

● SEPTEMBER 2023

iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

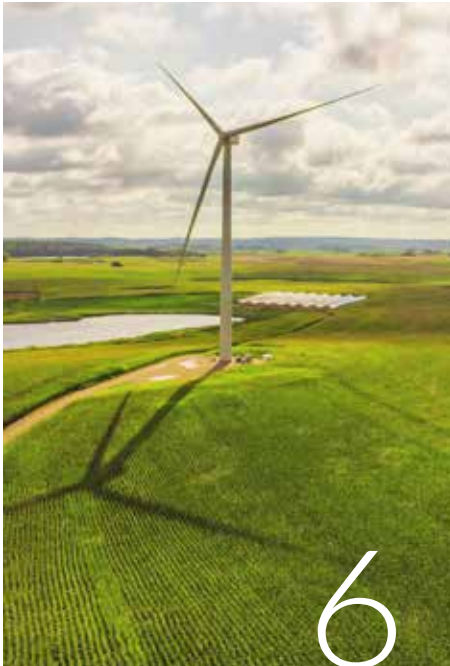
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annual meeting**

**Meet the 2023
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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Gratia Masters, a North West REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

EMERGENCY PREPARATION BEGINS WITH PERSONAL PLANNING

BY SCOTT MEINEKE



There's a common saying in disaster planning, *"It's not a matter of if a disaster will take place; it's a matter of when it will happen."*

Since 2004, National Preparedness Month has been observed each September in the U.S. to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to all types of emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks.

This year's preparedness campaign focuses on preparing older adults for disaster. Older adults can face greater risks in extreme weather events and emergencies, especially when living alone, are low-income, have a disability or live in rural areas.

One of the most important steps in preparation is to have emergency supplies on hand. The following are tips to help you or loved ones create an emergency kit.

Step 1: Consider how an emergency might affect your needs and plan accordingly. It is crucial to consider what kinds of resources you use daily and what you might do if those resources are limited or unavailable.

Consider creating two kits. In one kit, put everything you need to stay where you are and make it on your own for several days. The other kit should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you need to leave your home.

Basic emergency supplies include water, food, pet food, a flashlight, a radio, batteries, a first aid kit and personal sanitation items (moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties).

Step 2: Have medications and medical supplies readily available. If you take medicine, have what you

need to make it on your own for at least a week. You might not have access to a medical facility or drugstore during an emergency. Keep a copy of your prescriptions as well as dosage or treatment information.

If you undergo routine treatments administered by a clinic or hospital or if you receive regular services, such as home health care, treatment or transportation, talk to your service provider about their emergency plans.

Step 3: Keep extra essentials in your home. If you use eyeglasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries and oxygen, always have extras in your home. Also have copies of your medical insurance, Medicare or Medicaid cards readily available.

Step 4: Include copies of essential documents in your emergency supply kits. Include family records (and contact information), wills, power of attorney documents, deeds, social security numbers, credit card and

bank information, insurance cards and tax records. It is best to keep these documents in a waterproof container.

Emergencies, especially natural disasters, can often impact electricity services. Keep your local electric cooperative's phone number handy and always avoid downed power lines. If you plan to operate a generator during a lengthy power outage, take steps now to ensure you follow all necessary precautions to use it safely. Your local electric co-op is an excellent resource for safety information.

Be prepared to adapt this information to your circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions from authorities on the scene. Above all, stay calm, be patient, and think before you act. With these simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected.

For more information, visit www.ready.gov.

Scott Meineke is the director of safety and loss control for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a WiFi Smart Weather Station!

Ambient Weather's personal weather station allows monitoring of your home and backyard weather conditions with the brilliant, easy-to-read LCD color display. Monitor indoor and outdoor conditions, including wind speed, wind direction, rainfall, UV, barometric pressure, indoor/outdoor temperature, indoor/outdoor humidity and more. The weather station also calculates dew point, wind chill and heat index.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than Sept. 30. 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 beef bundle from the July issue was Gerald Kinney, Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative.



ENTER ONLINE BY SEPT. 30

"BLINKS" SIGNAL A PROPERLY WORKING SYSTEM

BY TROY AMOSS



We often hear the question from members, "What causes my lights to blink?" A "blink" is when the power grid is subject to a momentary loss of power. Lights may turn off and

then right back on, like when you blink your eyes. Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) takes all possible measures to prevent these occurrences and minimize their impact on our members, but the smart power grid may have just blinked to save you from sitting in the dark through a full-blown outage.

Why do blinks occur?

When an interruption of power or short circuit occurs on the line from a lightning strike, an automobile or farm equipment striking a pole or equipment, or a critter or tree branch coming into contact with an energized power line, a device called an oil circuit recloser (OCR) opens to stop it, then quickly closes back. An OCR is essentially a breaker, functioning much like a breaker in the electrical panel in

your home, except it can reset itself automatically. These momentary power interruptions can occur anywhere along a power system – from the time electrons are generated at a power plant to being shipped across transmission lines to substations, or during distribution from a substation to your home.

Have you ever noticed that blinks often come in sets of three before an outage? If the disruption continues, the OCR will operate or "trip" two more times giving the fault a chance to clear itself. If it does, it saves the cooperative from taking an outage and having to roll a truck. If it does not, the OCR stays open and stops the flow of electricity, protecting the lines from damage until the problem can be fixed.

Although the process is quick, blinks may cause circuitry in small appliances to lose their electronic memory, making it necessary to reset digital clocks and appliances with digital displays. Cooperative members can lessen the effect and inconvenience of blinks when they occur.

Reducing the blinks' effects

When purchasing small appliances and

digital clocks, consider models with battery backup or smart devices that can reset themselves.

Lease a meter-base surge protector from CVEC to help protect major appliances in your home.

Invest in surge-protector power strips with built-in uninterruptable power supply (UPS) for your computer or other electronic devices whose memory could be lost with a power interruption.

The future of blinks

CVEC operates an active system maintenance program and works hard to identify and fix sources of service interruptions. Even though blinks will never disappear from our electrical delivery system, by working together, we can minimize the effects of the interruptions and the frequency in which they occur.

Remember that when lights blink, it is an indication that the cooperative's equipment is operating properly. While we strive to avoid any interruption, occasional blinks are much more preferable to a sustained outage.

Troy Amoss is the CEO/general manager of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative.



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PROMOTION ANNOUNCEMENT

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is pleased to announce the promotion of two cooperative employees.



Jared Shaw has been promoted to line superintendent. Shaw has more than 20 years of electric experience in cooperative and municipal fields. He completed his

apprentice program through Northwest Lineman College and was most recently employed as a line foreman for CVEC. Jared says, "I look forward to interacting with the members more, organizing the daily tasks for the line crews and being involved with jobs from start to finish."

"We are excited to see these two take on new challenges and bring their skills and leadership to their new positions," says CVEC CEO/General Manager Troy Amoss.

Please join us as we congratulate Jared and Ryan on their new journeys at CVEC!



Ryan Romanco has been promoted to a line foreman position. Romanco received his Powerline Technician degree from Marshalltown Community College in April 2018. He

started his career at CVEC as a 1,000-hour apprentice in May 2018 and was offered a full-time apprentice linemen position in October 2018. He became a journeyman lineman at CVEC in 2021. Ryan says, "I look forward to continuing to teach safe working habits on a different crew, that way we can all go home safe every day."



ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) members broke attendance records at the 2023 Annual Meeting of Members. The meeting, held as a drive-through meeting for the first time ever, took place at co-op headquarters on Aug. 7.

"This year, we had a total of 671 individual memberships come out to participate in the Annual Meeting," says Troy Amoss, CEO/general manager of CVEC. "This is 628 more than last year and over 200 more than our record in 2017. The numbers speak for themselves. Our members have responded well to this new meeting format."

As a member-owned electric cooperative, CVEC is governed by a board of directors representing and elected by the membership. Each year, the Annual Meeting of Members is held to present business reports to the membership and elect members to the board. Traditionally, a sit-down meal is served, and the business meeting and election are conducted in person.

However, in 2020, the traditional meeting format was changed to a virtual format due to COVID-19 precautions. Since then, the cooperative has continued to make adjustments each year and find the best format for our membership.

"As we move into the future, we realize that our members expect us to meet them where they are. Most families do not have time to attend the traditional-style meeting during the workweek," Amoss says. "For next year's meeting, the board will continue to weigh our members' desire for convenience against the value of a traditional meeting setting."

Director election results

At the heart of all Annual Meetings is the board election. One new board member will join the CVEC board of directors this year, as District 4 Director Mike Miller retired after serving 11 terms, totaling 33 years. Karla Heffron was newly elected by the membership to take over as the District 4 director representative. Randy Gottschalk

was re-elected to serve District 2 and Richard Welsh was re-elected to serve District 5. The minutes of the 2022 CVEC Annual Meeting were approved by the membership.

Prize winners

As is tradition, all members who returned their ballots by Aug. 7 at 7:30 p.m. were entered into a drawing for a chance to win a \$500 energy credit. All members who attended the drive-through portion of the event were entered into a drawing for a chance to win a \$1,500 energy credit. Both drawings were held during the business meeting portion of the event and the winners include:

- \$500 Energy Credit:
George Davis Jr.
- \$1,500 Energy Credit:
Beverly Scieszinski

"We want to thank everyone who came to the meeting," Amoss says. "Keep an eye on your *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine and our website for updates as we make plans for next year."

MEET YOUR NEWLY ELECTED DIRECTOR



One of the seven Cooperative Principles encourages member participation, which includes running for election on your cooperative's board. Being on the board takes a great amount

of time and commitment, but the benefits are great, including understanding the issues at hand and gaining personal satisfaction by serving your friends, business associates and other members.

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) warmly welcomes Karla Heffron,

District 4 director, to the cooperative board! Heffron was elected by the membership at the 2023 Annual Meeting held on Aug. 7 at the co-op headquarters.

Get to know Heffron

Heffron resides in Melrose and has been a cooperative member for 27 years. She and her husband Steve have two children, Ryley and Nicholas.

Heffron brings financial and business management skills to the board. She is self-employed, manages and operates Beck's Hybrid Seed, farms 450 acres of row crop, hay and cattle, and previously worked at Hy-Vee for 25 years. Heffron

has also served on many boards and committees, including Monroe County 4H, JDRF, Chariton Rotary Club and Chariton girls' softball.

When asked what important issues she believes the cooperative board needs to focus on in the near future, Karla replied, "I believe the cooperative needs to focus on keeping up with the changing technology and also recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce."

Please join CVEC as we welcome Director Heffron aboard! Her interest and involvement are crucial to the future success of your cooperative.

In the U.S., wind currently generates twice the amount of electricity it did five years ago and provides 10% of the nation's electricity.

WIND ENERGY IS SOARING

BY PAUL WESSLUND

Wind energy is big and getting bigger, in more ways than one.

In the U.S., wind currently generates twice the amount of electricity it did five years ago and provides 10% of the nation's electricity – a share expected to grow to more than 25% by 2050.

The basics behind wind power technology is a tall pole with rotor

blades at the top. You've likely seen vast fields of those turbines, with white rotor blades spinning lazily around across the Iowa countryside. But they're not lazy at all, and that's another way wind energy is big – in physical size.

Bigger turbines make more electricity

Wind turbine blades seem to circle slowly due to an optical illusion resulting from their size. The tips of those rotors are likely to be moving at more than 150 miles per hour.

There's a reason for that size. Wind turbines are getting bigger and taller to capture more wind high in the air. The average wind turbine height has increased from about 190 feet in 2000 to nearly 300 feet today, which is as tall as the Statue of Liberty. During that time, the size of the rotor blades doubled, making a circle more than 400 feet in diameter. That size growth has tripled the amount of electricity a wind turbine can produce, lowering the cost of wind power.

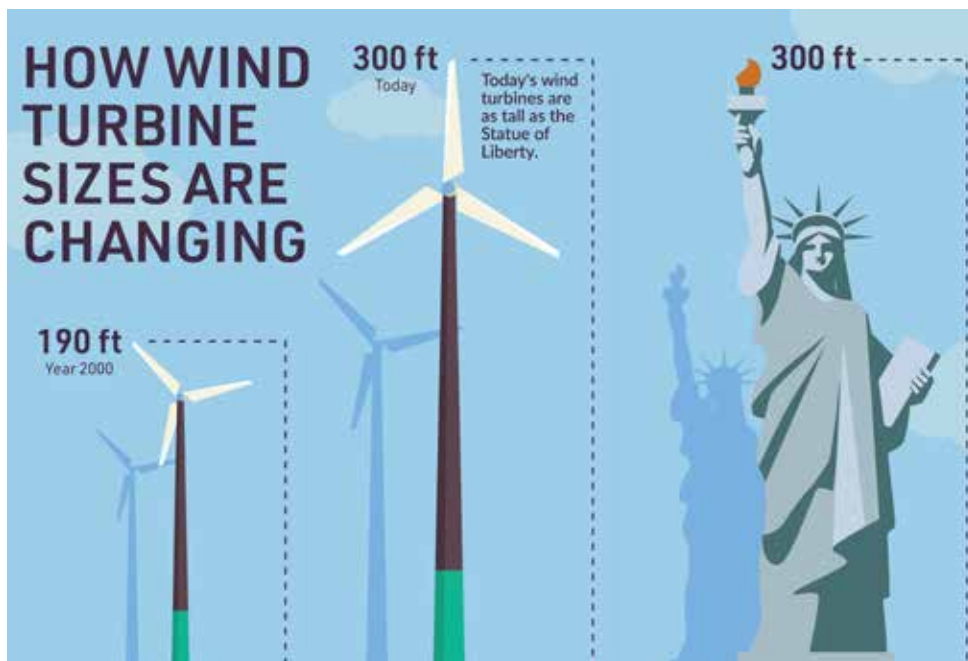
Location of turbines is changing

One wind turbine can generate enough electricity to power about 900 homes, and they're being installed at a rate of about 3,000 a year. Today, there are more than 72,000 turbines in the U.S., primarily located in the middle of the country. But that's about to change.

Federal and state governments are encouraging developers to build wind turbines out in the ocean, where winds are more constant, and the rotors could be even larger. Sixteen projects have been proposed and one estimate shows there's enough potential for offshore wind to supply nearly all our electricity. Offshore wind turbines are generally even larger than those used on land.

Navigating real-world challenges

Bigger sizes can cause problems, though, like transporting rotor blades that average more than 100 feet long. Delivering those monsters can



cost more than \$30,000 in finding the right truck for the oversized load, planning the route, obtaining permits, checking clearances and recruiting escort vehicles. Researchers are already working on those problems. One solution is flexible blades that could be carried on three train cars. The blades could bend to allow the train to maneuver around curves.

As the wind industry has evolved, attention has been focused on bird deaths. As many as a million birds a year fly into spinning rotors. This poses a dilemma for wildlife and nature groups, who are generally supportive of renewable energy. The National Audubon Society, for example, supports wind power as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but urges careful planning to locate wind farms in ways that minimize risk to wildlife.

Local, distributed energy resources

Besides large onshore and offshore wind farms, wind turbines can be used as a distributed energy resource. With support from the U.S. Department of Energy, there have been significant innovations in smaller-scale wind turbines to integrate some of the improvements seen in larger models, including longer blades to capture more wind and advanced composite materials. Smaller turbines can even be used to help power homes, farms, schools and businesses.

Across the U.S., several electric cooperatives and other rural utilities, including those in Iowa, have deployed one or more large-scale wind turbines in their local service territories as a local utility-scale resource to supplement their wholesale power supply. These kinds of local resources can help boost resiliency, hedge or reduce power supply costs, and support local economic development.

Wind energy and the technologies that power it will continue to evolve. For wind power, there will be opportunities for growth at both smaller and larger scales, as well as on land and offshore.

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.

There are currently more than 72,000 wind turbines in the U.S., primarily located in the central part of the country.
Photo Source: American Public Power Association



Federal and state governments are encouraging developers to build wind turbines out in the ocean, where winds are more constant and rotors could be even larger.
Photo Source: Nicholas Doherty



One challenge for wind is transporting rotor blades, which can average more than 100 feet long.
Photo Source: Artur Zudin



SCHOOL NIGHT

RECIPES



SIMPLE CHICKEN OR SHRIMP ALFREDO

- 8 ounces cream cheese**
- ½ cup butter**
- 1 cup milk**
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese**
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ½ pound shrimp, detailed and cooked (or 2 chicken breasts, cooked and diced)**
- noodles, cooked**

Mix all ingredients, except meat, in a saucepan over medium heat until cooked through. Add meat and serve over noodles. *Serves 2-4*

Marcy Gherian • Alvord
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

BAKED TUNA SANDWICHES

- 3 eggs, hard-boiled and diced**
- 7 ounces canned tuna, drained**
- 2 tablespoons sweet pickles, diced**
- 1 tablespoon onion, diced**
- ½ cup mayonnaise**
- 1 cup cheese, cubed to taste**
- buns**

Mix ingredients, put on buns and wrap in aluminum foil. Bake at 225 degrees F for 25 minutes.

Denise Anderson • Ocheyedan
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.

CHICKEN STIR-FRY

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast**
- ¾ cup mayonnaise**
- 16 ounces frozen stir-fry vegetables**
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce**
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder**
- rice**

Dice chicken, then cook in mayonnaise in a large skillet over medium heat for 3 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and continue cooking until chicken is done and veggies are tender. Serve over rice. *Serves 6*

Laura DeSmet • Larchwood
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

BURGER BOWL

- 1 pound ground beef**
- ½ teaspoon seasoned salt**
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper**
- 1 head lettuce, chopped**
- 1 cup cheese, shredded**
- 2 dill pickles, sliced**
- ¼ cup onion, chopped**
- salad dressing**

Brown ground beef and crumble until cooked. Add seasoned salt and pepper. Meanwhile, divide lettuce into four serving bowls. Top lettuce with ground beef, cheese, pickles and onion. Top with ranch, Thousand Island or your favorite dressing.

Mary Gropper • Chelsea
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

COMPANY GRAVY

- 2 pounds lean stew beef
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can cream of onion soup
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- ½ cup water
- optional: rice, mashed potatoes or noodles

Place all ingredients in a slow cooker on low for 5-6 hours. Can also be baked covered in oven at 275 degrees F for 3½-4 hours. Stir before serving. Best served over rice, mashed potatoes or noodles. *Serves 8*

**Susie Jacobs • Allison
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative**

BISCUIT CASSEROLE

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 roll refrigerator biscuits
- 1 jar spaghetti sauce
- ½ cup brown sugar
- mozzarella cheese

Brown ground beef and onion. Cut each biscuit into four pieces and layer on bottom of 9x13-inch pan. Mix spaghetti sauce and brown sugar with meat mixture. Pour over biscuits and bake at 400 degrees F for 20 minutes. Add mozzarella cheese and bake another 5-10 minutes. Gluten free option: Use one recipe box or homemade gluten free biscuits in place of refrigerator biscuits. *Serves 8*

**Deanna Foreman • Rock Valley
North West Rural Electric Cooperative**

SWEET & SPICY CHICKEN WRAPS

- 2 tablespoons sour cream
- ¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon seasoned salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups coleslaw mix
- 1 small scallion, sliced
- 1 tablespoon Sriracha sauce
- 4 frozen breaded chicken tenders
- 4 8-inch flour tortillas

Combine sour cream, 1 tablespoon mayonnaise, sugar, seasoned salt and pepper. Stir in coleslaw mix and scallion (can substitute shredded cabbage and carrots for pre-made coleslaw mix). Create a sauce by combining ¼ cup mayonnaise and Sriracha sauce. Prepare chicken tenders according to package directions. Divide sauce and coleslaw mixture among tortillas and top with chicken tenders. Roll tortilla into a wrap. *Serves 4*

**Chris Daniels • Casey
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association**

TACO CASSEROLE

- 1 pound ground pork
- 1 package taco seasoning (4 tablespoons)
- 8 ounces sour cream
- 1 roll refrigerator pizza crust
- 4 ounces corn chips, crushed
- 1½ cups Mexican cheese, shredded
- optional toppings: salsa, torn lettuce, diced green pepper, diced tomato

Brown pork, chop into small pieces as it cooks and then drain. Stir in taco seasoning and sour cream until well blended. Spray 9x13-inch cake pan with cooking spray. Press pizza crust into pan and slightly up sides. Bake crust at 400 degrees F for 4-5 minutes. Sprinkle crust with half the crushed corn chips.

Spread meat mixture over corn chips. Sprinkle with cheese and top with remaining corn chips. Bake an additional 18-22 minutes or until cheese starts to brown and crust is baked.

Cut into squares and add salsa, torn lettuce, diced green pepper and diced tomatoes as desired. Can substitute 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese and ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese for Mexican cheese. *Serves 8*

**Barb Sexton • Rockwell City
Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association**

WANTED:

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION RECIPES

**THE REWARD:
\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!**

Deadline is Sept. 30

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

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ANNOUNCING THE 2023 SHINE THE LIGHT AWARD WINNERS



Driven by their commitment to community, the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa held their third-annual Shine the Light contest in June to celebrate local volunteers. 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 reviewed essays from 126 outstanding nominations and selected three winners.

Congratulations to Erica Lindaman, who is recognized for her generous efforts through Gift of Giving; Betty Thronson, who is recognized for restoring hope for families through Project Flo; and Heather Weers, who is recognized for her compassion for children through Sleep in Heavenly Peace. These three winners have been awarded a \$2,500 donation to their charity.

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.

GIFT OF GIVING

ERICA LINDAMAN'S PASSION FOR GIVING DOESN'T GO UNNOTICED

BY RYAN CORNELIUS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Erica Lindaman saw a need and acted. The Clarion teacher started Gift of Giving 501c3 nonprofit organization to help collect Christmas gifts for children.

"We saw a need based on people not working as much," Lindaman explains. "Hours were cut because people had to stay home."

A mission grows

Gift of Giving could have stayed with just meeting Christmastime needs, but that wasn't in Lindaman's plans.

Since that first Christmas, the program has grown exponentially. The organization now assists with everything from food insecurity to bedding and furniture.

"It has grown into this massive entity," she says. "We are trying to get people in Wright County to keep their clothing and pieces here rather than take them to a different county to donate."

Emily Bernhardt, one of Lindaman's many nominators, has known her for 13 years. "I think Erica has seen a



Erica Lindaman is presented with a check for her Gift of Giving charity.

Gift of Giving continued:

need in the community through her background being a teacher and working with students on a daily basis,” Bernhardt says. “She just stepped in to fulfill that need. I know she spends a lot of her personal time and effort working with Gift of Giving. Her whole family has become involved and quite dedicated.”

For Lindaman, it has almost become a full-time job – and one that she loves.

“I literally get between 20 and 30 texts, emails and Facebook messages saying, ‘I need this,’ or ‘How can you help me with this,’” she says. “We have extended where we are helping to pay for electric bills and water bills. We have provided gas cards for people who are having health problems. We are just here to give.”

A heart for giving

That tenacity shines through for all to see, even when she may not want the credit.

“Erica has a huge heart,” Bernhardt says. “She may be quiet sometimes and likes to be in the background. But she has a huge heart and huge passion for the youth and families in the community.”

Today, Lindaman and Gift of Giving accept any items in Wright County. Those are stored in a temporary warehouse, where you can meet with Lindaman by appointment or visit one of the organization’s “pop-up” events.

“If you have a need, and you come to me, or you come to my mother or my father, or anyone who is involved in the organization, we’re going to find you a resource or the right person to help you,” she says.

Learn more about Gift of Giving at www.facebook.com/groups/134251198297192.

Article contributed by Ryan Cornelius, vice president of corporate relations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative.



The Project Flo Association works to build hope in the Chickasaw County area by restoring homes. And it all started with a mother’s love for her community.

Betty Thronson of New Hampton was nominated for Shine the Light by her sister, Shirley Hoffman, a member-consumer of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative in Ionia. In her essay, Hoffman shared that she and Thronson come from a family of 15 children, and they established Project Flo in 2011 after the passing of their mother, Florence “Flo” Thronson. Their mother was known in the New Hampton area for her positive spirit of volunteerism and her children have made it their mission to keep her spirit alive through community service.

Thronson has served as president of Project Flo for more than 11 years and is responsible for gathering family, friends and neighbors once a year in June to offer needed home repairs in the Chickasaw County region. These essential repairs help local families take control of their homes and help restore their faith in humanity. Often, the homes would be deemed unsafe and homeowners’ insurance could be jeopardized if the repairs weren’t made. Hoffman says, “The impact Betty has made on the residents, neighborhoods and businesses in Chickasaw County is immeasurable. Her dedication and leadership have significantly improved the lives of many individuals in need.”

A widespread impact

Project Flo coordinated 80 volunteers working on six projects in 2023,

including home repairs for a disabled veteran, a young family of five, a single mother of three, a low-income couple with a disability, and a retired man who is disabled. The volunteer group of carpenters, plumbers, electricians and masonry professionals use their vast skills to repair steps and sidewalks, install flooring, paint, perform landscaping, remove debris, repair bathrooms, and replace doors and windows.

Since Project Flo began, Thronson’s organization has assisted more than 30 homes in addition to helping with repairs at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church and St. Joseph Community School in New Hampton. Thronson takes charge of coordinating the grant and fundraising endeavors for Project Flo. She then conducts a thorough assessment of the tasks needed for each project and prioritizes them. During June each year, Thronson shifts into project mode and reaches out to local businesses to coordinate supplies and services.

Thronson also coordinates volunteer assistance to ensure each home project has the right crew ready to work. Hoffman says, “When Betty visits a work site, her infectious energy fills the air with jubilation, laughter and camaraderie. Volunteers of all ages are thrilled to see Betty, recognizing her as the glue that holds the family and project together.”

The \$2,500 Shine the Light donation will be invested to purchase much-needed renovation equipment and supplies for Project Flo.

Learn more about Project Flo at www.thronson.com.

Article submitted by Erin Campbell, director of communications for Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.



Continued on Page 14



GIVE TO RECare

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) established RECare, a program that 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 at P.O. 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 at 641-932-7126 or P.O. Box 486 Albia, IA 52531.

CVEC Account #: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

INVESTING IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY

BY TOD FARIS



Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives have a long history of supporting energy efficiency; in fact, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) has been offering cost-effective energy efficiency rebate programs since 2006. These programs include rebates and incentives for various energy-efficient products, such as air conditioning, appliances, water heaters, ENERGY STAR® Wi-Fi thermostats and business lighting.

Smart energy choices make a home more comfortable and power bills more affordable. That's why CVEC

offers many valuable rebate incentives for our members. CVEC and partners Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative and Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. have returned more than \$21,000 in rebates among 75 members to date in 2023.

CVEC invests in energy efficiency programs to benefit the communities we serve. If you have questions or would like to learn more about energy efficiency, please contact us at 641-932-7126. You can also find information regarding CVEC's rebate programs and even complete and submit rebate applications on our website at www.cvrec.com.

Tod Faris is the economic development and community relations manager for Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative.

CVEC'S OPERATION ROUND UP PROGRAM SEEKING APPLICATIONS

As a cooperative, improving the quality of life of our members and strengthening our communities is in our mission. In 2020, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative's (CVEC) board of directors adopted a community service program called Operation Round Up®. The program "rounds up" each participating member's electric bill to the nearest dollar, and that tax-deductible amount is donated to local organizations in our service area. All funds stay in the communities we serve to benefit the members of CVEC.

CVEC has a long history of supporting charitable and community service organizations, from children's programs and athletic organizations to food banks and more. We see the Operation Round Up program as part of our cooperative heritage and values – people coming together to help their neighbors. Through Operation Round Up, our members have the opportunity to come together to create change in their communities – something they could not do individually on this scale.

The goal of Operation Round Up is to address charitable needs and provide financial assistance to improve the

quality of life in the seven counties CVEC serves.

As of June 2023, we have helped 23 organizations by providing them with nearly \$76,000 in grants.

The Operation Round Up board has granted requests ranging from \$300 up to \$6,800. The average grant awarded is around \$3,300.



Do you know a group, organization or project needing funding?

Please share CVEC's Operation Round Up program! Applications and grant guidelines are available at www.cvrec.com/operation-round. Operation Round Up applications are due on the last business day of each quarter (March, June, September and December).

MICK'S FURNITURE & APPLIANCES HELPS MAKE ALBIA A PLACE TO CALL HOME

For more than six decades, Mick's Furniture & Appliances has helped customers turn their houses into homes. The local business sells a wide variety of high-quality, high-value furniture and appliances – but most importantly, the Mick family puts the utmost importance on serving customers and caring for the local community.

Mick's is owned and operated by Dave Mick, his wife Lois, and sons Neal and Curt. Their small but mighty team is rounded out by long-time employee Roger Long and independent appliance repair technicians.

"We're truly hands-on," Dave explains. "You'll find us waiting on customers in the store, helping them find the best value possible. We also deliver products and service everything we sell."

Mick's offers a full line of furniture and mattresses from brands such as La-Z-Boy, England and Best Home Furnishings. They sell appliances from Whirlpool and Maytag, and washers and dryers from Speed Queen. Customers can also find flooring and a variety of lamps and home accessories.

The business was originally founded by Dave's parents Harold and Gloria in 1960. The business' longstanding tenure in Albia means generations of families from across southeast Iowa have chosen Mick's for their home furnishing needs.

"We see many of the same families over the years. We enjoy what we do, and they feel comfortable working with us, which makes it a lot of fun," Dave says.

Historic presence and appreciation

Mick's is located on the west side of the historic Albia square. Over the years, the store has expanded across five storefronts in the approximately 150-year-old building. The interior and exterior spaces have been renovated – while maintaining historic building elements – to become an open showroom on the



"HOPEFULLY, WE CAN BE HERE ANOTHER 63 YEARS, AND THE COMMUNITY WILL STILL BE STRONG AND VIBRANT."

main level and office space on the ground floor. "Albia has done such a wonderful job keeping up the town square," Dave shares. "Everything looks great and is convenient for people shopping in the area."

Separate from their furniture and appliance business, Dave helped to spearhead a major historic renovation of the Lundy Building in 2014.

Located on the town square since the 1800s, the historic bank had fallen into disrepair but had the potential to be converted into a modern office space. The Micks purchased the building and renovated it extensively while still retaining character and original elements, such as the bank vault door and sidewalk sign.

Ongoing commitment to community

Historic renovation efforts are just one of many examples of the Mick family caring for and investing in the community. Lois can often be found helping with city beautification

efforts, caring for flowers and planters around town. They have also established a scholarship fund to award scholarships to local high school seniors.

"Albia is a very giving community. People step up to help others in need. It's just part of small-town living, but we're all working to make it better for one another," Dave explains. "

The couple's dedication to the community is carried forward by their sons, Neal and Curt. Both returned to Albia after college to raise their families in the tightly knit community. They've followed their parents' and grandparents' footsteps, jumping right into volunteering with the schools and coaching youth sports.

"Hopefully, we can be here another 63 years, and the community will still be strong and vibrant. I know we will work to help make it that way even when I'm long gone," Dave says.

ANNOUNCING THE 2023 SHINE THE LIGHT AWARD WINNERS



SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE HEATHER WEERS WORKS TO PROVIDE BEDS FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

BY CHRISTIE REMLEY

Heather Weers (right) is the president of the Jones County Chapter for Sleep in Heavenly Peace. She is pictured with MVEC employee and member Megan Ruley, who nominated Weers for the honor.

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Heather Weers of Center Junction has dedicated her professional and personal life to improving the lives of Jones County children and residents alike.

By day, she works for the Jones County Community Partnership for Protecting Children, which aims to improve the child welfare process. And on her own time, she is the president of the Jones County Chapter for Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a non-profit dedicated to providing beds for children who would otherwise not have them. While the national organization's mission is "No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town®," Weers likes to say, "No kid sleeps on the floor in Jones County."

Addressing a community need

When the Jones County Community Partnership for Protecting Children received a \$1,600 grant to buy beds for children, Weers was shocked to learn how great the need was in her community. While researching ways to help, Weers discovered the national organization Sleep in Heavenly Peace and pursued starting a local chapter. She established the Jones County

chapter in 2019 and has delivered more than 320 beds to local children since then.

Weers is humble and attributes the impact of Sleep in Heavenly Peace Jones County to the local volunteers who help build the beds and donate materials.

"It's not about me; it's about what the community comes together to do to give children a comfortable place to sleep," she says. Weers hopes to inspire others to make their own impact. "I want others to know that you can help people with the simplest gestures – sometimes it's just a thank you note or a letter that can profoundly impact another person's life," says Weers.

Dedication to community shines

Weers was nominated for Shine the Light by Megan Ruley, a member and employee at Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC).

"When I learned about the Shine the Light contest, the first person who came to mind was Heather," Ruley says. "Her work with Sleep in Heavenly

Peace is heartwarming, and I admire her dedication to improving the lives of our Jones County residents. The work outlined here doesn't even begin to encompass all of Heather's impact in our community as she seems to be behind many initiatives to make Jones County a better place now and into the future."

"Maquoketa Valley is thrilled to recognize Heather's dedication to making Jones County a better place. Heather embodies the co-op principle, 'Concern for Community' by recognizing unmet needs and then rolling up her sleeves to meet those needs," says Jeremy Richert, MVEC CEO.

The \$2,500 award will help the Sleep in Heavenly Peace chapter purchase materials, tools, bedding and mattresses. With the vision of no Jones County child sleeping on the floor, Weers is seeing to that goal one bed at a time. For more information, visit shpbeds.org/chapter/ia-jones-co.

Article contributed by Christie Remley, manager of communications and public relations for Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.

IT'S ALL GOOD ON RIVER TIME

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

I kept thinking to myself, “How far back in here do I have to drive?”

In July, I was invited to share my “Adventures Along the Lincoln Highway” history program with the volunteers of Iowa Project AWARE (A Watershed Awareness River Expedition) – the state’s largest river cleanup event.

Fortunately, I found my contact easily once I reached the campground. “No worries,” my hosts said. “We’re on river time.”

Decades of cleanup work

It turns out this was the 20th Annual Iowa Project AWARE event, and an impressive 315 volunteers gathered for the big cleanup. They paddled canoes down 58 miles of the Iowa River from July 9-14, removing all kinds of junk along the way. We’re talking serious trash here, including tires, mannequin heads, appliances and farm equipment (some of it 100 years old). The crew hauled 21,360 pounds (10.7 tons) of junk from the Iowa River. An amazing 96% of this (20,520 pounds, including 161 tires) can be recycled.



The origins of Iowa Project AWARE were inspired by Chad Pregracke, “The River Rescuer,” who started a movement to help clean up the Mississippi River. Inspired by his work, three dozen volunteers spent a week during the summer of 2003 camping, canoeing and picking up trash from the Maquoketa River. That first-of-its-kind event became known as Iowa Project AWARE. It quickly became the state’s largest volunteer river cleanup.



Photo Credit: Project AWARE 2023

While it started as an Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) event, Iowa Project AWARE now operates through a nonprofit organization known as N-Compass, Inc. Major partners include the Iowa DNR and the State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa. Hundreds of participants return each year for this unique event, including multigenerational family groups, youth groups, church groups and scouting groups.

One gentleman I met said his kids grew up participating in Iowa Project AWARE. Now they plan their vacations around this annual, can’t-miss event.

Diligent volunteers make a difference

Even though they’re on “river time,” these volunteers work hard. They’ve cleaned the Boone River, Maquoketa River, Cedar River, Lower Des Moines River, Wapsipinicon River, Big Sioux River, Iowa River, Little Turkey, Turkey and Volga Rivers, West and East Nishnabotna Rivers, Cedar River, Winnebago River, Shell Rock River, Middle and North Raccoon River, English River and Little Sioux River.

The Iowa Project AWARE team is just as diligent about tracking results as cleaning up Iowa’s rivers. In the past 20 years, 6,223 volunteers from across the country have been part of this effort. They’ve cleaned 1,429 river miles of nearly 1 million pounds (979,480 pounds, to be exact) of trash. A majority (81%) of this trash has been recycled. Wow!

I checked in with my friend Jodi Henke from Norwalk and her daughter Michaela, who started volunteering with Project AWARE in 2021 and helped clean up the Iowa River this summer.

“Hearing a loud ‘whoop!’ from around the river bend means someone found something cool – probably their first tire,” Jodi shares. “Also, some of the nicest people you’ll ever meet are wet, filthy dirty, stinky and so proud of the trash they collect. We totally believe in what we’re doing. Every piece of trash we pull out of the river is one less thing to potentially harm the environment.”

For someone like me who cares about Iowa’s water quality, that’s great news. It also speaks to the goodness of Iowans. There’s nothing quite like Iowa Project AWARE in any other state. These volunteers know it’s all good when you’re on river time.

Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family’s Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at www.darcymaulsby.com.





IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine
for members of
Iowa's electric
cooperatives.

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