

living with energy

IN IOWA

SEPTEMBER 2021



Chariton Valley
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative director election results ► See Page 5



INTRODUCING
THE 3
WINNING
VOLUNTEERS



Visit our website at www.cvrec.com

CVEC awards Operation
Round Up® funds

Learn about Iowa's Youth
Leadership Academy

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Living with Energy in Iowa magazine (ISSN: 1935-7176) is published monthly by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, a not-for-profit organization representing Iowa's member-owned local electric cooperatives. Association address: 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. The phrase *Living with Energy in Iowa* is a mark registered within the state of Iowa to the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. The magazine does not accept advertising.

Editorial Office: 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. Telephone: 515-276-5350. E-mail address: editor@livingwithenergyiowa.com. *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine does not assume responsibility for unsolicited items.

Website: www.livingwithenergyiowa.com

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine, 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. Periodicals Postage Paid at Des Moines, Iowa, and at additional mailing offices.

Change of Address: Every local electric cooperative maintains an independent mailing list of its members, so please send your change of address directly to your local electric cooperative's office. *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine cannot make an address change for you.

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living with energy IN IOWA

Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives of Iowa
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On Pages 10, 11 and 14 of this issue, meet the three individuals featured on this month's cover. Each is a shining light in their communities. ⚡

What's in a name?

BY ANN THELEN



Styles come and go, trends evolve and change, but one thing that never goes out of style is what it means to be part of an electric cooperative. Since

locally owned electric cooperatives first brought power to rural Iowans in the 1930s, the momentum fueled by the cooperative spirit has only strengthened.

A business model that has endured the test of time sets electric cooperatives apart from other utilities. Your electric cooperative adheres to seven guiding principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good of the community. Owned by the member-consumers we serve, Iowa's community-focused electric cooperatives power the lives of 650,000 Iowans throughout all 99 counties and are committed to delivering safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible power.

Sharing what it means to be an electric cooperative member

Each month, through the pages of this magazine, we share what it means to be an electric cooperative member. We embrace with pride the opportunity to tell the stories of community volunteers, such as our Shine the Light winners in this issue; to highlight economic development success stories helping communities prosper; and encourage youth to become engaged in the future success of the electric cooperative industry.

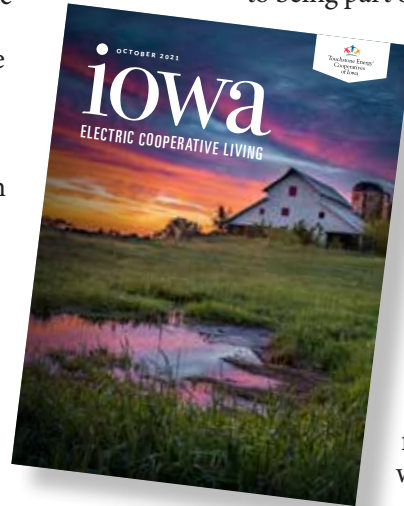
Since this publication began in 1948, it has undergone six name changes while keeping to the central mission of keeping co-op member-consumers informed. From starting as a newsletter to becoming a magazine 61 years ago, each change was meant to further illustrate what it means to be an electric cooperative member.

Magazine name change coming in October

With the October issue of this publication, we're excited to unveil a name change that we believe even more clearly describes the magazine. Your statewide publication will now be called *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living*. On behalf of the team, I'm excited for the magazine's name to fully reflect who we serve – you the members – and who we are – Iowa's electric cooperatives.

This magazine's name should identify us, be unique to us and tell readers what to expect inside. We are confident that *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* will do all these things and more.

Based on our 2020 readership survey and years of research by the



National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, we know that member-consumers have a strong affinity to being part of a cooperative. It

makes sense to have “cooperative” as part of the magazine's name.

To the left, we're giving you a sneak peek at what the cover of the October issue will look like so that you know what to expect when you open your mailbox. Inside, you'll find fresh designs paired with familiar favorites – energy efficiency tips, information

on technology and innovation, economic development features, and of course, recipes!

Once the October issue comes out, we'll be anxious for your feedback! ⚡

Ann Thelen is the editor of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a Keurig K-Classic Coffee Maker!

Wake up to amazing coffee with this Keurig single-serve coffee brewer. Select from 6, 8 or 10 ounces for each brew. A 48-ounce water reservoir allows users to brew 6+ cups before having to refill, saving you time and simplifying your morning routine. An auto-off feature is easily programmed to turn off the coffee maker after it has been idle for 2 hours, helping to save energy. ⚡



Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com no later than Sept. 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 \$100 home improvement gift card from our July issue was John Evans from North West REC.

We want your feedback!

BY LEILANI TODD



Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) wants to know what our members think, feel, believe, want and already know. As CVEC plans

for the future, it is important we hear from our members on what you want from your local electric cooperative and what plans you are making for your homes and businesses.

During the next few months, CVEC will be sponsoring a membership satisfaction survey. This is conducted every three years to measure the quality of service provided to you, our members. Research efforts will identify key drivers of satisfaction and loyalty, allowing management and board members to target areas to improve. This survey will give us a better understanding of the current feelings of our members, a critique of our performance as an electric service provider, an evaluation of member communications channels

and a demographic overview of our diverse membership.

The member surveys will begin in September with a mixture of online and telephone interviews. You may be sent an email OR you may be sent a postcard in the mail inviting you to participate.

Members may also be randomly selected to complete a telephone interview. It should take approximately 12 minutes to answer all questions on the phone. The call center conducting the survey will identify themselves as calling on behalf of the cooperative. They will be calling Monday through Friday from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be no calls on Sundays or holidays.

I encourage you to take

time to complete the survey you receive as it helps CVEC become more reliable in serving your needs and innovative as we plan for the future. Please take the time to answer truthfully and honestly, as this will help us grow as a cooperative. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 641-932-7126. ⚡

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

Your feedback is valuable!



Please share
it with us.



Office

2090 Highway 5 South
P.O. Box 486
Albia, IA 52531-0486

Office Hours

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Closed Saturdays, Sundays and holidays

Telephone Numbers

Days, nights or holidays:
641-932-7126 (local)
or 800-475-1702

Website

www.cvrec.com

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COOPERATIVE NEWS

CVEC participates in Albia's Restoration Days Parade

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative enjoyed the 36th annual Albia Restoration Days Parade last month. Many employees and their families volunteered to participate in the Hollywood-themed parade and toss candy to kids along the route. ⚡



The 2021 director election results are in!

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is pleased to announce the results of the 2021 director elections.

CVEC is a democratically controlled, not-for-profit electric cooperative governed by nine directors elected by and from the members to serve a three-year term in office. There are five districts, and each district is allotted a proportionate number of directors. One seat was up for election in each of the following districts: 1, 3 and 5.

Being on the board takes a great deal of personal time and commitment, but the benefits are meaningful. Board members gain a better understanding of the issues at hand and have a great deal of personal satisfaction from serving their friends, business associates and other members.

This year, voting took place by mail-in ballot only. Voting concluded on Aug. 2, 2021, with a total of 674 members placing their votes.

The three directors elected to serve three-year terms each are:



John Houser



Wes Green



Norm Major

■ **District 1** – John Houser of Moravia was newly elected, receiving 575 votes.

■ **District 3** – Wesley Green of Promise City ran unopposed and was re-elected, receiving 577 votes.

■ **District 5** – Norm Major of Albia ran unopposed and was re-elected, receiving 625 votes.

“Thank you to these director candidates for their interest in serving the cooperative by pursuing a seat on the board of directors,” says Leilani Todd, CEO/general manager of CVEC. “I would also like to thank the members who took the time to vote and participate in this democratic process. This is what sets us apart from other organizations; we are owned by the members who have a voice.”

As a member, it is important to review the annual reports, stay abreast

of cooperative happenings and exercise your right as a member by voting during director elections! Your involvement is vital and, most importantly – wanted! ⚡



Annual meeting prize winners

Prize Winners List

Grand Prize #1

\$1,500 Energy Credit:
Trent Sheffield

Grand Prize #2

\$500 Energy Credit:
Ratricia Robertson

Grand Prize #3

\$250 Energy Credit:
Jenna & Kagan Post

\$25 Energy Credit:

Craig & Connie Foster
Lakeshore Heights
Property Owners
Irene Lathen

Donald & Jean Marlin
Gene & Lois Behrens
Barbara Smith

David & Shari Lepley
Johnson Insurance

James & Becky Belzer
Jerry & Sheila Best

Gary & Jill Konfrst
Deanna & Dan Blackford

Frank Masick
Dylan Miller

Larry & Joann Ewing
Vickie Wilkinson

James & Judith Wright
Jennifer Hess

Sam & Deanna Beaird
Ray Mosbarger

Thomas & Mary Sue Zaputil
Ronald & Mary Lou Sales

Robert & Lona Aldrich
Loren or Sue Corcoran

Rodney Perry

**Luck of the Draw \$500
Scholarship Winner**

Rachel Showers



IOWA YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

We're looking for high school students who are interested in public service and leadership

Students who attend our Zoom sessions in October will have a chance to win AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship!



For decades, Iowa has been sending deserving high school students to our nation's capital as part of the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the trip was canceled in 2020 and 2021, but is scheduled to return in 2022.

To bridge the gap in not having a Youth Tour for the past two summers, Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to offer a new opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities and the cooperative business model. The **Iowa Youth Leadership Academy** will be held as a three-part webinar series in October and is open to any high school student in the state. Students can register at www.IowaYouthTour.com.

Who should attend?

This new program is geared for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, leadership or government. The goal of the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is to raise students' awareness of the role electric cooperatives have in their local communities. In addition, participants will learn about electric cooperative careers.

Zoom sessions in October

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their own computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic.

Zoom Sessions

- **Tuesday, Oct. 5, 7 p.m.**
Cooperative Business Model
- **Thursday, Oct. 14, 7 p.m.**
Rural Iowa Advocacy
- **Tuesday, Oct. 26, 7 p.m.**
Civic Involvement & Leadership

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our speakers and presenters while learning about advocacy and leadership. Attendees will also hear from former Iowa Youth Tour students who pursued their passion for government service and leadership after attending the weeklong trip to Washington, D.C. 🌩️

Featured speakers



Haley Moon
Advocacy and Political
Action Manager
Iowa Association of
Electric Cooperatives



Adam Schwartz
Founder & Principal
The Cooperative Way



Kathleen Riessen
Leadership Expert
Kathleen Riessen &
Company

Details released for Iowa Home Energy Assistance Program



Opportunities to win

At the end of each live session, one lucky attendee will be selected at random to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random drawing for a \$1,000 college scholarship.

Save the date

The 2022 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is slated for June 18-24.

“Students really need to take advantage of all the opportunities that the Iowa Youth Tour provides – not only what participants see and do while in D.C., but also for the lifelong opportunities. The activities are great networking events with electric cooperatives and peers from around the state. I’m constantly running into people I met. Even today, through my job, I interact with people that went on the Iowa Youth Tour.”

Jacob Holck
(2016 Iowa Youth Tour participant)
Communications Specialist
Office of Iowa Secretary of State

Learn more at
www.iowaYouthTour.com or
contact your local co-op for
more information.

The 2021-2022 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel and type of housing.

Besides meeting the income guidelines, you must furnish the Social Security numbers of all household members and a copy of recent heating and electric bills. You also must show proof of income for all household members age 19 and older. If you receive alimony or child support, it will need to be verified too.

If you’re a wage earner, you should bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period before the date of application or a copy of your federal income tax return. If you’re self-employed or a farmer, provide a copy of your most recent federal income tax return. And if you’re on a fixed income – Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program (FIP), Veteran’s Assistance, Unemployment Insurance and pensions – take copies of check stubs from the last 30 days. For FIP recipients, bring your current DHS Notice of Decision or contact your local office for acceptable

document information.

In Iowa, applications for the program will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis from Nov. 1, 2021, through April 30, 2022. The start date is Oct. 1, 2021, for elderly (60 and over) and/or disabled applicants. If you’re not sure where to apply, visit humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply to contact your local community action agency, call 2-1-1 or write: LIHEAP, Iowa Department of Human Rights, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, IA 50319. ⚡

Income Maximums

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$25,760
2	\$34,840
3	\$43,920
4	\$53,000
5	\$62,080
6	\$71,160
7	\$80,240
8	\$89,320

Note: For households with more than eight members, add \$9,080 for each additional member.

Chicken

RECIPES



Bruschetta Chicken Bake

- 1 pound chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 6 ripe Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- fresh basil
- noodles or rice, optional

Place oil in a skillet on medium-high heat. Add chicken and season with salt and pepper. Cook until golden on both sides and almost cooked through. Place chicken in a sprayed 8x8-inch dish then add tomatoes, oregano and garlic (optional, replace fresh tomatoes with 15 ounces canned diced tomatoes). Drizzle with balsamic vinegar and sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Bake uncovered at 375 degrees F for 18-20 minutes or until the cheese is melted. Remove and let sit for 5 minutes, top with fresh basil. Can be served on your choice of noodle or rice.

Arie Schiller • Donnellson
Access Energy Cooperative

Chicken Casserole

- 1 pouch dry onion soup
- 8 ounces pineapple and apricot preserves
- 8 ounces Thousand Island salad dressing
- 6 whole chicken breasts, skinned and boned
- rice

Mix dry onion soup, preserves and dressing together. Put a small amount of sauce in a 9x13-inch pan. Split chicken breasts in half and place on sauce in pan. Spoon remaining sauce on top of chicken. Bake at 325-350 degrees F for 30-40 minutes. Baste a couple of times while baking. Serve with rice. *Serves 6-8*

Darla German • Rhodes • Consumers Energy

Crispy Chicken

- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- ½ teaspoon basil
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- ⅛ cup Parmesan cheese, shredded
- ⅛ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon milk
- ½ pound boneless chicken breast

Combine breadcrumbs, basil, oregano and cheese in a shallow bowl. Mix mayonnaise and milk in a separate shallow bowl. Dip chicken into mayonnaise mixture and then into breadcrumbs. Place on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake at 400 degrees F for 25 minutes or until chicken reaches 165 degrees F. *Serves 2*

Donna Stoll • Hoppers
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

Chicken Pasta Salad

- 1 cup mini bow tie pasta
- 1 cup mayonnaise (don't substitute)
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 cups chicken breast, cooked and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 cup celery, thinly cut
- 1 cup red grapes, washed, drained and cut in half
- ¼ cup whole cashews

Cook pasta until just tender then drain, rinse and cool. Mix mayonnaise and sugar, set aside. Combine cooled pasta, chicken, celery and grapes. Stir in mayonnaise and sugar mixture, then refrigerate. Add cashews just before serving. *Serves 6-8*

Jennifer Judson-Harms • New Hampton
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

Chicken Facts
Source: U.S.
Department of
Agriculture, National
Chicken Council

LEAN PROTEIN

Chicken breast is a great source of lean protein. A 3-ounce, boneless, skinless breast offers 26 grams of protein in just 128 calories.

BBQ Chicken Quesadillas

- 6-8 flour tortillas
- 2 cups cheddar or Mexican blend cheese, shredded
- 1 cup cooked chicken, shredded
- ½ cup barbecue sauce

Divide cheese between tortillas, spreading cheese evenly over half of each tortilla. Top each with chicken and barbeque sauce. Fold each tortilla in half and place on lightly greased large baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F for 5-6 minutes until cheese is melted, tortillas are lightly browned. Cut tortillas in half and serve. *Serves 6-8*

Nichole Blankespoor • Rock Valley
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

Barbecue Bacon Chicken

- 12-15 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 12-15 slices bacon
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 16 ounces ketchup
- ⅓ cup vinegar
- ½ cup butter
- ¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- colby jack cheese, shredded

Grill chicken about 5 minutes per side, doesn't need to be fully cooked. Cook bacon until mostly done but still limp. Wrap one bacon strip around each chicken breast. Place on a large baking pan, bacon-seam side down. Heat brown sugar, ketchup, vinegar, butter and Worcestershire sauce on stovetop until butter melts. Pour over chicken. Bake covered at 350 degrees F for 1-1.5 hours, until chicken is completely cooked through. Top with shredded cheese. *Serves 12-15*

Laura DeSmet • Larchwood
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative



Search our online recipe archive for thousands of recipes from Iowa's rural kitchens.

www.livingwithenergyiowa.com/recipes

Baked Chicken Fajitas

- 1 pound chicken breast, cut into strips
- 1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes with green chilis
- 1 large bell pepper, sliced
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 3 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 12 tortillas
- avocados, optional

Mix chicken, diced tomatoes with green chilis, bell pepper and onion in a greased 9x13-inch pan. Mix oil and seasonings in a small bowl (optional, replace seasonings with one fajita seasoning packet). Drizzle over the chicken mixture, toss to coat. Cover and bake at 400 degrees F for 25 minutes or until chicken is cooked and veggies are tender. Serve on warmed tortillas. Top with sliced avocados if desired. *Serves 4-6*

Marcy Gherian • Alvord
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

Wanted: Slow Cooker Recipes The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

You can't beat the convenience and versatility of a slow cooker! From dips and casseroles to stir fries and soups, we want your favorite recipes prepared using a slow cooker. If we run your recipe in the magazine, we'll send a \$25 credit for your electric co-op to apply to your power bill. Recipes submitted also may be archived on our website at www.livingwithenergyiowa.com.

The deadline is Sept. 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@livingwithenergyiowa.com
(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

MAIL:
Recipes
Living with Energy in Iowa magazine
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48
Urbandale, Iowa 50322

HORMONE-FREE

No hormones are ever used in U.S. chicken production.

CHICKEN FACTS

COOK IT SAFELY

Chicken should be cooked to a safe internal temperature of 165 degrees F as measured with a food thermometer.

CHICKEN FACTS

WINGS BY THE BILLION

Americans ate a record 1.42 billion wings during Super Bowl LV in 2021.

CHICKEN FACTS

PACKED WITH NUTRIENTS

Beyond protein, chicken contains under-consumed nutrients such as magnesium, potassium, choline, vitamin B12 and iron.

CHICKEN FACTS

NO. 1 PROTEIN

The average American consumes more than 98 pounds of chicken in a year. It is the No. 1 protein consumed in the U.S.

CHICKEN FACTS

Announcing the inaugural Shine the Light award winners

The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa are driven by a commitment to community. To celebrate local volunteers, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives launched the first-ever Shine the Light contest earlier this summer. Employees and member-consumers of Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives were invited to nominate someone who makes a positive difference in their community.



The judging committee had the difficult task of narrowing down from 39 outstanding nominees to select three contest winners.

Congratulations to **Suzanne Askelsen** who is recognized for her enthusiastic support of the Ballard Education Foundation; **Marlene Walthart** who is recognized for her dedication to the Emmet County Animal Shelter; and **Dr. George North** who is recognized for his vision in establishing Wilder Park. These three winners have been awarded a \$1,500 donation to their charity or community organization of choice.

The following pages showcase and honor each of the Shine the Light contest winners' commitment to humbly serving their communities. Learn more at www.IowaShineTheLight.com.



Bridget Itzen, CEO/general manager of Consumers Energy (second from right), presents a check to Shine the Light winner Suzanne Askelsen (third from left).



Suzanne Askelsen (far right) presents a check on behalf of the Ballard Education Foundation to teacher JoEllen Wesseleemann, (second from right).



Suzanne Askelsen (center) with Ballard Education Foundation Board Members Sara Hillbrand and John Hilleman.

BALLARD EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Suzanne Askelsen enthusiastically supports teachers and students

Ask anyone who knows Suzanne Askelsen to describe her, and you'll hear things like, "She has a big heart!" and "She's an inspiration!" delivered with a big smile.

Askelsen lives by the motto, "We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give." She embodied this belief when launching an education foundation that helps students and teachers in the Ballard Community School District.

"My parents taught me to always lend a helping hand," she says. "To me, life is about making a better place for everyone around you."

Askelsen is the recipient of one of three Shine the Light awards sponsored by the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa. The contest awards \$1,500 to a non-profit organization of the recipient's choice and Askelsen chose the Ballard Education Foundation.

Midland Power Cooperative member Carol Gilbert nominated Askelsen, who is a member of Consumers Energy. As Askelsen's

mother, Gilbert showed her daughter how giving time to her community can be a fulfilling and rewarding journey.

"I nominated Suzanne for this contest as a thank you to the person she is and how she lives her life," Gilbert says. "It's been wonderful to watch her grow into the young woman she is today. By her shining example, Suzanne lives out her personal belief daily in 'doing what you can, with all you have, wherever you are.'"

In 2013, Ballard Superintendent Ottie Maxey first approached Askelsen about starting an education foundation. The foundation would supplement the school district's budget for teacher resources. Askelsen agreed and her enthusiasm attracted other community members to get the foundation off the ground.

"Suzanne shows up and get things done," Superintendent Maxey shares. "She was absolutely one of the key reasons why this foundation started."

Officially established in February 2015, the Ballard Education



Winner: Suzanne Asklens (left)



Winner: Marlene Walthart (right)



Winner: George North (left)

Foundation partners with the school district, alumni, businesses and individuals to identify and meet the needs of Ballard students. Askelsen served as the organization's first president from 2015-2019.

"She led us through those initial grassroots efforts," says Sara Wilson, current president of the Ballard Education Foundation. "When I think about her leadership, I think about mobilizing community action and volunteers. She can connect the dots."

As a Shine the Light contest winner,

Askelsen has directed the money to fulfill grant requests from teachers for resources to enhance the curriculum. Bridget Itzen, CEO/general manager of Consumers Energy, presented the check to Askelsen and the foundation on Aug. 2.

"Consumers Energy is excited to recognize Suzanne's volunteerism in the community," Itzen says. "She has the values I think we all wish we had. Everyone needs a Suzanne in their life."

For those wishing to get involved in their community but don't have time to

volunteer, Askelsen suggests monetary donations to a favorite charity or group can go a long way.

"I believe if you have time in your life to be part of something bigger than you, you will walk away with a full, warm heart and a smile on your face," she says.

To learn more about the Ballard Education Foundation, visit ballardedfoundation.org. ⚡

Article contributed by Sarah Heggen, Central Iowa Power Cooperative.

EMMET COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

Marlene Walthart shares her time and lifelong love of animals

If you ask Dawn Eveleth, there's one person you go to in a pinch when you need a volunteer: her cousin Marlene Walthart.

"I've known her forever," Eveleth says. "For as long as I can remember she's been a volunteer. From the time she was a little kid, up until now, it's kind of been her life. You can ask her anything and if she's available to do it, she's always willing for anyone or any animal."

While Marlene is known to volunteer elsewhere in her Estherville community, she has been selected as a winner in the inaugural Shine the Light awards sponsored by the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa for her work at the Emmet County Animal Shelter.

Kristy Henning founded the shelter in 2010. Right away, Marlene saw the shelter as just another way to help her community.

"I wanted to do something with my Girl Scouts to win the silver award badge," Marlene says. "I got in touch with Kristy and started doing things around the shelter. It just went from there."

Henning says she can't count how many times she relied on Marlene and her husband Larry in those early days.

"I don't even know where to start," she says. "They are just invaluable to the shelter. Marlene and Larry were integral.

They spent numerous hours here, I don't even know how we would do that today."

What motivates Marlene?

It's her lifelong love for animals.

"My husband and I believe I am part cat," she says. "All my life I have wanted cats. My dad wanted dogs. I would bring a cat home, and they would say no. I would take it back and cry."

Today, the shelter has grown from a predominately cat rescue to also include a dog section.

"We have the opportunity to save a lot of animals' lives," Marlene says. "We usually have around 100 cats. When I first got in touch with Kristy, she told me about some instances of animal cruelty that I was unaware of."

For the Waltharts, volunteering goes far beyond just loving on animals. The duo set up a non-profit can redemption center adjacent to the shelter. The can redemption center serves as a funding vehicle for the shelter. Marlene takes care of office and bookwork, while Larry can be relied upon for handyman tasks.

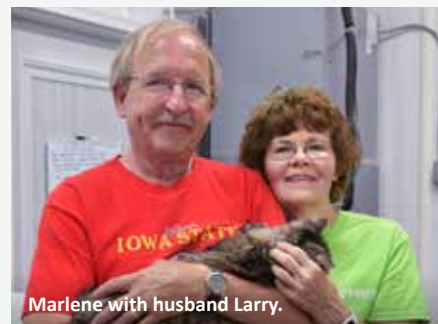
As for how the shelter will use its \$1,500 Shine the Light grant, Henning says expansion is always needed with the mission to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome the unwanted, unloved and the abandoned.

"The need for puppy rescue is overwhelming right now," she says.

"We're going to put an outside run on the intake kennel. If we can run two groups of puppies at the same time, we can rescue more puppies."

To learn more about the Emmet County Animal Shelter or to inquire about adopting a pet, visit emmetcountyanimalshelter.org. ⚡

Article contributed by Ryan Cornelius, Corn Belt Power Cooperative.



Marlene with husband Larry.



Marlene with Kristi Henning, shelter director.

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CVEC awards 2021 Q2 Operation Round Up® funds



The Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) Operation Round Up® Foundation Board is proud to announce two local organizations have been selected as the recipients of the 2021 second quarter funds.

Operation Round Up is a program that rounds up participating members' electric bills to the nearest whole dollar. For the nearly 80% of CVEC members that participate in the program, each bill is increased anywhere between \$0.01 and \$0.99. The money collected is then pooled together and administered in a series of grants to non-profit organizations by the CVEC Operation Round Up Foundation Board.

In July, the Operation Round Up Foundation Board reviewed the submitted grant applications and awarded funds to two applicants, totaling \$8,000.

The Appanoose County Historical Society was awarded \$5,000 to aid in the restoration of the Bland Log House and Old Sherriff's Residence. These funds will help preserve



segments of history in Appanoose County that will be shared with residents and tourists.

The Moravia Shooting Sports Program was awarded \$3,000 to purchase Garmin Xero Trapshooter Trainers. It is often difficult to near impossible for the athletes to see where their shot ends up, but with these trainers, the team will be able to visualize where the shot was in relation to the target, while also keeping track of scores and response times.

CVEC is grateful our members continue to donate their small change each month. It truly is impacting lives. We hope our membership continues to see the value and benefit this program brings to the communities we serve.

If you would like your organization to be considered for a grant, please visit our website at www.cvec.com to complete the application documents by Sept. 30, 2021. ⚡

Are you ready to round up your electric bill and help make a difference in our communities?

If you said **YES** and wish to participate in CVEC's Operation Round Up® program, simply complete the form and send it directly to CVEC or include it with your next payment!

Printed Member Name: _____

CVEC Account #: _____

Member Signature: _____

Date: _____

By signing and returning this form, you authorize CVEC to round your electric bill to the nearest dollar each month.

Snack supplier tastes continued success in Albia

Snacks add a little extra flavor to everyday moments. A beef stick makes a car ride feel like a grand road trip, a spicy salsa makes a tailgate feel like a gameday win and a big bag of delicious beef jerky is a comfort food like no other.

Spicy, salty, sweet and savory moments are made possible by Preferred Wholesale, Inc. (PWI), a snack food supplier located in Albia. It is owned and operated by Lee Holsman, his wife Gayle, son Aaron and daughter-in-law Laura.

PWI serves customers in many farm, ranch, home improvement, grocery and convenience stores and ships products to major distribution centers across the U.S. The family-operated business prides itself on personal, progressive, reliable products and service.

“The snack food industry is always changing,” Lee says. “We work hard to be responsive to our customers and always insist on quality.”

PWI was selected as one of the Iowa Area Development Group’s (IADG) Iowa Venture Award recipients in 2019. This award recognizes businesses that are quietly making big impacts through entrepreneurial leadership, investment and job creation. PWI was nominated by Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC), which has long served the business’ electrical needs.

Road to snack supplying success

In 1984, Lee decided to start a snack food distribution business, so he went to the bank and borrowed \$5,000. Because he was new to Albia, his sister co-signed the loan. With the money, he purchased a Volkswagen Rabbit – his first delivery vehicle – and \$3,000 worth of beef jerky and other snacks.

Lee began calling on taverns, convenience stores, truck stops along Interstate 80, then chains of convenience stores and finally



grocery stores. He built a direct-store-delivery business model that was made possible by hard work, persistence and creative thinking.

“We came up with the idea to build custom displays because it’s very hard to get shelf space,” he shares. “We would find dead spaces in the stores, build a display and the retailer would make a good profit off the once unused space.”

After many years of distributing other companies’ meat snack products, Lee and Aaron decided to create their own brands and shift their business model to working with distribution centers across the U.S.

First was Laura Beth’s all-natural jams, salsas and pickled jar goods. These products invoke a nostalgic feeling with the appeal of home-cooked goodness. Then Iowa Smokehouse jerky and meat snacks, which have built a reputation for their quality, affordability and generous portions.

“We use a simple black and white label for our jerky and meat snacks and put a lot of product in a little bag,” Lee says of the Iowa Smokehouse brand. “It’s the exact opposite of what our jerky competitors are doing, but it is a refreshing change for retailers



and customers. It looks and tastes authentic, just like what you would find from a meat counter.”

Growing footprint in Albia

Over the years, PWI has rooted its business in Albia. The community’s rural values and supportive neighbors are important to the Holsman family.

In 2000, PWI opened an office and warehouse space near the Albia town square. Then in 2017, they moved to a larger office and warehouse space near Highway 34, adding 10,000 square feet of warehouse space in 2018.

PWI broke ground on a new office and warehouse space in the South Albia Industrial Park in 2020. They were awarded a \$1 million USDA Rural Economic Development Loan with the support of IADG and CVEC. The new building includes 42,500 square feet of capacity. As part of the expansion, the company is expected to add 15 new positions over the next two years.

“We’re very thankful for all CVEC has done for us in securing this interest-free loan,” Lee says. “They have been nothing but helpful and have made our growth and progress much easier.”

Learn more about PWI products at preferredwholesaleinc.com. 🌱

Announcing the inaugural Shine the Light award winners



Dr. George North stands with friend Deb McWhirter, who nominated him for the 2021 Shine the Light contest.



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WILDER PARK

Dr. George North establishes a recreational destination for the community

If you drive east of Allison on Highway 3 and look north, you'll find Wilder Park. Those who take the time to stop and drive through don't soon forget it; at least that's what Dr. George North hopes.

Selected as a winner of the Shine the Light awards sponsored by the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa, North had a vision for the park in the early 1990s. Today, that vision has become a reality. His idea began when the land the park now sits on was gifted from the original property owner.

"My early involvement was with the Boy Scouts, planting trees," says North, who is a retired dentist. "We planted 250 to 300 trees."

Today, the park is full of large, mature trees. It has turned into a recreational destination for people across Iowa, full of activities ranging from camping to fishing to frisbee golf.

Deb McWhirter nominated North for the Shine the Light contest. She says the growth of the park is due in large part to his commitment.

"It was a farm field. They have

turned this into a destination for a lot of campers and people. It has developed over the years," she says. "Dr. North has been the mastermind of the whole project. It takes a lot of volunteers and a person with a vision about what you want to have happen to the future of this park. He's been instrumental in making a plan and following through, making sure things happen."

It all started with getting his Boy Scouts involved with the environment by planting trees. According to North, who turns 92 this year, trees have been a metaphor for what having a vision means.

"Rarely when you plant trees do you get to see the result of that activity," he says. "Trees don't grow that fast. Fortunately, I've lived long enough to see the fruition of the vision. A lot of people have a very difficult time seeing down the road. Seeing what the possibilities are. Seeing what the positives are of having this type of facility."

North knew he wanted more for the park and the area than just having trees.

"Our mission is to create an affordable recreational activity facility," he says. "Except for renting an RV space, all our amenities are free. Everything is based on our mission – affordability. That's caused our level of usage to go way up."

Wilder Park also serves as one of the major outdoor classrooms in the state of Iowa. The park features more than 100 different tree species and is home to an uncommon species arboretum.

North says it's all about giving back to the community. Something he has lived by in all his years.

"I think you're obligated to give back," he says. "Part of life's responsibility is to pay it forward, give back to your community, do what you can to facilitate the growth and ambiance. To me, that's just part of living."

To learn more about the park, visit www.visitwilderpark.com. To reserve a camping spot or cabin, contact the Allison City Hall. ⚡

Article contributed by Ryan Cornelius, Corn Belt Power Cooperative.

Dreaming in color

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

I admit to being a “color person.” I like seeing the differences between taupe and ecru, the subtle variances among celery and sage and seafoam. I was a frustrated grade-schooler, being limited by 24 crayons in the box since my mom wouldn’t spring for the larger 64-color supply. And the larger box had its own crayon sharpener! How could she have missed the importance of that?!

Even with 64 choices, I’m not sure it would have been enough for my hue-hungry first-grade self. My mother says that even as a toddler, I was perplexed by the color turquoise. It wasn’t green, it wasn’t blue ... wow.

“Bluetiful” discoveries

That’s why I read with wonder the discovery of a new color. A team of chemists at Oregon State University inadvertently came up with a new shade of blue, which they dubbed YInMn Blue (pronounced YIN-min Blue) after the elements used to create it. Evidently, this is the first new blue discovery since cobalt entered the world in 1802.

When I heard the news, I immediately had questions. How exactly do you know you’ve discovered a new color? I’ve looked at pictures of this shade, and it looks a lot like wood violet to me, or maybe amethyst. Heck, I had bridesmaids’ dresses of this shade. What makes this discovery a bona fide discovery?

But it must be. This new tint, even with its unglamorous name, has become sensationalized in scientific journals. Harvard Art Museums has added the shade to its Forbes Pigment Collection, a digital resource on the history of color. Even Crayola has annexed this hue of hyacinth to its product, with a



striking crayon called “Bluetiful.” It must be a real thing.

Expanding palettes

All of this has gone over the head of people like my husband, for whom the basic eight crayons are enough. We’ve been married more than 35 years, and he just added “mauve” to his color lexicon. It drives him crazy when I talk in terms of “eggshell” and “snowfall” when describing white paints. He rolls his eyes when I tell him I’m looking for a couch that’s emerald.

“You mean green?” he says with a here-we-go-again voice.

“Well, yes ...” I hesitate. “But there are so many greens. I don’t want avocado or hunter. I’m looking for a strong, clear emerald green.”

“So, you’re looking for green,” he says again.

“Uh, yeah, whatever.” I give up. The complexities of finding the right shade of emerald are lost on him. My quest continues alone.

Will another color be discovered? Will our mnemonics like “Roy G. Biv” for memorizing the colors of the rainbow change? Will crayon manufacturers be forced to add another layer of pigmentation to their products?

I don’t know. But I do know that no one had better mess with emerald. ⚡

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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