

● JULY 2024

Iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



**Co-ops work together
on storm repairs**

**Federal energy policy
threatens reliability**

Summer dessert recipes

You're invited to attend CVEC's annual meeting ▶ See Page 4

CONTENTS



6



8



10

VOLUME 77 • ISSUE 7

3

STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE

Reflecting on a cooperative career

3

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win an electric pressure washer

14

ENERGY MATTERS

Signs your HVAC is in trouble

15

OUT BACK

Remembering the battle cry of freedom

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Jacob Holck, whose family are North West REC member-consumers, for supplying this month's cover image of tornado damage in Greenfield. He is also a former Iowa Youth Tour participant. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100! Holck donated his prize to relief efforts in Greenfield.

REFLECTING ON A COOPERATIVE CAREER

BY CHUCK SODERBERG



Do you remember what you were doing in July of 1979? That's when my electric cooperative career began 45 years ago. When I

started working for Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) in the summer of '79, I had just graduated from college and was so excited to start my first job. I didn't know much about the electric industry, but I soon learned how complicated it is to provide reliable, affordable power to the member-owners of Iowa's electric cooperatives.

Over the years, many have asked what keeps me up at night. My answer is simple: This is not the time to restrict the use of any generation source to produce electricity. The electric industry must be allowed to use all resources to produce reliable, affordable electricity. This must include the use of coal, natural gas, nuclear and weather-dependent renewable resources such as wind and solar. An "all-of-the-above" strategy is the only way to meet the growing electricity needs of this country. Read more on Pages 6-7 of this issue.

Leading the statewide association

In my role as executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) for the past nine years, I have been blessed to help bring electricity to those less fortunate. Through IAEC's participation in National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International projects in 2019 and just last month, Iowa's electric cooperatives have helped two rural Guatemalan villages receive electricity for the very first time. This transformation will improve their lives in fundamental ways for generations.

At IAEC, I have also worked to bolster our member co-ops' cybersecurity



Photos courtesy of Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative

defenses, as cyberattacks are now an ever-present threat in the electric industry. Iowa's electric cooperatives have made great strides over the last four years, and the electric industry must remain vigilant in this area.

An honor serving co-op members

On July 31, I will retire after serving for 36 years at NIPCO and nine years at IAEC. It has been an honor to serve you in these roles. IAEC is in great hands as the board of directors' leadership is second to none. The staff at IAEC work

tirelessly to serve you, the electric cooperative member-owners.

I always tell my family to enjoy the journey of life. God has blessed me greatly, and I am excited for what lies ahead. Now, it's time for me to shift gears and enjoy the rest of my journey. During my retirement, I will always have one eye on the electric industry while the other eye will be focused on my faith, family and friends.

Chuck Soderberg is the retiring executive vice president and general manager for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN AN ELECTRIC PRESSURE WASHER!

The Craftsman 1,900 MAX PSI Electric Cold Water Pressure Washer is durable, mobile and powerful enough for outdoor cleaning tasks. With three nozzles, including a turbo nozzle, you have the accessories you need to wash your car or clean your back patio. The pressure washer gun has an integrated soap tank for cleaning with soap.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than July 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of \$100 in beef certificates from the May issue was David Tallon, a Harrison County REC member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY JULY 31!



ANNUAL MEETING ENHANCEMENTS

Reflecting on the success of last year's drive-through event, we've listened to your feedback and are excited to announce several improvements to enhance the experience for our members. This year, we've streamlined the registration process, added more lanes to reduce wait times, and introduced new activities to enjoy while you drive through. Additionally, all activities have been moved further back on the property to get members off the highway, ensuring a safer and more enjoyable experience. Our goal is to create a smoother, more engaging event that prioritizes your convenience and enjoyment. Thank you for helping us make this year's event better than ever!

JOIN US FOR CVEC'S 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

BY TROY AMOSS



Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) proudly invites our valued members to our 2024 annual meeting. This event offers an exceptional

opportunity for you to connect with co-op leadership and, most importantly, exercise one of the key benefits of being a co-op member: voting to elect the board of directors for the coming year.

CVEC stands apart from other electric utilities. We are not owned by distant investors, nor are we managed by an appointed board. Instead, we are a cooperative rooted in our community, governed by a democratically elected board of directors chosen by you. This unique structure ensures that our leadership remains directly accountable to our members and is deeply committed to serving your needs.

By attending this year's annual meeting, you'll do more than enjoy a wonderful

meal and have a chance to win prizes. You will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our cooperative and our essential resource, electricity. Your vote and participation are vital to ensuring that CVEC continues to operate in the best interest of our community.

If you have never attended our annual meeting or if it has been a few years since your last visit, we strongly encourage you to join us this year. CVEC is more than just a utility provider; we are your neighbors, rooted in the same community and dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all.

This year's event promises to be both enjoyable and impactful. Join us, meet your neighbors and help shape the future of CVEC. We eagerly look forward to welcoming you to CVEC's 2024 annual meeting!

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



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We accept



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2024 ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, Aug. 5

4-6:30 p.m.
Drive-through time
(where you will receive your membership gift and meal)

7 p.m.
Meeting time
(where you will hear from cooperative leaders and receive election results)

CVEC Headquarters

2090 Hwy 5
Albia, IA 52531

- **Enjoy a to-go meal prepared by Cater 2 U 2**
- **Membership gift**
- **Drive-through attendance prizes:**
 - Grand prize: \$500 bill credit
 - 10 - \$100 bill credits
- **Mailing-in voting prizes:**
 - Grand prize: \$250 bill credit
 - 5 - \$50 bill credits:

CVEC'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY: SHARING SUCCESS GRANT PROGRAM

One of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative's (CVEC) most unique and exciting community programs is the CoBank Sharing Success grant program. Aimed at supporting local communities and projects, the grant is made possible by CVEC's governing board of directors in partnership with CoBank – a national nonprofit cooperative bank owned by the rural American cooperatives it services.

Recently, CVEC, Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative (Northeast Power), and CoBank collaborated again to fund a project through the Sharing Success grant program and the Northeast Power Partnering Request program. CVEC is thrilled to support the Rathbun Lake Area YMCA as they work to upgrade their facility with video surveillance, new security doors and a pass card system for members to access to the gym, exercise equipment, restroom and a classroom after hours, contributing \$18,000 toward this initiative. This upgrade will significantly enhance the area's access to fitness and

recreational facilities, promoting a healthier lifestyle for residents.

In addition, CVEC and CoBank provided \$2,000 to the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. This funding will assist in sending linemen to Guatemala to build electric infrastructure in areas currently without electricity. This international effort underscores the cooperative's commitment to extending a helping hand beyond local borders, improving lives through essential infrastructure development.

Helping rural communities thrive

"Rural communities and cooperatives like Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative are fortunate to have the generous support of CoBank and Northeast Power," says Tod Faris, CVEC economic development and community relations manager. "We are thankful for the contributions, which enable us to help make our communities a better place to live, work and play."

"CoBank and Northeast Power's partnerships allow us to maximize our

efforts in community improvement projects, ensuring that every dollar goes further in creating a positive impact," adds CVEC CEO/General Manager Troy Amoss. "Their support is invaluable in our mission to enhance the quality of life in our service areas."

CVEC has annually budgeted \$7,500 for this Sharing Success Program, with the goal of applying for matching funds from CoBank and Northeast Power. This year, CVEC's initial \$7,500 investment has blossomed into \$20,000 with the assistance of its partners, demonstrating the power of collaboration in achieving greater good.

Together, CVEC, CoBank, Northeast Power and the community are striving to build stronger, more resilient rural areas. Through initiatives like the Sharing Success grant program, we continue to make significant strides in improving infrastructure, supporting local organizations and fostering community development. This ongoing commitment ensures that rural communities remain vibrant and thrive in an ever-changing world.



Laramie River Station. Photo Source: Basin Electric Cooperative

SOUNDING THE ALARM: FEDERAL ENERGY POLICY THREATENS ELECTRIC RELIABILITY

BY CHUCK SODERBERG

Those of us who work in the electric utility sector are deeply concerned how federal energy policy is threatening electric reliability for the families, businesses and communities we serve. It's time to sound the alarm and raise awareness of how these misguided mandates will negatively impact our country.

In April, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its final Power Plant Rule, which includes four major environmental regulations. One regulation under Section 111 of the Clean Air Act (also known as the Greenhouse Gas Rule) will limit emissions from existing coal and new natural gas power plants. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) stands with the Iowa Attorney General, the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) and the Iowa Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) in opposing these regulations on

the grounds that they are unlawful, unrealistic and unachievable.

The EPA's Power Plant Rule requires existing coal and natural gas generation facilities to deploy carbon capture and sequestration at a level that is not yet achievable or commercially viable. The other three regulations in the rule tighten already stringent standards for mercury and air toxins and wastewater and impose additional burdensome requirements on legacy coal ash sites.

Policy targets always-available generation

Specifically, the Power Plant Rule will force the early closure of "always-available" electric generation sources and limit the construction of new natural gas plants as our nation's economy will require more electric generation in the years ahead. Existing coal-fueled units that plan to operate past 2032 and until 2039

must co-fuel with natural gas at a 40% rate starting in 2030.

To operate past 2039, existing coal-fueled plants must capture or avoid 90% of their carbon emissions by 2032. The Power Plant Rule also requires the same 90% carbon capture or avoidance for new natural gas plants operating at baseload (above a 40% capacity factor). These new standards will impact electric utilities' abilities to economically and reliably replace lost coal generation.

These reckless regulations are not based in reality and pose an immediate threat to the electric grid and will negatively impact electric reliability here in Iowa. We are sounding the alarm that these EPA mandates will drastically diminish electric cooperatives' ability to provide dependable power when our member-consumers need it most.



Leland Olds Station. Photo Source: Basin Electric Power Cooperative



Walter Scott, Jr. Energy Center. Photo Source: Central Iowa Power Cooperative



Earl F. Wisdom Generating Station. Photo Source: Corn Belt Power Cooperative

Jeopardizing affordable and reliable electricity

With the Power Plant Rule, the EPA is overreaching its legal boundaries, disregarding practicality and endangering national energy security. These new mandates jeopardize affordable and reliable electricity by forcing the premature closure of “always-available” power plants while also making it harder to permit, site and build critical new generation facilities. As electric demand increases each year, replacing dispatchable electric generation sources like coal and natural gas with intermittent power sources like solar and wind is a recipe for disaster.

We support an “all-of-the-above” electric generation strategy that prioritizes reliability.

Iowa’s electric utilities are not alone in our concern. In filing joint comments on the proposed EPA Power Plant Rules back in 2023, Iowa’s OCA and the IUB expressed the following opposition to the mandates:

“The proposed rules treat reliability as merely one of many considerations and do a poor job in making that consideration.” ... “The proposed rules are rushed, the record does not meaningfully consider the impact of this truly essential service, and

EPA myopically pursues a narrow goal at the expense of larger societal benefits like life, heat, and jobs.”

National utility trade associations – including the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Edison Electric Institute and the American Public Power Association – and a coalition of 27 attorneys general, including Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird, have filed separate lawsuits in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, petitioning for review of the EPA’s Power Plant Rule and to stay the rule while the Court decides the motion.

Risk of insufficient power resources

Additionally, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) has noted this growing capacity shortfall, which has resulted from the reduction in reliable electric generation and the increase in electric demand. In its 2024 Summer Reliability Assessment, NERC warns that there is an elevated seasonal risk for several regions of the country, including parts of the Midwest. This means there is potential for insufficient operating reserves – which can translate into rolling power outages – in above-normal peak conditions. And in 2023, NERC

listed energy policy as the highest significant risk to grid reliability.

Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a regional transmission operator that covers parts of western Iowa, warns that the EPA’s rule poses reliability risks.

“SPP is concerned that limited technological and infrastructure availability and the compliance time frame will have deleterious impacts including the retirement of, or the decision not to build, thousands of megawatts of baseload thermal generation.”

Iowa’s economy can’t succeed without reliable electricity, and the EPA cannot ignore growing reliability challenges at this critical time for our nation’s energy future. The EPA must follow the law and set realistic standards based on technology that has been adequately demonstrated and is achievable. With the Power Plant Rule, the EPA has set an unworkable timeframe in violation of the Clean Air Act and Supreme Court decisions.

Federal energy policy has now become a major threat to electric reliability and it’s time to take a stand and sound the alarm to protect the Iowans we serve.

Chuck Soderberg is the executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.



Summer DESSERTS

KIWI PIE

- 1½ cups vanilla wafers, finely crushed (36 wafers)
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ cup butter, melted
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- ½ cup cold water
- 8 ounces plain yogurt
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 16-ounce carton whipped topping
- 3 kiwis, peeled and sliced

In a mixing bowl, combine crushed wafers, cinnamon and butter. Press onto bottom and sides of 9-inch pie plate. Chill for 1 hour. In a small pan, soften gelatin in cold water. Cook and stir over medium heat until gelatin is dissolved. Cool this mixture. Beat together yogurt, sugar and lemon juice, then stir in the cooled gelatin. Chill until partially set, stirring occasionally. Fold whipped topping into gelatin mixture. Line the bottom and sides of the chilled crust with two sliced kiwis and place whipped topping/gelatin mixture on top. Cover and chill several hours, or until set. Garnish with sliced kiwi before serving.

Mary Thatcher • Breda
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

RHUBARB PUDDING

- 1 heaping cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups sugar, divided
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon butter, softened
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 3 cups fresh or frozen rhubarb
- a few pieces butter
- 1 cup boiling water

Mix flour, baking powder, salt, ½ cup sugar and baking soda. Cut in softened butter, then add buttermilk and stir. Pour mixture into greased 9x13-inch pan and top with rhubarb. Sprinkle 1 cup sugar, dot with butter and pour boiling water over top. Bake at 350 degrees F for 35-45 minutes, until the top is golden brown. Any fruit can be used in place of rhubarb, or use 2 cups rhubarb and 1 cup blueberries. Serves 6-8

This recipe is more than 100 years old and was originally called Pie Plant Pudding.

Dawn Fry • Moravia
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative

RHUBARB DUMPLINGS

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1½ cups plus ⅓ cup sugar, divided
- 2 cups rhubarb, diced
- dash salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1½ cups boiling water
- 1¼ cups flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 2 tablespoons shortening or butter
- ⅓ cup milk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

Combine butter, 1½ cups sugar, rhubarb, salt, cinnamon and boiling water in heavy skillet. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Sift flour, baking powder and ⅓ cup sugar. Cut in shortening, then mix in milk and vanilla. Drop by teaspoons in boiling sauce. Cover and simmer 20 minutes.

Mary Eggebraaten • Forest City
Prairie Energy Cooperative

TOFFEE CRUNCH ICE CREAM CAKE

- 2½ cups chocolate graham crackers, crushed
- ½ cup butter, melted
- ½ gallon vanilla ice cream, thawed slightly
- 4 Heath candy bars, crushed (or more, to taste)
- ½ gallon chocolate ice cream, thawed slightly

Mix 1½ cups graham crackers and butter. Pat into bottom of a greased 9x13-inch pan. Freeze 10-15 minutes. Spread vanilla ice cream onto crumb crust, then sprinkle with half of crushed candy bars and ½ cup cracker crumbs. Spread chocolate ice cream on top, then sprinkle with remaining crushed candy bars and cracker crumbs. Freeze until ready to serve. Butterfinger candy bars also work well.

David Warner • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

SUMMER STRAWBERRY DESSERT

- 1 large angel food cake
- 2 3-ounce packages instant vanilla pudding
- 2 cups milk
- 3 cups vanilla ice cream
- 1 3-ounce package strawberry Jell-O
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 10-ounce package frozen strawberries

Break cake into pieces and put in bottom of 9x13-inch pan. Mix pudding with milk, then add ice cream and beat together. Pour over cake pieces. In another bowl, dissolve strawberry Jell-O in hot water. Add strawberries, and once thawed, pour over pudding mixture. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Betty Meeves • Dunlap
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI CAKE

- ½ cup margarine
- ½ cup oil
- 1¾ cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup sour milk
- 2½ cups flour
- 4 tablespoons cocoa
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 cups zucchini, chopped
- 1 cup nuts, chopped
- ½ cup chocolate chips

Cream margarine, oil and sugar. Add eggs, vanilla and sour milk, blend well. Add flour, cocoa, salt, baking powder and cinnamon to creamed mixture and mix well. Add zucchini and nuts. Pour into greased and floured 13x9x2-inch pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top. Bake at 325 degrees F for 40-45 minutes. Serves 15

Debra Bartholomew • Ollie
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

WANTED:

THANKSGIVING SIDE DISHES

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

Deadline is July 31.

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



EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com
(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

MAIL: Recipes

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AFTER THE STORM: COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

The Midwest experienced several powerful storms this spring, with the worst of the storms hitting Iowa on May 21.

The National Weather Service issued an EF-4 rating to the devastating tornado that struck Greenfield; five people died, and dozens were injured. Several employees of Farmers Electric Cooperative, headquartered east of Greenfield, and Greenfield Municipal Utilities (served by Central Iowa Power Cooperative) suffered extensive damage to their homes and properties. In addition, Farmers Electric linemen were some of the first to assist with search

and rescue efforts in Greenfield immediately after the tornado hit.

As the storm system moved across Iowa on May 21, many of Iowa's electric cooperatives experienced power outages. The peak of outages occurred around 8:30 p.m. as the storm left Iowa's eastern border, with just over 12,000 electric cooperative outages systemwide. As of 6 a.m. the next day, about two-thirds of those outages had been restored, with electric co-op linemen closing in on the remaining 4,000 outages. After surveying the extent of the damage, Iowa's electric cooperatives supported each other with several

co-ops providing mutual aid for the restoration efforts.

Later in May, northern Arkansas experienced widespread outages following severe storms over Memorial Day weekend. The National Weather Service confirmed tornadoes in six counties and at least eight deaths. In the aftermath, three Iowa cooperatives – Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative and Western Iowa Power Cooperative – sent crews to Arkansas to assist with restoring service to co-op member-consumers.

Photos courtesy of the respective electric cooperatives pictured.



◀ **Corn Belt Power Cooperative** transmission crews cleared downed structures, phases and equipment on May 22 before rebuilding this stretch of line northeast of Farnhamville.



◀ Loyd Hise, Jay Spack, Jordan Terwilliger and Jeff Eagle of **Guthrie County REC** worked with **Consumers Energy** in Marshalltown to provide mutual aid after severe weather hit their service territory leaving broken poles, downed lines and more than 1,000 members without power.



▶ The mid-May storms damaged 109 poles across **Central Iowa Power Cooperative's (CIPCO)** territory.



▶ **Grundy County REC** provided mutual aid support to **Consumers Energy**.





◀ Tornado damage near Harlan in Nishnabotna Valley REC's service territory.

▶ Crews worked to lift a broken transmission pole in CIPCO's service territory.



▶ Pella Cooperative Electric Lineman Matt Ainsworth and Apprentice Lineman Spencer Nagel assisted in the recovery and restoration of Consumers Energy member-consumers in Story and Polk counties.



▶ A road is closed due to downed power lines in the area.



▶ As a result of the storm, Southwest Iowa REC faced the task of replacing 140 broken poles and restringing roughly 142,000 feet of wire. Nishnabotna Valley REC and Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative supported the restoration efforts. The dedicated line crews worked long hours to safely and efficiently restore power in just four days.



▶ Clarke Electric Cooperative linemen spent time working at Farmers Electric Cooperative in Greenfield after the EF-4 tornado.

▶ At the peak of the outages following the storm, Maquoketa Valley REC had nearly 3,500 members without power.



▶ A domino of downed poles line a gravel road.



▶ Cooperation Among Cooperatives is one of the most important cooperative principles. NIPCO (pictured) and Corn Belt Power Cooperative assisted CIPCO with storm recovery efforts across Iowa.

CVEC LINE CREWS HELP RESTORE POWER TO STORM-BATTERED COMMUNITIES

In the aftermath of fierce storms, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative's (CVEC) line crews were called upon to help Southwest Iowa REC in Corning and Carroll Electric Cooperative in Huntsville, Arkansas, which both faced widespread power outages.

Answering the call

The storms wreaked havoc, toppling power lines, exploding transformers and crippling entire grids. Utilities from neighboring states quickly sent their best crews. The decision was straightforward for many workers like Thad DeMoss, a veteran line foreman at CVEC. "You don't think twice. You pack your gear and head out to help," he says.



CVEC lineworkers Kile Overmyer, Ryan Romanco, Tim Scott and Wyatt McCarty provided mutual aid support to Southwest Iowa REC.



CVEC lineworkers Thad DeMoss, Makaine Rinehart, Wyatt McCarty and Jonathan Giesken provided mutual aid support to Carroll Electric Cooperative in Arkansas.

Overcoming challenges

Rebuilding the electrical infrastructure is a daunting task. Crews navigate debris, work atop dangerous poles and handle high-voltage equipment. "Each storm is unique," explains Kile Overmyer, a line foreman at CVEC. "It's tough but incredibly rewarding."

A brighter tomorrow

Thanks to their efforts, power was restored, bringing normalcy back to the affected areas. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the CVEC linemen who volunteered for these restoration efforts. Their dedication and bravery have not only reconnected power lines but also rekindled the spirit of these communities!

QUALITY AG: PIONEERING AGRONOMY SOLUTIONS

Since its inception in 1995, Quality Ag Service, Inc. has been at the forefront of agricultural innovation and support. Founded by Joe Sinclair to cater to the custom-applied chemical and fertilizer needs of local growers in south central Iowa, Quality Ag has expanded its reach and services nationwide, becoming a cornerstone in the agronomy landscape.

Headquartered in Albia, with additional retail locations in Melrose, Agency and Jessup, Quality Ag provides a comprehensive suite of agronomy inputs. Their offerings include seed, fertilizers, chemicals, custom application services, soil testing and grid mapping, all backed by a team of knowledgeable and experienced professionals dedicated to supporting the success of local farmers.

One of the features of Quality Ag is its wholesale chemical distribution division. Recognizing the need for a robust distribution network, Quality Ag leverages direct manufacturer contracts to deliver top-quality branded and generic farm chemicals to growers, custom applicators and independent dealers across the nation. Quality Ag sells to other retail

operations, independent retailers, co-ops and other stores. This division exemplifies their commitment to efficiency and cost-effectiveness, ensuring that even small-scale growers have access to high-quality products at competitive prices.

Emphasis on grower satisfaction

A key pillar of Quality Ag's philosophy is the unwavering emphasis on grower satisfaction and profitability. Sinclair, the company's president and CEO, says, "Our success is directly tied to the satisfaction and profitability of our growers." This customer-centric approach drives the company's operations and customer service, ensuring that every product and service is tailored to enhance the productivity and success of its clients.

Quality Ag's service offerings also include risk management solutions such as crop insurance and grain marketing. These services are designed to help farmers navigate the uncertainties of the agricultural market, providing them with the tools and support needed to make informed decisions and mitigate risks effectively.

In addition to its core agronomy services, Quality Ag operates

a well-stocked farm store that offers feed and hardware supplies, catering to the diverse needs of the agricultural community. This retail arm underscores Quality Ag's commitment to being a one-stop shop for all farming needs, enhancing convenience and accessibility for local growers.

The company's dedication to innovation and excellence is reflected in its ongoing efforts to stay ahead of industry trends and provide cutting-edge solutions to its clients. By continually investing in new technologies and expanding its service offerings, Quality Ag ensures clients have access to the latest advancements in agronomy and farm management.

A family-centered, community approach

Supporting local communities and being a family-oriented business is embedded in Quality Ag's business approach. They operate with a straightforward philosophy: To be the best place anyone would ever want to work.

You can find the company and its 35 full-time and seasonal employees supporting youth – from providing scholarships to hands-on support at athletic events or participating in local church activities and 4-H clubs. When a local farming family is in need, it's not uncommon for members of the Quality Ag team to step up to help.

"Our mission extends beyond just providing agronomy solutions," says CFO and co-owner Kris Knowles, who has been with Quality Ag since 1999. "We are deeply committed to being an integral part of the community, fostering ag solutions and enhancing the quality of life in the region. We believe in the power of community and strive to make a positive impact."

For more information about Quality Ag Service, Inc., visit its website at www.qualityag.com.



SIGNS YOUR HVAC IS IN TROUBLE

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is one of the most important and expensive systems in your home. Equipment functionality issues can affect electricity use, which may result in higher energy bills. Detecting issues early can help you plan for repairs or equipment replacement.

The age of your equipment can be a major factor in function. The lifespan of a heating and cooling system ranges from 15 to 20 years. If your system is approaching or past the 20-year mark, it is wise to start saving for a new system and get replacement estimates. To find the age of your system, look for the manufactured date printed on the unit's nameplate. You can also search online using the model number or call the manufacturer.

There are a few warning signs beyond equipment lifespan that may signal your HVAC system needs to be repaired or replaced.



The lifespan of a heating and cooling system ranges from 15 to 20 years. Proper maintenance and lower use can increase the life of the equipment.

Photo Source: Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources

1 Air conditioning is not as cool as usual. If the air from your air conditioner is warm or not as cool as it usually feels, the equipment has an issue. It could be a problem with the compressor or a refrigerant leak. Many refrigerants, especially the ones used in older systems, are harmful to the environment. Fix leaks before adding more refrigerant. Special certifications are required for handling refrigerants, so hire a professional to ensure the work is done properly.

2 Low airflow. If you aren't getting good airflow, it could be an easy fix, such as filter replacement or opening closed dampers. If you've made these fixes and the airflow is not at normal levels, contact a professional. There could be a bigger problem with a motor or fan.

3 Bad odors. Heating and cooling systems sometimes smell when first turned on for the season. Those smells should be minor and dissipate quickly. Any serious smells – such as burning metal, melting plastic or noxious odors – are a sign the system is in trouble. If you smell those odors, turn the system off immediately and contact a professional.

4 Strange noises. There is typically noise associated with the fans and motors in HVAC systems. Take note of any excessive or new noises. If your system is making any clunking, clanging or

whistling noises, turn it off and check the filter. If that doesn't solve the problem, reach out to a professional.

5 Running frequently. Your system needs to run more often to keep up on extreme weather days, but there might be an issue if it runs too often outside of these special circumstances. Short cycling is when a system cycles on and off before completing the heating or cooling process. Contact a professional to diagnose this issue.

Decision-making factors to consider

Several factors come into play when deciding to fix or invest in new equipment. Consider the severity of the issue, repair costs, the likelihood of additional repairs, equipment lifespan and your budget.

The efficiency of your existing system is also a consideration. Heating and cooling technology improvements have come a long way in the last 20 years. Lower operation costs can offset the cost of a new system over time.

Be proactive and evaluate your options before you are in desperate need. And if you are ready to make a change, always get estimates from at least three contractors before making a choice.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.



The best solution for your home might be a different type of equipment. This high-efficiency, dual-fuel heat pump system heats and cools.

Photo Source: Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

REMEMBERING THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

When I was putting flowers on the graves of our family members on Memorial Day, I visited the grave of my great-great-grandfather Henry C. Nicholson at the Lake City Cemetery. Ever since I was a kid, I've seen his white marble gravestone with the words "Henry C. Nicholson, Co. B, 106 Ill. Inf."

I never knew much about Henry, other than the fact that he was my great-grandmother Myrtle Dougherty's father. I also knew he died in the master bedroom upstairs in my family's farmhouse in 1925.

I became more interested in Henry's story after interviewing some members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and attending one of their meetings this spring in Atlantic, Iowa. These men, who come from Denison, Lenox, Griswold and beyond, are members of the Colonel William H. Kinsman Camp #23.

It was amazing how much each member knew about his ancestor's Civil War service. I shouldn't have been surprised, since the group's mission is to "preserve the history and legacy of the heroes who fought to save the Union during the Civil War." This takes many forms, from educating local school children to locating the final resting place of Union Civil War veterans and providing gravestones.

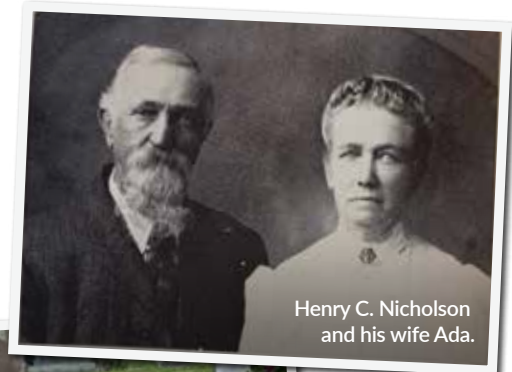
A personal account of the Civil War

These guys inspired me to see what I could find out about Henry Nicholson's life. I was thrilled to find the "Life's History of Henry C. Nicholson Written by Himself," which appeared in the Nov. 26, 1925, edition of the *Lake City Graphic*, following Henry's death.

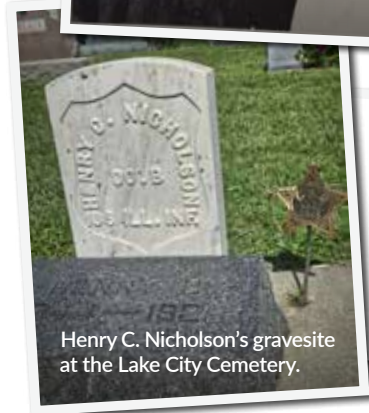
Born in Cass County, Michigan, in 1844, Henry grew up working on farms in Michigan and Illinois. Henry was living in Logan County, Illinois, northeast of Springfield, when "President Lincoln called for 600,000 more soldiers," he noted.

"On Aug. 9, 1862, I went with the Army as a volunteer in Company B, 106th Illinois Volunteers," he wrote. "We camped at Lincoln, Illinois, on the fairgrounds. We drilled hard for two weeks and were then sent south. We went by railroad to Alton, Illinois, and then by boat to Columbus, Kentucky, and then to Jackson, Tennessee. We were soon put on detached service to keep the rebels from burning bridges and tearing up railroads. This brought us in touch with the rebels several times. We had to forage some of the time, as the government was unable to send us food."

Henry noted that, "Four of the boys in my company were captured, and three



Henry C. Nicholson and his wife Ada.



Henry C. Nicholson's gravesite at the Lake City Cemetery.



ran away. I was exposed to all kinds of weather, sleeping in wet clothes, etc. I took very ill with pneumonia and was sent to the regimental hospital and from there to General hospital at Jackson, Tennessee, where I was discharged as an honorable soldier by the medical board, saying I would not be able to stand the service any longer. I was not able to work much for over a year."

Preservation, education and patriotism

Henry eventually recovered, married my great-great-grandmother, Ada (Adams) Nicholson in Illinois, and moved to Calhoun County, Iowa, in 1881. He bought farmland near Yetter, which my family still farms.

The more I've learned about Henry's history, the more I appreciate the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, who promote historic preservation, education and patriotism in their communities. That's worth honoring as we celebrate our nation's independence in July.

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



Members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War at a recent meeting in Atlantic.



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