of mind that their product needs will be met.

In addition to its inventory reserves, RESCO is also helping members stay within their purchasing budgets by maintaining product pricing, thanks to its not-for-profit cooperative model. When demand increases, for-profit companies typically increase their pricing to maximize margins. RESCO does not. This, along with the availability of many necessary products housed in its warehouses, is enabling RESCO and its cooperative members in Iowa to weather the storm, so to speak, of logistical challenges in the electric utility sector.

What goes on behind the scenes is what keeps the lights on. RESCO's membership model helps cooperatives ensure reliability, along with savings passed on to their own members.

*Matt Brandrup is president and CEO of Rural Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO), a member-owned and not-for-profit distribution and transmission material supply distributor serving electric cooperatives and public power districts in 11 states in the Upper Midwest and Northern Plains.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win a NutriBullet Pro Plus Personal Blender



This compact yet powerful personal blender has a 1200-watt motor and specialized blades to effortlessly pulverize and puree ingredients with the push of a button. It's an easy way to make shakes and smoothies!

## Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than March 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the Fitbit Versa 2 from the January issue was Jeremiah Manken, Consumers Energy.

# WHY IS MY ELECTRIC BILL HIGHER THAN EXPECTED?

During times of extreme weather, such as the body-numbing cold we've experienced in Iowa this winter, using more power to stay warm is a necessity. You may be startled by an uptick in kilowatt-hours (kWh) totaled on your monthly electric bill. You may also wonder why your bill may be higher (or lower) than that of a neighbor or friend, or how your usage can jump up one month.

## Factors that affect your energy use

Your bill reflects the amount of electricity you've used in the previous month. While extreme cold may bring a sharp focus to your bill this month, there are several factors that determine how much energy you use. Your bill is impacted by your habits and behaviors, as well as the choices you make to stay comfortable. Some of these factors include:

- **Space heating and cooling.** Your HVAC system and hot water heater are usually the largest energy expenses, especially in periods of extreme cold or heat. In addition, dehumidifiers, portable space heaters and fans all add kWhs to electric bills.



- **The number of appliances and devices in your home and how often you use them.** There is a wide range in energy use between various appliances and the models of the appliances you choose.
- **Your family size and number of visitors in your home.** More people in the home lead to more laundry, more cooking and cleaning up, as well as more electronics charging, more lights on and higher usage of other appliances, too.
- **Your home's features.** The size and age of your home, how well-sealed it is and how many windows it has all affect the amount of energy used for heating and cooling.
- **Your personal preferences and choices are important factors.** Some people require (or desire) a warmer temperature in the winter and a cooler temperature in hot weather, while others don't mind bundling up in the winter and sweating a little in the summer. Note that recommended



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Each month Harrison County REC hides a code in our *Smart Choices* news stories. Find the code below in the *Smart Choices* article, complete the prize entry registration form and submit for a chance to win a SunJoe Electric Pressure Washer in March.

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comfort levels are 68 degrees F in the winter and 78 degrees F in the summer.

### Extra winter challenges

If you experienced a jump in your bill this past month, you may have altered your electric use. Each of these habits can cause your bill to tick up:

- Did you turn on portable electric heaters in drafty rooms?
- Did you use heat tape to keep your pipes from freezing?
- Did you turn on engine heaters to ensure your vehicles and equipment started in the morning?
- Did you turn up your heat a few degrees to ward off the chill caused by frequently opening the door to the outdoors? Perhaps you went in and out of the house several times a day to frequently check livestock? Or to shovel the driveway? These necessary tasks can let warm air escape and cold air in.
- Did you have lights turned on more hours each day because it's darker in the morning and evening during the winter?
- Could the furnace filter have been dirty, causing it to run less efficiently?
- Were more family members home

more hours due to school closures?

- Were you able to snuggle under an electric blanket for a while, but used it longer than usual or forget to turn it off as soon as you walked away?

### Maximize energy-efficiency efforts

There are a variety of steps you can take to maximize your energy-efficiency efforts. Here are some ideas to incorporate:

- Research how much energy each of your appliances uses. Ask Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative for ways to identify how much energy your appliances use.
- Become diligent in turning off appliances, lights, game consoles, computers, printers and TVs when you aren't using them. Also turn off power strips utilized by standby devices that are always on. Some power strips make this easier with a feature that stops delivery of electricity to peripheral devices when the power is turned off to a main device, such as printers and scanners when a computer is shut down or gaming systems and movie players when a TV is switched off.
- Maintain all appliances to be sure they are at maximum efficiency (replace filters, clean coils and follow manufacturers' maintenance schedules).

- Research before purchasing any new appliance and bring home the most energy-efficient model available (labeled as Energy Star®) to ensure savings for years thereafter.
- Do all you can to make your home more energy efficient. For example, check insulation and replace where needed, and seal windows and doors and any other openings into the home.

### As your trusted energy partner, we're here to help

Ask us about rebates if you are planning to update your HVAC system to a more energy-efficient electric model or if you need a new energy-efficient electric water heater.

- Check in for additional energy-saving tips from our energy experts.
- Enroll in budget billing so you can spread the higher cost of winter heating and summer cooling costs out over the entire year. You'll have no surprises using this process!

For more helpful articles on energy efficiency, visit our website and sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter, Smart Choices. Each month, members can find a hidden code and win a prize. Find the code in March, and you could win a SunJoe electric pressure washer.

## ENERGY MATTERS

# COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

If your complaint is related to service disconnection, renewable energy, safety or engineering standards, and it is not resolved by Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB). Contact the IUB by calling 515-725-7321 or toll-free 877-565-4450; by writing to 1375 E. Court Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069; or by emailing [customer@iub.iowa.gov](mailto:customer@iub.iowa.gov).



# GET TO KNOW YOUR NEW STATEWIDE DIRECTORS

BY ANN THELEN

Just like at your local electric cooperative, board directors help guide the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative's (IAEC) decision-making and represent the needs of the member cooperatives in their respective districts.

At the IAEC's recent annual meeting, three new directors were seated following a nomination and election process. Learn more about each director, and discover their vision for helping to serve the interests of Iowa's electric cooperative member-consumers at the state level.

## Tony Lem | District 2



**Occupation:** Farms outside of Slater

**Education:** Ag systems technology at Iowa State University; diesel technology at Des Moines Area Community College

**Family:** Wife Ashlea; Daughters Avery and Molly

**Activities:** Restoring and operating antique Caterpillar machinery, volunteering with the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad steam crew, and spending time with family and friends. Member of Salem Church in Alleman and Heartland Co-op's young leaders' program.

**Electric co-op experience:** Consumers Energy (Marshalltown) board for four years.

### What do you appreciate most about the cooperative business model?

I appreciate that electric cooperatives are owned and led by the members we serve, rather than shareholders who don't understand the local needs of the communities we serve. Electric cooperatives have a genuine interest in the long-term success of the people and businesses we serve.

### Why did you want to become a director for IAEC?

I want to be a voice for members of Iowa's rural electric cooperatives (RECs). It is an important opportunity to ensure we are participating in the debate within the halls of state and

federal government – especially when energy policy is being decided.

### What energy issues are the biggest concerns for electric cooperatives?

Our biggest challenge will be adapting the grid to meet the energy demands of the future. I believe it is essential

to use a balance of generation methods for a reliable baseload while using carbon-free energy generation as much as possible without sacrificing reliability or affordability for the

member-consumers we serve.

### What future opportunities are you most excited about for Iowa's electric cooperatives?

Electrification has amazing potential to create new growth for RECs that hasn't been possible since the first wires were strung across our state.



## Deena Moore | District 4



**Occupation:**  
Paralegal for Engel & Maharry, PLC, in Corning

**Education:**  
University of Iowa

**Family:** Husband Corey; Daughters Mikayla,

Kennedy and Joslynn

**Activities:** Camping, horseback riding, kayaking, learning to golf, performing in the local theatre and cheering on the Iowa Hawkeyes. Member of Corning United Methodist Church and the Adams Community Events Committee.

**Electric co-op experience:** Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative (Corning) board for seven years.

**What do you appreciate most about**

### the cooperative business model?

The attitude of always looking out for other members in our co-op. We are conscious of keeping rates and fees fair for everyone. Further, that collaborative attitude filters out into the community through grants, low-rate loans and economic development.

### Why did you want to become a director for IAEC?

I have worked hard to educate myself as a cooperative leader, earning my credentialed cooperative director designation, so I wanted to continue doing something positive that will benefit many members.

### What energy issues are the biggest concerns for electric cooperatives?

My local co-op serves an area where membership per mile is decreasing, so adding urban development to our

load would be beneficial. We are also seeing rising costs of materials needed to provide reliable and safe electric service.

### What energy issues are the biggest concerns for electric cooperatives?

Cybersecurity is a top concern for every industry

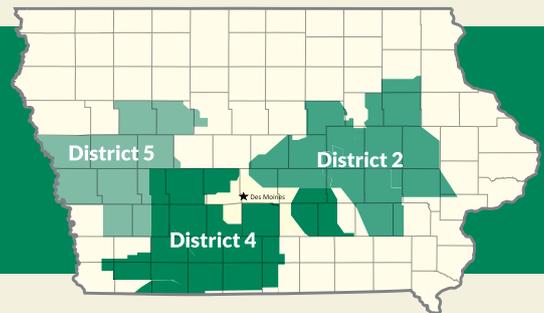
as well as government regulations and decisions made at the statehouse. We want to ensure we have a strong voice as legislators make decisions that impact Iowa's residents.

### What future opportunities are you most excited about for Iowa's electric cooperatives?

Like all energy providers, we are being challenged to diversify our energy portfolio. Change always offers new opportunities to think outside the box without losing sight of our core mission of providing safe, reliable and affordable electric service.



Learn more about IAEC's board of directors at [www.iowarec.org/who-we-are/districts-and-board](http://www.iowarec.org/who-we-are/districts-and-board).



## Jim Miller | District 5



**Occupation:**  
Retired from farming outside of Fonda

**Education:**  
Morningside College

**Family:** Wife Rae; Children Benjamin

(in heaven), Kendra and Timothy

**Activities:** Golfing, cheering on the Iowa Hawkeyes, refereeing basketball games and attending Civic Center shows. Member of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Fonda and various local Knights of Columbus councils.

**Electric co-op experience:** Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association (Rockwell City) for 14 years.

### What do you appreciate most about the cooperative business model?

Being democratically controlled and the philosophy of cooperation among co-ops. We have a quote in the co-op board room that reads, "Every decision I make shall be based on what is best for the member-owners of this cooperative." I keep this in mind as we do local and state-level work.

### Why did you want to become a director for IAEC?

To learn about the electricity industry on a broader scale and bring the voice of smaller cooperatives to the table. I have earned my credentialed cooperative director designation and board leadership certificate, and I think these milestones prepared me to support state efforts.

### What energy issues are the biggest concerns for electric cooperatives?

The top focus for me is cybersecurity. I am also concerned about climate change and feel strongly that we can move toward more renewable energy. Still, we also must have a portfolio that includes all types of electric generation.

### What future opportunities are you most excited

### about for Iowa's electric cooperatives?

With the rise in electric vehicle popularity, I would like to see co-ops involved in building and supporting charging stations throughout Iowa.



*Ann Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living.*

# Favorite FISH RECIPES



## 30-MINUTE AMAZING GRILLED FISH TACOS

- 1 pound lean white fish (e.g., tilapia, halibut, mahi mahi, snapper, cod)
- salt and fresh ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil
- 2 small limes, divided
- 1 clove garlic
- 1½ teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ½ cup sour cream
- ⅓ cup mayonnaise
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sriracha hot sauce, to taste
- 8 white corn tortillas
- Optional toppings: pico de gallo, shredded cheese, shredded cabbage, fresh cilantro, lime wedges, red onion, hot sauce

Season fish with salt and pepper. In a mixing bowl, combine oil, juice from one lime, garlic, chili powder, cumin and paprika. Add fish to large zip-top bag and pour marinade over fish. Seal bag and allow to marinate for 20-30 minutes. Combine sour cream, mayonnaise, juice from one lime, garlic powder, cumin, salt and hot sauce. Preheat grill to medium-high heat. Brush grill grates with oil and grill fish for 3-4 minutes on each side. Flip only once (cook time will depend on thickness of fish). Transfer fish to a plate and allow to rest for a few minutes before gently breaking into pieces. Serve on warm tortillas, topped with taco sauce and desired toppings. *Serves 4*

Erik Folkmann • Marengo  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## SALMON PATTIES

- 1 16-ounce can salmon
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- cold water, as needed
- ½ yellow onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup celery, chopped
- 1 tablespoon green bell pepper, finely chopped
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- ⅓ cup bread crumbs or cracker crumbs
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- pinch black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Drain salmon and save liquid into a measuring cup. Add lemon juice and enough cold water to reach ½ cup liquid total. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine salmon, onion, celery and green pepper. Add eggs and mix, then add bread crumbs, flour and pepper. Add liquid and stir well. Shape ⅓ cup salmon mixture into a ½-inch thick patty. Repeat until you have six patties. Heat oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat, add three patties. Cook 2-3 minutes, until golden brown on both sides. Repeat with the next three patties. Serve immediately. If desired, top with lettuce, red onions and sprouts. Serve with pineapple. *Serves 6*

Nancy Bowman • Coon Rapids  
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

## BAKED SALMON

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup thin cream or half and half
- 1 can salmon
- 1 cup cracker crumbs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon celery seed
- 1 tablespoon grated onion
- black pepper, to taste
- butter

Beat eggs until light, then add cream. Remove bones and skin from salmon, add to eggs. Add remaining ingredients. Place in buttered casserole dish. Bake at 350 degrees F for 30-35 minutes or until nicely browned on top. *Serves 4-6*

Janice Schneidermann • Little Rock  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## SPICY BROILED FISH

- 6 fish fillets (8-10 ounces)
- 1 tablespoon Cajun spice
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper
- 6 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- ½ cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes

Place fish fillets in two lightly greased 13x9-inch baking dishes. Sprinkle Cajun spice, paprika and red pepper over fish. Brush fish with butter, sprinkle lemon juice and top with parsley. Broil 10-12 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. *Serves 6*

Annalee Buffington • Marshalltown  
Consumers Energy

## HOMEMADE FISH CHOWDER

- 1 pound boneless fish (any type)
- 2 tablespoons margarine or cooking oil
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- ½ cup celery, diced
- 2 cups raw potatoes, diced
- ½ cup carrots, sliced
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup milk

Cut fish into bite-sized pieces. Melt margarine in a large saucepan. Cook onion and celery until onion is tender and translucent. Add potatoes, carrots, water, salt and pepper. Cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes until vegetables are tender. Add fish and cook 10 minutes longer. Add milk. Reheat, but do not boil. Serve hot with freshly baked homemade bread or rolls and butter. *Serves 4*

Dave Duit • Nevada • Consumers Energy

## CRAB PASTA SALAD

- 1 16-ounce package pasta
- 2-3 cups mayonnaise
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 8 green onions, sliced
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- ¾ cup celery, diced
- 3-4 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- green stuffed olives
- 1½ pounds imitation crab, flaked

Cook and drain pasta. Mix mayonnaise, salt and pepper. Toss with pasta and remaining ingredients. Chill until ready to serve. *Serves 12*

Hana Hartter • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## FAVORITE BAKED FISH

- filleted white fish, any kind
- 1 can cream of shrimp soup
- milk
- 1 can small shrimp
- buttered bread crumbs
- butter

Butter a flat 9x13-inch baking dish. Place fish fillets in prepared dish. Thin soup with milk and pour over fish. Drain and rinse shrimp, then add on top of fish. Cover lightly with bread crumbs. Bake at 375 degrees F for 30 minutes. *Serves 4-6*

Jane Person • Batavia  
Access Energy Cooperative

WANTED:

## ON THE GRILL RECIPES

THE REWARD:

\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is March 31

Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions. Also provide the number of servings per recipe.

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(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

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# HARNESSING THE POWER OF BATTERY STORAGE

BY ANN THELEN

Photo: Kristi Travis, Harrison County REC

Most of us use batteries in some form to help power our lives every day. In simple terms, a battery converts stored chemical energy into electrical energy. From flashlights and toys to cellphones and vehicles, batteries have become a necessary part of our world.

While batteries have been around for centuries, advances in battery storage technology are sparking new ideas on how to power homes, electric substations or entire power grids more efficiently. Modern batteries can store excess energy produced by generators when demand is low, then seamlessly export the stored power during times of peak demand or weather-related power disruptions.

While the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and consumer applicability of battery storage solutions have a way to go for significant deployment, Iowa's electric cooperatives are studying more about the ongoing advances in storage technology.

## Iowa co-ops explore potential battery storage solutions

From assessing residential batteries to coordinating large-scale substation

battery storage, electric cooperatives across Iowa are exploring various innovative battery storage technologies. Many projects deepen understanding of electric storage technology and how it can benefit member-consumers.

"It's an opportunity to embrace the future," says Brian Krambeer, president and CEO of MiEnergy Cooperative. "We need to be educated about batteries and ready to provide this information and research to our member-consumers."

With ongoing research, development and investment, battery storage technology can innovatively deliver safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible energy. Today's investment in model and scale-up projects has the potential to serve cooperative member-consumers far into the future.

## Studying residential battery storage

MiEnergy Cooperative, which serves 18,000 members in northeast Iowa and southeastern Minnesota, launched a trial residential battery storage program in November 2018. In partnership with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the 5-to-10-year study is designed to gain insight

into residential battery technology opportunities and limitations.

"We chose to study residential batteries because we have 700 members that have installed distributed generation at their homes and farms," Krambeer says. "It's given us the momentum we needed to make sure we're educated on the next round of technology our members may be considering."

The study included residential sites across four participating cooperatives, including six MiEnergy Cooperative member-consumers. It was funded in part by a grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority. The team at MiEnergy reports the following high-level findings:

- The batteries (16kWh and 10kWh) worked seamlessly as advertised but were cost-prohibitive to the average user at the time (\$19,672 to \$14,522 plus installation costs).
- Units cover about 20% of a home's energy use and can fluctuate depending on the owner's power use, varying from 263 to 1,030 kWh per month.

- There is about a 30% efficiency loss, potentially due to daily storage loss and the inverter conversion from AC to DC.
- There are limiting factors for residential applications. Homes need an internet connection, a conditioned storage space with temperatures ranging from 41 to 113 degrees F, and adequate ventilation and spacing for the unit.

“With the numbers, we are looking at a payback in about 35 years,” Krambeer says. “I don’t think anyone is running out right now for that kind of payback, but this is a test – it’s education and an investment for the future, especially as battery costs come down.”

This is an example of how MiEnergy is proactively looking for new



Matt Washburn

Brian Krambeer

opportunities to control costs, enhance service and exceed member expectations. In part because of this program, the cooperative was awarded a 2021 Electric Cooperative Purpose Award at NRECA’s PowerXchange conference.

### Coordinating resources for substation battery storage

Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO), which supplies wholesale electric power to seven distribution cooperatives in western Iowa, recently completed a battery storage project at one of its substations.

The project was made possible in part through a Trial Battery Rate offered by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, the generation and transmission cooperative that provides power to NIPCO. The rate allocated up to 150 kWh per Basin Electric member cooperative, and NIPCO engineers developed a plan to pool and optimize this allocation across its membership.

“This approach was a perfect example of better serving member-consumers through the co-op principle of cooperation among cooperatives. Our

coordination with Basin Electric and member cooperatives made this project possible,” says Matt Washburn, executive vice president and general manager of NIPCO.

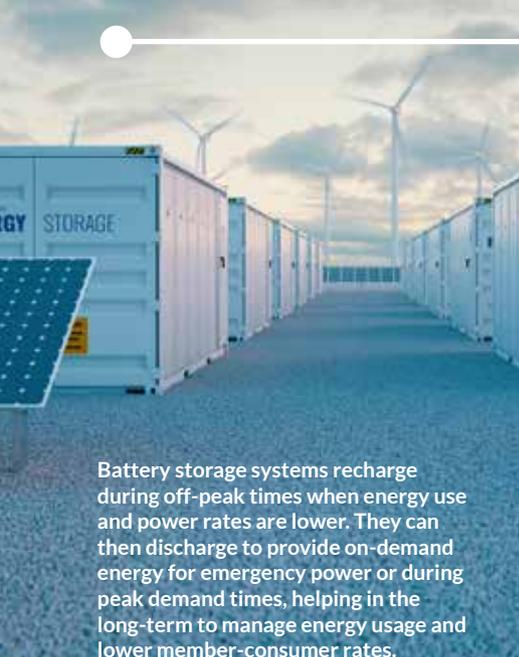
NIPCO integrated a 950 kWh Tesla Mega Pack battery storage unit at its Lawton substation in December 2021. Stored power from the battery will replace almost 1 MW of power (enough to power 100 homes) for up to six hours during scheduled load control cycles. While this is only 1% of NIPCO’s total energy load, it’s an opportunity to study how the technology could be further incorporated while maintaining a reliable, economical power supply for member-consumers.

“We see this as a research and development project,” Washburn says. “We want to see firsthand how batteries work operationally and financially.”

NIPCO plans to share ongoing performance data with its membership to highlight the battery’s ability to flatten demand curves, reduce power costs and use existing generating resources more efficiently.

*Ann Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living.*

## HOW BATTERY STORAGE WORKS



Battery storage systems recharge during off-peak times when energy use and power rates are lower. They can then discharge to provide on-demand energy for emergency power or during peak demand times, helping in the long-term to manage energy usage and lower member-consumer rates.

## THREE WAYS YOU BENEFIT FROM BATTERY STORAGE



### 01 COST SAVINGS

Power can cost more for electric cooperatives to purchase during peak times of energy use (such as summer months or dinner time when appliances are running). Batteries can help reduce this peak demand by discharging stored energy to help power the electric grid. Then, when energy costs are lower (like the middle of the night), batteries can recharge and store lower-cost power. Load management, or managing peak energy costs, is one of the best ways cooperatives can save member-consumers money.

### 02 EXTRA RELIABILITY

If a large power outage occurs on a transmission line, stored battery energy can kick on to power homes or businesses while the issue is repaired.

### 03 PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

With the uncertainty of extreme weather events and changing state and federal energy policies, battery energy storage can help reduce some uncertainty. As battery storage technology evolves, it can potentially help take the unpredictability out of intermittent wind or solar energy generation, improve grid resiliency and reduce energy consumption.

# PLANTING SEEDS OF CAUTION NEAR POWER LINES

As farmers make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative (HCREC) and our friends at Safe Electricity urge farmers to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Operating large equipment near these lines is one of the often overlooked, yet potentially deadly, hazards of working on a farm.

Safety starts by making sure everyone knows to maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance from power lines.

“The minimum 10-foot distance is a 360-degree rule – below, to the side and above lines,” says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of the Energy Education Council’s Safe Electricity program. “It can be difficult to estimate distance, and sometimes a power line is closer than it looks. A spotter or someone with a broader view can help.” Account number two one zero two zero one nine one one.

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have tall antennas extending from the cab that could contact power lines. Avoid raising planters, cultivators or truck beds near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

## Cutting it close is also dangerous

Simply coming too close to a power line while working is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting material or objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck. Remember, non-metallic materials, such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay, will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.

When guy wires (a grounded wire used to stabilize utility poles) are broken, these normally neutral wires can be anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call HCREC immediately to fix it. Do not fix it



yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call your electric cooperative.

## What to do in an emergency

If your equipment does contact power lines, stay in the cab and call for help. If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground. Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized.

If leaving the cab is necessary, as in the case of fire, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet together, hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area. Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment before the power has been shut off.

## Proactive safety measures

“Farmers and farm managers should make sure full-time and seasonal workers are educated on these safety precautions, and dangerous areas need to be thoroughly identified and labeled,” explains Shadon Blum, director of operations for HCREC.

Farmers may want to consider moving or burying power lines around buildings or busy pathways. If planning a new outbuilding or farm structure, contact our office for more information on minimum safe clearances from overhead and underground power lines. HCREC’s line crew can provide professional assistance to measure line height and ensure the safety of our members for their farm operations.

For more electrical safety information, visit our website at [www.hcrec.coop](http://www.hcrec.coop) or [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

## DID YOU READ OUR NEWSLETTER CAREFULLY?

**We have selected two lucky winners for a \$25 bill credit!**

Spot your account number spelled out in our newsletter and win. (Example: Account 4321 is written four three two one.) Members must contact Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative by March 31 to be eligible to claim this credit. Questions? Contact Tara Ganzhorn at 712-647-2727.

# STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Spring is just around the corner, and there's never been a better time to get outside and enjoy the fresh air. Perhaps you're making plans for a new garden or a lawn makeover. If you're planning to revamp your backyard oasis, remember to keep safety in mind for all projects – especially those that require digging near underground utility lines. Account number two four two four zero zero nine one one.

## Know what is below

Most of us never think about the electric, gas, water and other utility lines buried below the ground, but hitting one of these lines while digging is not the reminder you'll want – trust us! Don't assume you know what is below.

Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative reminds all members who are planning a digging project to call Iowa 811 at least three business days before the project starts. Or you can submit a request online by visiting [www.iowaonecall.com](http://www.iowaonecall.com). Here's how the process works:

After you call 811 or submit your request online, all affected utilities will be notified of your intent to dig. It may take the utilities a few days to get to your request, so please be patient.

The affected utilities will send someone out to mark the buried lines with paint or flags.

Before you break ground, confirm that all the utilities have responded to your request. If you placed your request by phone, use the process explained by your 811-call center representative. If you submitted your request online, refer to your 811-center ticket to confirm.

By taking this important step before you break ground on your project, you can help protect not only yourself but also our community. Disrupting an underground utility line can interrupt service, cause injuries and cost money to repair, so remember to call 811 first and know what's below.



## 5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Always call 8-1-1 first. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:



### 1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before your work begins. The operator will notify the utilities affected by your project.

### 2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for affected utilities to respond to your request. They will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



### 3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded to your request by comparing the marks to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



### 4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. The markers are your guide for the duration of your project.



### 5. DIG CAREFULLY

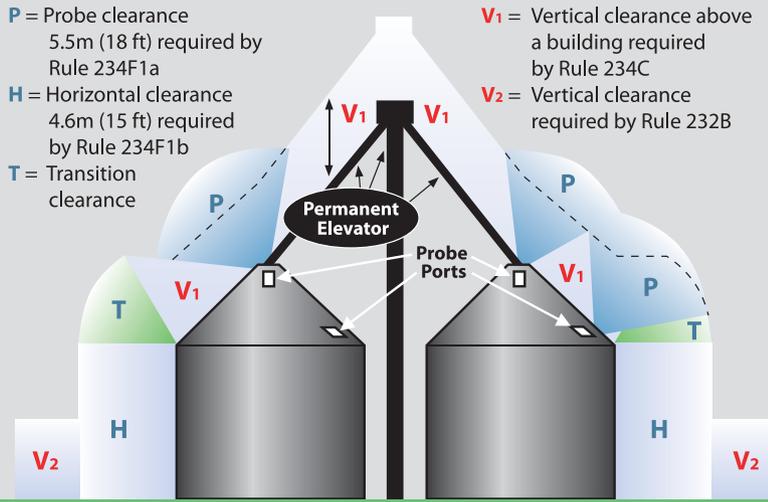
If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project location.



Source: [call811.com](http://call811.com)

### Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators

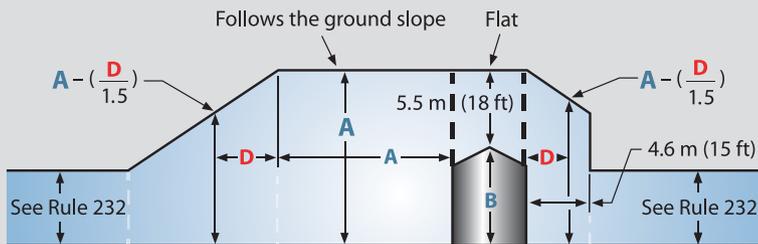
- P** = Probe clearance  
5.5m (18 ft) required by Rule 234F1a
- H** = Horizontal clearance  
4.6m (15 ft) required by Rule 234F1b
- T** = Transition clearance
- V<sub>1</sub>** = Vertical clearance above a building required by Rule 234C
- V<sub>2</sub>** = Vertical clearance required by Rule 232B



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### Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors or elevators

**ELEVATION**



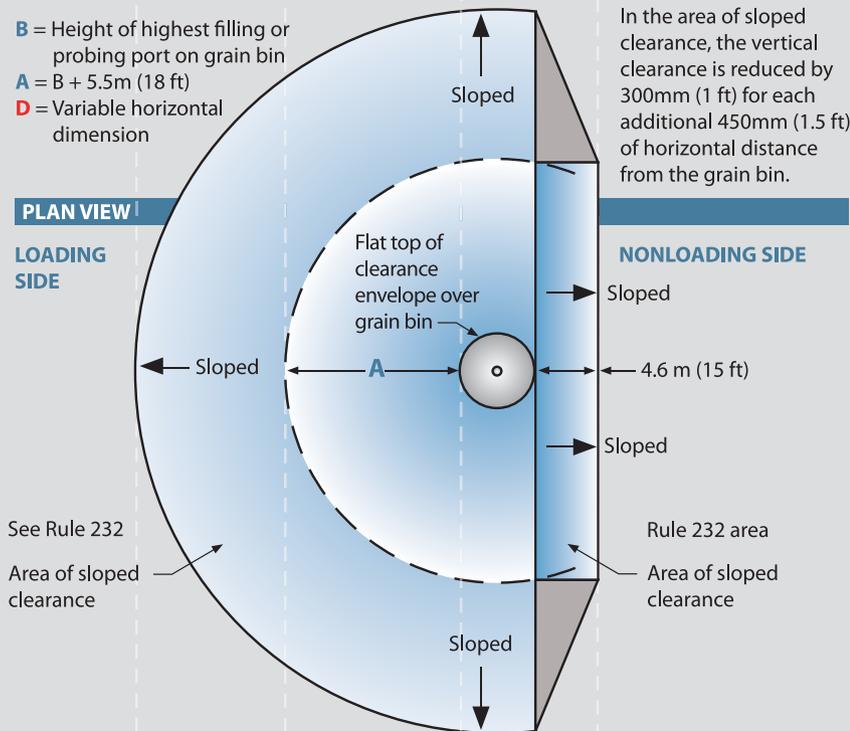
- B** = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin
- A** = B + 5.5m (18 ft)
- D** = Variable horizontal dimension

In the area of sloped clearance, the vertical clearance is reduced by 300mm (1 ft) for each additional 450mm (1.5 ft) of horizontal distance from the grain bin.

**PLAN VIEW**

**LOADING SIDE**

**NONLOADING SIDE**



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## MAINTAIN PROPER CLEARANCE AROUND GRAIN BINS

The state of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors and elevators. According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 - 25.2(3) b: An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2017 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234F. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after Sept. 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after Dec. 24, 1997. The Iowa Utilities Board has adopted this language.

Your local electric cooperative is required by the Iowa Utilities Board to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants and city and county zoning officials. The drawings on this page show the required clearances, but your co-op's policies may be more restrictive. If you have any questions concerning these regulations - or what needs to be done before you begin placing a new grain bin or moving an existing one - please call your electric co-op for help.

These drawings are provided as part of the Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication.

Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents of these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.

# PERMED HAIRSTYLES COME FULL CIRCLE

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

I recently attended an evening gathering where we were seated at round tables. One woman, a local salon owner, rushed in about 15 minutes later and apologized as she sat down next to me. “I probably smell like a perm,” she said. “I just got done giving one.”

Huh? After all, you don’t hear about perms much anymore among women’s hairstyles. I asked about what I assumed were likely her older clientele who were still getting perms to add curls and body to their straight locks.

“Oh, no,” she assured me. “Perms are huge with college girls right now, especially girls with really long hair.”

I was a bit stunned. Were girls really wanting to start this cycle of submitting to the acrid, eye-stinging, burning, pillowcase-ruining solution that was once squirted onto so many of our heads?

## Permanent perm memories

Oh yes, I’ve had my share of perms. With my fine, stick-straight hair, I’m the perfect candidate. And I go way back, before the days of salon permanents. I’m talking the days of a box of Lilt or Toni’s administered by your mom or next-door neighbor. Where the amount of time you left it on was a fluid thing, depending on how much your mom got to talking on the phone. And how a lack of water to rinse it off spelled disaster.

You might sense a bit of a backstory here. You would be right.

For three years in my early high school years, our farm’s well was running dry. The city of Pella was running a water line from Pella to Otley, which would pass by our house. So naturally, my folks weren’t going to dig a new well when they could connect to city water. But one thing after another stalled the planned water lines. For the entirety of those years, the cattle and hogs got the majority of the water, with the house getting sputtering, jerking, rusty spurts of water late at night after the livestock



were done drinking.

And for three years, my folks drove their pickup to town once or twice each day with a roll of quarters and bought water directly from the city, administered through a hose on the back of the fire station. It supplemented the well water and gave us what we needed for the house.

## Disaster strikes at the sink

On the day in question, I don’t remember why we didn’t have any water saved back. Usually there were milk jugs all over the kitchen full of the life-giving liquid. But when the time came to rinse my home perm and Mom opened the spigot ... nothing. Not a

drop. We stared, incredulous, and then Mom declared, “To Grandma’s!” We hopped in the car and headed to town, where I ran to her sink and doused my head under the faucet.

I remember that perm as a disaster but reflecting on my later poodle perms of the 1980s, I’m not sure any of them were much better.

Good luck to this new generation of gals getting perms. Just be sure to use an old pillowcase afterward.

*Valerie Van Kooten is a writer from Pella who loves living in the country and telling its stories. She and her husband Kent have three married sons, two incredibly adorable grandsons and a lovely granddaughter.*



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