



Chariton Valley  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

● NOVEMBER 2021

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**Area students  
participate in Youth  
Leadership Academy**

**Shop “co-op local”  
this holiday season**

**Cozy up with soup  
and stew recipes**

**Help others by giving to RECare ► See Page 5**

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## ON THE COVER

Congratulations to Dawn Joerg, a Harrison County REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to [editor@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:editor@ieclmagazine.com). You could win \$100!

# THE BEST TIME TO ADVOCATE IS ALWAYS

BY KEVIN CONDON



Have you ever talked to your lawmakers about a specific issue? Your county supervisor? Have you ever spoken up on behalf of your fire department? If so, then you've

advocated for something before, perhaps without even realizing it.

As part of larger electric cooperative family, I hope you'll consider standing up on behalf of your co-op. The next decade will be critical for the electric industry as policies and regulations that come from federal and state governments will impact how your cooperative provides power. The time to start educating has begun, and your statewide association wants to help you to make informed decisions about how your co-op will adapt to a changing energy industry.

## Proposed federal policies

Currently, Congress is debating what is referred to as the Build Back Better Act (BBBA) under a budget-setting process called reconciliation. When this magazine went to press, the U.S. Senate still had not announced provisions they could agree on for the U.S. House-passed version. Regarding the energy industry, the "carrots and sticks"

approach included in the House version has caused concern for electric utilities, including co-ops. To be clear, there are positive attributes contained in the bill, including:

- Direct-pay tax incentives for cooperatives to use for renewable energy and carbon capture projects.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture-administered funds that will help rural electric cooperatives increase clean energy and reduce carbon emissions.
- Expansions of projects to increase support for much-needed transmission infrastructure.

While the Senate Majority appears to not have the required amount of support, the proposed Clean Electricity Performance Program (CEPP) concerns cooperatives due to the punitive measures in the plan. The \$150 billion program would reward utilities that increase their use of clean energy by 4% annually but would penalize those that don't without consideration for whether that percentage threshold affects the reliability and/or affordability of power for member-consumers.

Recently, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Jim Matheson told federal lawmakers in a letter that the program's 10-year

timeframe to achieve the bill's mandates is "is unrealistic because of longer-term existing contractual obligations." He also called the clean energy targets "too aggressive," adding that "a year-over-year 4% increase in clean electricity deployment is not attainable for many of our members."

Further, the CEPP "makes a significant mistake by requiring compliance on load-serving entities," Matheson says. "Many electric cooperatives are relatively small distribution entities that own little, if any, generation."

## Balanced power generation

Iowa's electric cooperatives support the inclusion of clean energy through a balanced and responsible "all-the-above" power generation strategy. When the battery storage puzzle pieces fall into place, intermittent wind and solar will see an increase in their reliability score, but the technology isn't yet there. Policy or regulatory efforts to prematurely close baseload generation facilities ahead of those developments fails to appreciate your cooperative's responsibility to provide you with affordable, reliable and efficient power.

## Make your voice heard

Making sure the co-op perspective is heard and understood is why we advocate. Most lawmakers have never worked for or belonged to an electric cooperative. We must continue to put into practical terms how laws and regulations will actually impact member-consumers.

Now is the time to get involved and educate yourself on these issues. Contact your cooperative or your District Board Director to better understand the positions of the co-op. Your cooperative takes pride in being part of your community, and you are the co-op. Help your co-op advocate for you!

For more information, visit [www.iaruralpower.org](http://www.iaruralpower.org).

*Kevin Condon is the director of government relations for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win a \$100 gift card

Just in time for holiday shopping, we're giving away a \$100 gift card to your choice of a hometown business. It will be good for a restaurant, hardware store, gift shop, grocery store, beauty salon or other local business that's vital to your community.

## Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest at [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than Nov. 30, 2021. 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 Keurig from the September issue was David Foelske from Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative.



# WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND ENERGY-CONSCIOUS HOLIDAY SEASON!

BY LEILANI TODD



In 1789, President George Washington issued a Thanksgiving proclamation calling upon Americans to express gratitude for the happy

conclusion to the nation's war of independence and ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Since then, Thanksgiving has become a favorite American holiday as family and friends reunite to feast and give thanks. The one drawback, however, is that the holiday contributes to an annual increase in energy use due to a usual drop in temperatures, lights staying on longer and appliances operating more frequently.

Here are some energy-saving tips, which can help lower the unwelcomed tradition of higher energy bills following holiday celebrations:

**1. Turkey tips** – Avoid buying a turkey larger than needed for your group size. A smaller turkey will take less time to cook, which in turn will save energy. You can also try adding side

dishes that can be cooked at the same temperature while the turkey is cooking to also reduce oven use.

**2. Thermostat** – Perhaps the most obvious reason energy consumption goes up during the holiday season is due to the weather. Here in the Midwest, the temperature drops drastically in November and December, and chances are your heater starts to come on more frequently. The thermostat continues to be turned up more and more as the winter sets in, which directly increases your electric bill. Try turning down the temperature on your thermostat a few degrees while guests are over as body heat will help offset the difference and while the turkey is cooking, the oven will also add heat to your home, especially in the kitchen area.

**3. Lights stay on longer** – Another reason for the spike in energy use during the holidays has to do with lights. Daylight saving time ends, it begins to get dark earlier and the lights of the house immediately come on. More hours in darkness translates to more hours of turned-on lights. By the time December rolls around, Christmas lights are hung taking their share of kilowatts used. Overall, during the holiday season, lights are one of the biggest users of energy.

**4. Appliances** – In addition to increased heat use and electricity, appliances tend to be on more during the holidays. If you have family visiting, chances are the oven, dishwasher, washer and dryer will all see more use. Between extra loads of laundry and home-cooked meals, one or more appliances might be running 10 hours in a single day. Not only that, but the hot water heater for showers will get extra use as well. More showers mean more hot

water, which increases energy use. Appliances can really add to energy consumption during the holiday season. Thanksgiving and Christmas are two times of year when the kitchen really gets put to the test with almost constant cooking, baking and cleaning.

It is no secret that energy use goes up during the holidays. From the thermostat being turned up to lights being left on longer and appliances being used extensively, the holiday season can increase energy bills dramatically. One thing you do not need to worry about this holiday season is reliable service.

This is the time of year when families come together and memories are made. Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative knows how important these times spent with loved ones are – that's why we have provided reliable service to our members for the past 74 years and will continue to do so moving forward. So, here's to you and your family enjoying a happy, healthy, energy-conscious and reliable holiday season!

*Leilani Todd is the CEO/general manager of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative.*



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[www.cvrec.com](http://www.cvrec.com)

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## HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL OUR MEMBERS!

**Our office will be  
closed Nov. 25-26.**



# THE FIRST IOWA YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY WAS A SUCCESS FOR CVEC YOUTH!

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) was excited to offer a new online program for rural high school students in our service territory. CVEC had 9 local students take the initiative and participate in this program.

The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy gave students the opportunity to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities and the cooperative business model during the three-part webinar series in October.

Three Zoom sessions (45 minutes to 1 hour each) covered the following topics:

- The Cooperative Business Model and Why It Matters
- Rural Iowa Advocacy
- Civic Involvement/Leadership



CVEC hopes these sessions opened the eyes of each participant to how cooperatives impact our daily lives, the opportunities available through cooperative careers and how to advocate for issues important to them!

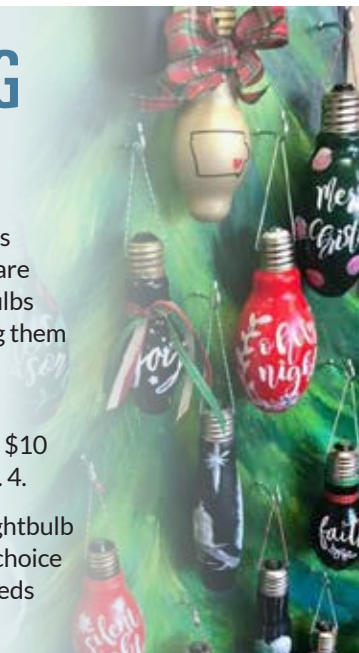
## LIGHTBULB PAINTING IS UNDERWAY

Many of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative's (CVEC) employees and their family members are busy painting and refurbishing 100 old lightbulbs from streetlight change outs and transforming them into one-of-a-kind Christmas ornaments.

CVEC will be set up at the Albia Chamber of Commerce to sell our lightbulb ornaments for \$10 each during this year's Victorian Stroll on Dec. 4.

Once the night is over and hopefully all 100 lightbulb ornaments are sold, a local charity of CVEC's choice will receive a \$1,000 donation from the proceeds of this fundraiser.

**Don't miss your chance to snag one of these unique ornaments this year!**



## GIVE TO RECare

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative's (CVEC) RECare program facilitates members helping other members. RECare provides funds to local community action agencies that then distribute the assistance to low-income CVEC members. Your support helps pay winter heating bills and assists in the weatherization of homes.

As a member of CVEC, you can make a one-time contribution or a monthly pledge to help your neighbors in need. If you choose to make a monthly pledge, it will be automatically added to your electric bill.

If you are interested in donating, please complete and return this form to our office. Any amount you give is greatly appreciated! Please note, your contributions are also tax deductible.



Please complete this form if you wish to participate in RECare. Simply detach the completed form and send directly to CVEC (PO Box 486 | Albia, IA 52531) or include it with your next payment.

**YES, I care and want to contribute**

- ☐ I will make a one-time contribution to RECare. My check is enclosed.
- ☐ I will contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month to RECare. I understand this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill. You may discontinue your pledge at any time by simply contacting our office by phone (641-932-7126), or by mail (PO Box 486 | Albia, IA 52531).

CVEC Account #: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# SHOP CO-OP LOCAL THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

BY ANN THELEN

Ho, ho, ho! It's time to deck the halls, turn on the holiday music, roll out the wrapping paper and start this year's holiday shopping.

Electric cooperatives are committed to the communities we serve, and it shows with the way member-consumers, employees and directors rally around to support one another. During the holiday season, shopping local is one of the easiest ways to support your friends and neighbors who are also business owners.

To help your holiday gift-giving or list-making, we've combined a list of electric cooperative-served businesses that offer unique gifts to place under the Christmas tree or in a stocking. As you embark on Santa Claus duties this year, keep in mind that this list is just a sampling of local businesses. Take a walk along your community's Main Street or explore all that your local area offers for additional inspiration to shop local this holiday season!



## BERGMAN FARMS

[www.bergmanfarms.com](http://www.bergmanfarms.com)

Facebook: BergmanFarms1884

From their pasture to your table, Bergman Farms offers quality beef, pork, chicken and produce. Located between Cedar Falls and Hudson, the online shop offers a variety of cuts and package sizes. Plus, they also own Velvet Hoof, a customized apparel and gift company. See more information on the next page.



## BRITCHES 'N' BOWS

[www.britchesnbowscountystore.com](http://www.britchesnbowscountystore.com)

Facebook: shopbnnb

Britches 'N' Bows is a rustic country gift shop in Panora offering modern farmhouse décor, boutique style clothing and trendy accessories. The shop also offers rustic wedding rentals, styling services and fresh wedding florals.



## CAM CUSTOM DESIGNS

Facebook: CAM-Custom-Designs-104853484709869

Located in Reinbeck, owner Carrie McCalley offers customized apparel and home decor.



## BENTON AVE. BOUTIQUE

[www.bentonavenueboutique.com](http://www.bentonavenueboutique.com)

Facebook: bentonaveboutique

Instagram: bentonaveboutique


Benton Avenue Boutique is located on the beautiful historic square in Albia. Two moms with a love for cute clothes bring trendy looks to small-town Iowa so that women in every size look good and feel good. Shop online or visit their storefront.



## COUNTRY BLEND SEASONING

Facebook: CountryBlendSeasoning

Country Blend is Grandma's secret to excellent cooking. The seasoning blend is manufactured in Rockwell City by Midwest Flavors, LLC. It makes the perfect addition to grilled or baked chicken, pork, beef, turkey, fish and wild game. It's also great on potatoes, salads or in soups and sauces.



## DOWN HOME CREATIONS

[downhomecreationsalbia.com](http://downhomecreationsalbia.com)

Facebook:

DownHomeCreationsAlbia

Down Home Creations is a handmade-focused gift shop with more than 25 artisans and crafters who sell handmade and refurbished creations. Shop online or visit their storefront.




## THE HOLTON HOMESTEAD

[www.holtonhomestead.com](http://www.holtonhomestead.com)

Facebook: TheHoltonHomestead

Instagram: theholtonhomestead

Owners Sara and Tyler Holton founded The Holton Homestead in 2015 on their small acreage in Elkhart. The farm specializes in market gardening, beekeeping, honey production, food preservation, natural remedies and lifestyle products. Products can be purchased at a small store on the farm or in numerous retail locations in central Iowa.



## J&J CANDLES

[www.jjcandlesmanson.com](http://www.jjcandlesmanson.com)

Facebook: jjcandlesmanson

J&J Candles is a family-owned business that has been offering handcrafted, scented products for more than 25 years. They feature nearly 200 scents. In addition to individual sales, they offer wholesale pricing with minimum orders and do fundraisers. All the scented products are made at its facility south of Manson.



## MOLLY'S

Facebook: mollyscountrystore

Molly's is an old barn turned vintage-inspired retail store in Audubon. The shop offers quality home décor, clothing and accessories in a weathered and worn, tattered and torn style.




## MUSTARD SEED

[www.visitmustardseed.com](http://www.visitmustardseed.com)

Facebook: mustardseedcoalbia

Mustard Seed Co. is a family-owned, unique shop featuring home inspirations. Located one block south of Albia's quaint historic square, the shop delivers with charm and character. Shop online or visit their storefront.



## NIGHTINGALE BAKERY

Facebook: Nightingale-Bakery-473092180174458

Nightingale Bakery offers homemade pies, cakes, cheesecakes, cupcakes and more in a cozy setting in Albia.



## THE PINT-SIZED FARM WIFE

Instagram: ThePintSizedFarmWife

Email: [thepintsizefarmwife@gmail.com](mailto:thepintsizefarmwife@gmail.com)


Katie Putnam and her husband Nick farm corn and soybeans in rural western Iowa. Katie offers custom sugar cookies featuring everything from farm scenes to business logos to holiday greetings.



## RECREATION UNLIMITED

Facebook: recreationunlimited04

A family-owned and operated business in Traer, offering top notch outdoor equipment and accessories, including Green Mountain Grills.



## SWEET HONEYMOON WINERY

[www.sweethoneymoonwinery.com](http://www.sweethoneymoonwinery.com)

Facebook: sweethoneymoonwinery

Sweet Honeymoon Winery is a craft winery in Calhoun County making quality wines (including dry wines) in small batches from imported grape juice from all around the world. Because of this approach, the business offers varietals not normally available to wineries in our northern climate. They also make an award-winning Mead (honey wine).



## VELVET HOOF

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/groups/366408144865806](https://www.facebook.com/groups/366408144865806)

The shop expresses a love for the outdoors, hunting, farming, cattle, livestock and all things western and rustic with custom creations. Shoppers can find stickers, decals, apparel, decor and more. Join The Velvet Hoof's Facebook group to learn more!

To find more local business in your area, check with your local chamber of commerce or electric cooperative. Happy shopping!

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

# SOUP & STEW

## RECIPES

### RIBOLITA SOUP

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 onion, minced
- 3 stalks celery, minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 large potatoes, peeled and diced
- pinch of dried sage
- 1 bunch kale, washed, stemmed and shredded
- 1 small head green cabbage, chopped
- 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 3 cans kidney or navy beans, rinsed
- 8 cups water or chicken stock
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 8 thick slices French bread, toasted
- Parmesan cheese
- olive oil
- parsley, chopped

In a very large pot, heat olive oil. Add garlic, onion, celery and carrots. Cook until the onion is transparent, stirring constantly. Add potatoes, sage, kale, cabbage, tomatoes, beans and water or stock. Bring to a boil and add oregano and basil. Simmer 30 minutes, until potatoes are tender. Add more water or stock if the soup seems too thick. Season with salt and pepper. Put the toast in the bottom of a big soup bowl, drizzle with olive oil and ladle soup over the toast. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and parsley to serve. **Soup secret:** Use Swanson's chicken stock diluted with 50% water. Don't use bouillon cubes or paste as they are too salty. Serves 8-10

Linda Coats • Mount Pleasant  
Access Energy Cooperative

### CREAMY TORTELLINI SOUP

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup flour
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 8 ounces cheese tortellini
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese
- 10 ounces spinach, chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste

Melt butter over medium heat, add onion and cook 5-7 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute. Add flour and cook 1 minute more. Add broth, diced tomatoes, tomato paste and tortellini; bring to boil. Simmer on low heat 10 minutes or until tortellini is tender. Add Parmesan and let melt. Add spinach and let wilt. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and serve. If desired, garnish with more Parmesan and fresh spinach, sliced small. Yields 8 cups

Lauren Zollinger • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## PEANUT SWEET POTATO SOUP

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 large carrot, diced
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 1 small red pepper, diced
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon chili pepper
- ½ teaspoon seasoned salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 14.5-ounce can chicken broth
- ½ cup corn
- 3 tablespoons peanut butter
- chopped peanuts, garnish

Sauté vegetables (except corn) and seasonings in butter, adjusting seasonings to taste. Add broth and corn. Simmer until vegetables are tender. Stir in peanut butter. Garnish with chopped peanuts. *Serves 4*

Chris Daniels • Casey  
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

## CHEESY VEGETABLE SOUP

- 1 quart water
- 5 chicken bouillon cubes
- 1 cup onion, diced
- 1 cup carrots, sliced
- 2 cups potatoes, cubed
- 1 20-ounce package frozen broccoli and cauliflower
- 1 pound box Velveeta cheese
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup

Simmer all ingredients (except cheese and soup) until vegetables are tender. Add cheese and cream of chicken soup; simmer until cheese is melted. Be careful not to scorch. *Yields 1 gallon*

Phyllis Bosma • Ocheyedan  
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## CORN CHOWDER

- 1 pound sausage
- ¼ cup onion
- 1½ cups potatoes, chopped
- ½ cup carrots, chopped
- 1 cup water
- 1 12-ounce can evaporated milk
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- 1 can creamed corn

Mix sausage and onion. Add potatoes, carrots and water, cook until done. Add evaporated milk, soup and creamed corn. Heat together until hot. *Serves 6*

Glenda Jager • George • Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## PORK & BEAN SOUP

- 3 or 4 medium potatoes, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 15-ounce cans pork and beans
- 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 14.5-ounce can beef broth
- 1 pound hamburger, browned
- salt and pepper, to taste

Place potatoes and onion in pan and almost cover with water. Boil until tender. Add pork and beans, tomatoes, beef broth and hamburger. Season to taste. Heat thoroughly and serve. *Serves 8-10*

Norma Skogman • Hawarden  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## CREAMY CHICKEN & WILD RICE SOUP

- 1 6-ounce package chicken and wild rice mix
- 5 cups water
- 2 medium carrots, shredded
- 2 tablespoons dried minced onion
- 8 ounces cream cheese, cubed
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 2 cups chicken, cooked and cubed

In a large saucepan, combine packaged rice and seasonings with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 10 minutes. Stir in carrots and onion. Cover and simmer 5 minutes. Stir in cream cheese, soup and chicken. Cook until heated through. *Yields 6 bowls*

Elizabeth Hartter • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

**WANTED:**

## FAVORITE FISH RECIPES



**THE REWARD:**

**\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!**

**Deadline is Nov. 30, 2021**

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.

**EMAIL:** [recipes@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:recipes@ieclmagazine.com)

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

**MAIL: Recipes**

Iowa Electric Cooperative Living • 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992

# GETTING CHARGED UP ABOUT ELECTRIC VEHICLES

BY PAT KEEGAN AND BRAD THIESSEN



Photo Credit: Ford

Ford, Hyundai, Kia and Volkswagen will be offering EVs in 2022 that can potentially power your home during a prolonged power outage.



A variety of new EV models will be available to drivers soon, including the 2022 Ford Mustang Mach-E.

Photo Credit: Ford

This JuiceBox L2 EV charging station connects to Wi-Fi and includes smartphone app capabilities.



As the buzz continues to grow around electric vehicles (EVs), it's important to think about how they will be charged. This includes understanding the basics on batteries and charging options.

Batteries, like the vehicles they power, come in different sizes that provide different mileage ranges. Most people charge their EVs at home, but if you take a cross-country trip, you can charge your EV at one of the rapidly growing number of charging stations around the country. The Department of Energy estimates there are currently 50,000 EV charging sites in the U.S.

EVs will tell you how many miles are remaining before a charge is needed, and many models offer in-car navigation to the next charger. For EVs without this feature, there are many smartphone apps available to help you navigate to the next charging site.

### Understanding charging levels

We often refer to three levels of EV charging.

A new EV comes equipped for **Level 1 (L1)** charging, which simply plugs into a regular electrical outlet. This is the slowest option for charging, but if you don't travel many miles per day or your EV is a plug-in hybrid (PHEV) with a small battery, L1 charging will likely meet your needs.

L1 requires less than 1.5 kilowatts, which is about the same as a hair dryer, and will give the battery 3 to 5 miles of range per hour of charging. If you drive your car 40 miles or less during

the day and can charge it for 10 hours every night, this method should work for your daily driving needs. But if you have an all-electric EV with a 60-kWh battery, it would take more than 40 hours to fully charge with L1.

**Level 2 (L2)** is the most common type of charging because it operates on 240-volt power, which nearly every home has. L2 can supply roughly 6 to 19 kW of power, depending on what your vehicle can accept and your electric circuit's amperage. L2 can provide 100 miles of charge in several hours, and fully charge a large battery in 8 to 10 hours. You may need to install a new circuit if there isn't a 240-volt circuit near the area you park. L2 is the most common type of charging at public sites, like grocery stores, libraries and workplaces.

**Level 3 (L3)** chargers, often called DC Fast Chargers (DCFC), require much more current and are not installed in homes. L3 chargers are typically seen at specific EV charging sites and some gas stations. These chargers have power levels from 50 to 350 kW, depending on the charging station. Some new EVs can accept 250 kW or more and charge a battery from 10 to 80% in less than 20 minutes. Some older EV models may take an hour or more to achieve 80% at 50 kW. When selecting an EV, the charge time from 10 to 80% can be an important factor if you regularly head out on road trips.

### Charging considerations

"Vehicle to home" is an exciting new technology that enables EVs to power



a home or shop during a power outage. Ford's upcoming F-150 Lightning Pro (2022), Hyundai's Ioniq5 and Kia's EV6 crossovers, and the 2022 Volkswagens are slated to offer this option.

Another important decision is when to charge your EV. Your local electric co-op may offer special rates if you charge your EV at night when energy demand is lower, which can help keep electricity costs down. Electric co-ops around the country are working on programs to prepare for more EV home charging, so reach out to your co-op if you have questions about EVs, charging or specific programs and rates.

EV charging infrastructure is currently being built across the country. You may not see them in your area yet, but they're coming, so get charged up about EVs!

*Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

## HOW IS IOWA CHARGING UP?

According to Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Iowa Economic Development Authority, 5,880 EVs and hybrids are registered in Iowa.

Polk, Dallas, Linn, Johnson and Scott are the top five counties for EV registration.

Anyone with an EV in Iowa must pay a special registration fee in addition to the annual vehicle registration fee to the Iowa

DOT. Beginning Jan. 1, 2022, the battery electric (BEV) fee is \$130 and the plug-in hybrid electric (PHEV) is \$65.

**Plugshare** is one of the most accurate EV charging station maps. Drivers can download a free app or visit [plugshare.com](https://www.plugshare.com) to find charging stations, leave reviews and connect with other plug-in owners.



# BALANCE

*Reliable • Affordable • Responsible*

## ASSOCIATED ELECTRIC'S FOCUS ON MEMBER-OWNERS' PRIORITIES REMAINS CLEAR

BY MARK VIGUET

In an unpredictable year for energy companies, the leadership at Associated Electric Cooperative, which supplies power to Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, continues to focus on reliable and affordable electricity for its six transmission owners, their 51 local distribution cooperatives and the 2.1 million people who receive electricity from the three-tiered system.

Associated was created by members



in 1961 to ensure member control of electric supply. Throughout its history, the goals of Associated and its member-owners haven't changed.

"Our mission, to provide economical and reliable power supply, has served us well throughout decades of change in the power generation industry," says John Killgore, a board member for United Electric Cooperative and vice-president of Associated's board of directors. "We never forget that focus."

### Climate change proposals won't change member focus

Evaluating federal climate change proposals to reduce or eliminate carbon is among Associated's top priorities as the Biden administration seeks to quickly and fundamentally change how energy companies generate electricity. The current administration's goals propose to reduce carbon from electric generation 50% by 2030 and envision net zero carbon by 2035.

As our nation continues to debate, one thing is clear: Associated's member-led board of directors and staff believe in putting members and their needs first.

### Rush to renewables creates concerns

"As a member-owned and governed wholesale power generation cooperative, we are alarmed by a rush to renewables without technologies available today to ensure reliable power at affordable prices," says David Tudor, Associated's CEO and general manager. "Member-owners clearly prioritize reliability and affordability in the electricity they depend on. We cannot sacrifice reliable electric supply or affordable rates."

Associated's generation sources have evolved through the years. The primary way Associated preserves reliability and affordability for members is with a balance of generation sources. By maintaining a diverse mix – coal, natural gas, wind and hydropower – the cooperative has options to ensure reliable power at a competitive cost.

### Member reliability is not for sale

Aggressive climate change proposals from Washington, D.C., challenge Associated's balanced strategy.

"Today, there are attempts to get energy companies like ours to take a deal for money and agree voluntarily to close fossil fuel plants and replace them with renewables," Tudor says. "We don't see that as a path that preserves reliability, so we cannot support that approach. Our members' reliability is not for sale."

Tudor points out that since 2005, Associated's carbon emissions have been reduced more than 33%. "We take generating electricity in responsible ways seriously. Safeguarding the environment is not a recent development for us," he says. "Reliability and affordability co-exist with responsible generation at our cooperative and have for a long time."

A key part of Associated's member-focused power strategy includes significant wind energy and hydropower as part of its generation mix. In 2020, Associated added generation from two more wind farms, bringing its total to eight farms and 1,240 megawatts of energy. Those additions continued a legacy of leadership: the power generation cooperative brought the first utility-scale wind power to the region with wind farms starting in 2007. Hydropower from lakes and dams provide another 478 megawatts of renewable power.

"We value the land, air and water we and everyone in our cooperative network depends on. That's why our power generation always considers how best to generate reliable and affordable power in a way that preserves our natural environment," Killgore says.

### Technology, transmission and time key to transition

The technology does not exist today to replace all fossil fuel plants with renewable generation and battery storage. Reliability will suffer and prices will go up. While adding large volumes of generation like wind and solar, which are not constant, to replace 24/7/365 generation like coal and natural gas may sound good, adding too much too quickly will have reliability consequences.

The current transmission system has been designed and used for years to manage member energy load, not for a future where energy from intermittent sources like renewables displaces consistent electricity from coal and gas.

"Trying to force climate-change



*"Our mission, to provide economical and reliable power supply, has served us well throughout decades of change in the power generation industry. We never forget that focus."*

— John Killgore, vice president of Associated Electric Cooperative

initiatives by 2030 or 2035 will not work. In fact, that's a reckless approach. Time is needed to thoroughly think through realistic options," Tudor says. "I'm concerned when all the attention is on quickly eliminating coal and natural gas power plants, with no technological solution for their replacement."

The historic 2021 winter storm, when our three-tiered system kept the lights on while many other utilities were forced into blackouts, serves as an important reminder and demonstrates the value of a balanced electric generation strategy for member-owners and the nation.

"We will continue to make sure our members' needs come first. It's a time-tested and proven strategy that has resulted in real benefits," Killgore says.

For more information about Associated Electric and its responsible generation efforts, visit [www.aeci.org](http://www.aeci.org).

Mark Viguet is the senior manager of corporate communications for Associated Electric Cooperative.



MUSTARD SEED CO.

# SMALL THINGS ADD UP FOR HOME DÉCOR SHOP IN ALBIA



Sarah Hopkins has a vision for the little things. Her attitude to start small, have faith and see what happens has built Mustard Seed Co. Home Inspirations into a beloved home décor, furnishing and gift shop.

In 2017, she and her husband Curt purchased a former car dealership on the Albia Square and Central Commercial Historic District. They renovated the building into two sections and leased half to a healthcare provider, but the bright, glass-walled showroom portion remained vacant.

“Around the same time, we visited Magnolia Market at the Silos in Waco, Texas,” Hopkins explains. “I’m obviously a fan of Magnolia, and the trip inspired me to think about building a modest décor shop in Albia.”

After much prayer and soul searching, the couple decided the vacant glass showroom they had renovated was the perfect space for their own home inspiration shop. Hopkins, who originally worked as a physical therapist assistant and massage therapist, knew the business was the perfect opportunity to live out her passion for creating things and work hands-on with people.

“I had the vision for the shop, but I still needed a name, so I prayed,” Hopkins says. “One day, while I was reading scripture, I felt ‘mustard seed.’”

A mustard seed is one of the strongest symbols in the Bible. From its minuscule size, it grows into a large tree that cannot be swayed or moved –

representing growth, dependence and faith. Matthew 17:20: “Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Since its founding in December 2017, small things have added up for Mustard Seed Co. The shop has doubled in space, branched out to a second location in Ottumwa and grown to employ 10-15 team members. It also secured a rare opportunity to carry Magnolia Home products.

“We had to write a letter to Magnolia to see if they would make an exception to allow us to sell their products in our small market,” Hopkins explains. “We got to know their executive sales branch manager and she loved our story and community, so she vouched for us, and we are probably one of the final shops to get that kind of approval.”

## A personal touch

Mustard Seed Co. offers a range of products with prices for every budget, and the team is dedicated to never being intimidating, high-pressure or untouchable.

“We strive to offer customer service that you can’t get at big-box stores and help people fill their homes with things they love,” Hopkins says. “It just fills our cup when customers bring in a photo of a space they want to enhance, and then we can help them make their vision a reality.”

When setting up the shop, it’s not just

about putting products on shelves. The Mustard Seed Co. team works hard to create displays with themes that inspire shoppers for their own decorating. More important than making sales is making customers feel good about their visit.

“It’s our goal to treat customers like family and friends,” Hopkins explains. “I think that’s why small business is such a great thing. We get to create that connection with one another; we get to slow down and pay attention to people.”

The couple, their four children and even their pugs – fondly referred to as shop mascots – are actively involved in the business. Customers will often find the couple’s two daughters working at the shop. Their involvement is an opportunity for the next generation to understand the business and see if they want to be a part of it, Hopkins says.

## Commitment to community

Beyond Mustard Seed Co., the entrepreneurial-minded couple also operates a variety of area businesses. They own a Pizza Ranch in Ottumwa, and over the years, helped to establish, own and operate eight Pizza Ranch locations.

“Being a part of these communities is a big deal for us,” Hopkins says. “We are local, family-owned and we are proud to be a part of keeping our towns strong today and into the future.”

To learn more about Mustard Seed Co. visit [www.visitmustardseed.com](http://www.visitmustardseed.com).

# PETEY THE PEACOCK FINDS A HOME

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

A few months ago, a friend of mine on Facebook was wondering where she could find peacocks. She thought they'd be wonderful gracing her yard with their fully furled tails, strutting around.

I let her have her illusions of grandeur, but I know the truth about peacocks.

## Fowl farm guests arrive

Twenty-some years ago, three of these creatures showed up at my folks' place, about a half-mile across the pasture from where we live. They comprised a male and female pair and another male. No one was sure where they had come from, but my mom was hoping they'd move along soon.

No such luck. The trio made their nests at the farm and was determined to stay. Watching them was a reminder of the nightmare of junior high politics. The female laid eggs and hatched five of them. She led the peachicks into the cornfield and returned with only one. These three – the mother, father and chick – banded as a group and wouldn't let the lonely male anywhere near them. The old bachelor had a tough time of it, wanting to fit in. We could hear his piteous calls from our house.

The peacock population waxed and waned over the next couple of years. Eggs were hatched, and babies wandered off. Coyotes took some. That left the one bachelor peacock at my folks, a bird my grandsons have dubbed Petey.

## The truth about peacocks

Petey's idiosyncrasies are amusing and sometimes barely tolerated at my parents' house. If you've never heard the call of a peacock, it's shrill and loud and grating. Sitting on our deck in the evening, we can hear Petey, no problem. On telephone calls with my mom, he's easily identifiable in the background.

Because peacocks and peahens like to nest up high, they are constantly



flying into trees. Or the rafters of the machine shed. Or on top of your car. And because they have sharp, long talons, they scratch whatever it is they're climbing up.

Maybe you can handle the racket. Maybe you can even tolerate the scratched cars and house siding. But once ensconced in their perches, peacocks provide a constant stream of droppings, drippings, downpours and deluges. Your sidewalks will be a mess. Your movement under any tree where they are roosting had better be brisk or you risk being covered.

## Petey becomes a family friend

Since Petey is the lone male now, he doesn't unfurl his tail that often, as there's no female attention waiting to

be sought. But he's become an integral part of our family to my grandsons.

On Father's Day of this year, a tornado ripped through my parents' farm, taking down their pole barn, machine shed and several mature trees. My grandsons' first question was, "Are Grandma and Grandpa okay?" Their second question was, "Is Petey okay?"

Oh yes, Petey is a survivor. If you don't believe it, the truth is in his beady, gimlet eye, where he seems to be warning you to stay away from his tree.

*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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