

● MAY 2024

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



Plant trees in the right places

**Considering solar?
CVEC is here to help**

Sensational salad recipes

Meet this year's Youth Tour winners ▶ See Page 5

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Andrea Carlson, a Consumers Energy member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

RECOGNIZE A DESERVING VOLUNTEER IN JUNE

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



Often, the best way to thank a volunteer is to simply say “thank you” and recognize the work they are doing in the community.

Our annual Shine the Light contest, which will open in June, offers a great opportunity to show appreciation for a deserving member of your community by nominating them for statewide recognition.

Commitment to community

Now in its fourth year, this statewide contest is a way for Iowa’s electric cooperatives to “shine the light” on our commitment to community. During June, we invite member-consumers and employees of Iowa’s electric cooperative to visit www.IowaShineTheLight.com and nominate local volunteers who are making a positive difference. If you receive electricity from an electric cooperative, you’re a co-op member-consumer and eligible to make one nomination per account/household.

Winners receive \$3,000 for their local charity

In July, a panel of judges will review all the nominations and select three volunteers who will each receive a \$3,000 donation to their local charity. We will also announce our three winners on social media in early September and feature them in the September issue of this magazine.

As part of the nomination process, be prepared to share some basic contact information about you as the nominator and for the volunteer you are nominating. You may nominate a volunteer under the age of 18 with parental consent. You will also need to answer this question in 500 words or less: **How has your nominee made a difference in the community, and how might their local charity use the \$3,000 donation?**



As the person who sees the nominations come in as they are submitted through the contest website, it’s a privilege to read your essays each year. We have many incredible volunteers throughout the state who are improving the quality of life in their communities.

You can view the contest rules and see our past winners at www.IowaShineTheLight.com. Thank you for considering the opportunity to recognize a

hardworking friend, neighbor or relative in your life.

Iowa’s electric cooperatives are grateful to local volunteers across the state who deserve to be celebrated for the remarkable work they are doing in their communities. We look forward to learning about many of them through this year’s Shine the Light contest!

Erin Campbell is the director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN \$100 IN BEEF CERTIFICATES!

May is Beef Month in Iowa! To celebrate, we’re giving away \$100 in beef certificates to use at a grocery store. You can select your favorite cuts to purchase, and then make mouthwatering meals at home.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month’s contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than May 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa’s electric cooperatives to win. There’s no obligation associated with entering, we don’t share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the BISSELL® Carpet Cleaner from the March issue was Jason Collison, a Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc. member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY MAY 31!

CONSIDERING SOLAR? WE'RE HERE TO HELP

BY TROY AMOSS



As the cost of installing solar generation systems steadily decreases, more and more homeowners and business owners are considering

the option of generating their own electricity. However, as attractive and popular as solar may appear, it is important for our members to fully understand its true costs, the operational reality of this form of energy and actual energy savings.

Generating your own electricity by harnessing the sun's energy is an exciting idea. It seems fairly easy to do, is affordable, there is plenty of free fuel and it helps the environment, right? Indeed, all this is good news, but as your cooperative's CEO/general manager, I must play devil's advocate and share all the what-ifs and information I can about solar generation systems.

There is a lot to think about before deciding to lease or own and operate your own solar generation system. There are costs that may not be obvious, and it is far better to take extra time to know and understand

your unique energy needs and how these are best satisfied rather than making a hasty and sometimes costly wrong decision. While solar certainly works for many people, it's not the answer for all. If you're thinking about investing in a solar generation system for your home or business, please consider the following information before signing on the dotted line.

How does solar work?

Solar generation systems work when sunlight hits a solar panel and causes electric current to flow. The current produced from the panels is controlled and regulated by an inverter, which converts direct current to alternating current, needed for use by household appliances. The electrical panel is where the power gets distributed throughout your house; any excess electricity may be sent from the panel back to your cooperative's power grid or stored in batteries that are available for purchase.

How does solar work with your cooperative's system?

Most solar panel systems are designed to provide you with a portion of the electricity you need but will not provide 100% of your needs. At night and on cloudy days, and possibly at other high-energy-use times, you will need more power than your solar panel system can produce. That means you will still need to be connected to the cooperative's power lines – resulting in still having an electric bill that includes a daily service availability fee and any kWhs consumed throughout the month.

Will the cooperative buy any excess energy produced by my solar panel system?

Grid-connected solar panel systems are connected to the cooperative's power lines. That means electricity can flow both ways (to your home from your cooperative and from your solar panel system back to the electrical grid). Particularly on sunny days when your energy use may be low, your system may produce excess energy that can flow back to the grid and be purchased back by the

cooperative. Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) purchases energy generated by solar generation systems above what the homeowner uses at cost. Each utility – including CVEC – sets appropriate policies and rates for connecting solar panel systems to our lines (the grid) and for purchasing any excess energy your system might provide. As you begin to explore solar energy systems, be sure to ask CVEC about rate structures, interconnection, essential safety precautions and any other connection-related details.

What are some financial considerations I should think about before committing to solar?

When helping members determine whether solar is right for them, we also discuss the many financial considerations:

- Is a large, up-front payment required or are fees spread out over time?
- Will you own the panels, or will they be leased?
- Are there any hidden costs, e.g., does the roof need to be replaced before installing the panels?
- Are there ongoing maintenance fees?
- Are there rebates or other financial incentives available?
- Are the estimated energy savings worth the investment?
- Is it more cost-effective to invest in other energy-saving measures?

Most importantly, you need to look at your total energy puzzle. Consider your current energy consumption, your home's "envelope," age and efficiency of the HVAC system and home site, etc.

CVEC is committed to helping our members use energy wisely by helping them make educated decisions and we stand ready to help our members determine their best options. Do your homework and contact the cooperative early in the process if you decide to install your own solar generation system.

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



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CVEC'S YOUTH TOUR REPRESENTATIVES SELECTED

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is pleased to announce the two students who have been selected to represent the cooperative on the 2024 Youth Tour trip in Washington, D.C.



Brenna Whitney, a sophomore at Moravia High School, and the daughter of Heather and Chad Whitney of Moravia, has

been selected as one of the two outstanding students attending this year's Youth Tour. In school, Whitney is involved in band, student council and swim team, and she serves as the vice president of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), the wrestling manager and class secretary. She is also involved in her local 4-H club and 4-H youth council as well as her church.

If given an opportunity to speak with a member of Congress, Whitney says she would like to discuss the effects of electric vehicles (EVs) on the power grid. She would push to identify the pros and cons of EVs to determine if they are truly helping our world as much as they are advertised to do.



Ethan Stalzer, a senior at Albia Community High School, and the son of Mindy and Brad Stalzer of Lovilia, has also been selected to

attend the 2024 Youth Tour. Stalzer is involved in school activities, including track, cross country, National Honor Society and Mentors Against Violence Prevention. He stays busy outside of school by participating in his annual church picnic and fish fry, as well as the Albia Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation benefit.

If given an opportunity to speak with a member of Congress, Stalzer says he would discuss the future of agriculture given our changing environment and how environmental bills could shape agriculture as a large part of our state's economy.

Both will join around 40 other Iowa students – and more than 1,400 high school students from across the U.S. – in Washington, D.C., from June 15-21. They will get an inside look at the federal government, tour the city, develop leadership skills, gain a better understanding of electric cooperatives and make friendships that will last beyond the week!

With the generosity of our membership, CVEC is proud to support the Youth Tour program each year. Giving back to the communities we serve and investing in the next generation of leaders is part of CVEC's mission.

CVEC BOARD SEEKING DIRECTORS

The process of recruiting and electing new board members is key to strengthening the cooperative organization that strives to provide unequalled and unparalleled service to its members. Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) board members have a voice in shaping the cooperative's future while working alongside a group of people who share a like-minded commitment to the democratic process. This year, a board seat is up for election in Districts 1, 3 and 5.

- **District 1** – Appanoose County and portions of Monroe and Wapello counties
- **District 3** – Wayne County and a portion of Appanoose County
- **District 5** – Albia City limits

A director is responsible for setting policies and approving strategic plans that are the basis for operating the

cooperative. A director must attend monthly board meetings, other special sessions and educational seminars. These special sessions and seminars are necessary to keep directors informed on the always-evolving aspects of the electric utility industry.

Any interested member who would like to seek election will need to complete the Director Candidate Petition Packet and submit the signatures of at least fifteen (15) members of the cooperative who reside in the district for which the individual is seeking nomination.

Request a packet by calling 641-932-7126, emailing election@cvrec.com or visiting our website at www.cvrec.com/election-directors.

Prospective board candidates must submit the required forms to CVEC by June 6 at 4:30 p.m. CDT.

OFFICE CLOSING

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday, May 27, in honor of Memorial Day. Have a safe and happy holiday!



Some homeowners are taking a closer look at the latest battery-powered systems for backup power when the lights go out. *Photo Source: Tesla, Inc.*



BACKUP POWER: IS A BATTERY-POWERED OPTION RIGHT FOR MY HOME?

BY SCOTT FLOOD

We depend on reliable electricity more than ever before, which is why service interruptions from storms or other situations can be frustrating. Some homeowners are taking a closer look at the latest battery-powered systems as backups during an outage.

Battery technology has advanced significantly in recent years, with batteries able to hold more electricity even as they shrink in size and cost. The same innovations that boosted the performance of electric vehicles (EVs) are being engineered into today's battery-powered backup systems.

How battery backup systems work

As their name implies, battery backup systems like Tesla's Powerwall are essentially high-capacity batteries that store a set amount of electricity, which you can then use to power your home in the event of an outage. Some are constantly charged by the power grid, while others rely on solar panels for recharging.

Traditional standby generators use small internal combustion engines fueled by natural gas, propane or diesel. They can be connected to your home's electrical panel and kick on automatically whenever the flow of

electricity stops. Assuming you keep them refueled, most can operate for days at a time. However, some standby generators can be noisy, and nearly all produce smelly exhaust containing deadly carbon monoxide gas, so they can't be operated indoors. Large standby generators are typically installed outdoors on a concrete pad, which may detract from your home's curb appeal.

Most home battery backups are smaller than comparable generators. Because they don't use combustion to generate electricity, there's no danger of carbon monoxide exposure.



Portable battery-powered backups can be used indoors to power smaller appliances, like your laptop, TV or microwave. *Photo Source: Goal Zero*



As their name implies, battery backup systems like Tesla's Powerwall are essentially high-capacity batteries that store a set amount of electricity, which you can then use to power your home in the event of an outage. *Photo Source: Tesla, Inc.*



Some battery-powered systems are constantly charged by the power grid, while others rely on solar panels for recharging. *Photo Source: LG*

That makes them safer and more environmentally friendly than generators. Most can be installed in a small space indoors. Battery backups are also significantly quieter.

During a power outage, battery backups start instantaneously, unlike generators that may take a few moments to spool up and reach operating speed. Battery backups also don't need regular maintenance like oil changes or spark plug replacement, and there's no need to store fuel.

Pros and cons

Of course, battery-powered generators do present some disadvantages. The amount of power they deliver is limited by the capacity of their batteries. When they're out of electricity, they may need hours of recharging before being used again, so they're not as well-suited for lengthy outages. Energy-hungry appliances, such as air conditioners and water heaters, may drain the batteries' capacity more quickly, so you may have to disconnect them during an outage.

Fortunately, some battery backups are modular, allowing you to add capacity as needed. If you only need a few devices powered during an outage, consider a portable battery-powered system. These small, quiet backups can be used indoors to power smaller appliances, like your laptop, TV or microwave.

Generally, batteries require long charging times, so if an initial outage is quickly followed by another, they may not be able to respond. There are fast-charging systems on the market,

but they carry substantially higher price tags. In fact, the upfront cost of a battery backup is more than a standby generator – in some cases, twice as much for comparable performance.

Like the one in your mobile phone, batteries in these systems can degrade over time. In five or 10 years, they may need to be swapped out with new batteries, adding to the overall cost. Being able to recharge battery backups with solar panels appeals to many homeowners, but the performance will depend upon the amount and angle of sunlight falling upon your roof.

Considerations before purchasing

So, is a battery-powered backup system right for your home? The answer is different for every homeowner, but whether you're considering a battery system or a traditional standby generator, start by calculating the amount of

power you need to keep your home's systems and conveniences operating efficiently. Once you know that, you can determine which models are up to the task and calculate how long the device you're considering can power your home. (If you have a family member whose health depends upon devices, such as a CPAP machine or supplemental oxygen, be sure to factor that into your decision.)

Finally, whether you choose a battery backup or a traditional standby generator, make sure it's designed to protect your home and all your electronics from power surges and other issues that may damage your TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. That way, you won't have to worry about remaining without them long after an outage has ended.

Scott Flood writes for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.

WHAT ABOUT USING YOUR EV?

The growing acceptance of EVs offers another emergency power option. EVs are basically large batteries on wheels, and some models can deliver backup power to homes. Today's average EV stores enough electricity to power the typical home for up to two days. Bigger vehicles, such as Ford's F150 Lightning, store even more.

Tapping into that stored electricity isn't as easy as parking in your garage and pushing a button. Your vehicle must be equipped with the right technology to connect safely to your home's power, including a special transfer switch and an inverter. If you're thinking about using an EV as a power backup, reach out to your electric utility or a qualified electrician for advice.

SENSATIONAL

Salads



STRAWBERRY KALE SALAD

- ½ cup olive oil
- ⅓ cup cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- 12 ounces kale, trimmed and chopped
- 2 cups fresh strawberries, sliced
- ¾ pound bacon, cooked and crumbled
- ¼ cup fresh mint, minced
- 1 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- ¼ cup slivered almonds, toasted

Whisk together olive oil, cider vinegar, honey, salt and pepper for a dressing. To serve, place kale, strawberries, bacon and mint in a large bowl. Toss with dressing and sprinkle with feta cheese and almonds. To toast almonds, bake in a shallow pan at 350 degrees F for 5-10 minutes or cook in a skillet over low heat, stirring occasionally until lightly browned. *Serves 10*

Shirley DeSmet • Alvord
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

CRUNCHY SPRING SALAD

- 4 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 1 cup cooked chicken, chopped
- 16 Spanish olives, chopped
- ½ cup walnuts, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise

In a bowl, combine celery, chicken, olives and walnuts. Add mayonnaise and combine well. Serve chilled. *Serves 4*

Anita Doughty • Ankeny
Consumers Energy

COOL CUCUMBER SALAD

- 1 cup oil
- 1 cup vinegar
- 1 heaping cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 teaspoon celery salt
- 1 teaspoon onion salt
- 3 cucumbers, peeled and thinly sliced
- tomatoes and/or peppers, chopped (optional)

Mix the first six ingredients together. Pour over sliced cucumbers and optional vegetables, if desired. Let salad set for 30 minutes. *Serves 8*

JoAnn Nester • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

SPRING SALAD

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 4 ounces large macaroni, cooked and cooled
- 1 cup carrots, matchsticks
- 1 cup radishes, matchsticks
- 1 cup peas
- ½ cup red bell pepper, diced
- 1 scallion, sliced
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Mix mayonnaise, sugar and vinegar. Stir in macaroni, then add vegetables and season with salt and pepper. Chill. *Serves 6*

Chris Daniels • Casey
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

YUMMY SPRING SALAD

- ¼ cup walnuts, toasted
- 6 ounces broccoli slaw
- 1½ cups kale, chopped
- ½ cup apple
- ½ cup blueberries
- ½ cup strawberries
- 1 orange
- 1 avocado
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice

To toast walnuts, roast at 350 degrees F for 15 minutes. Cut vegetables and fruits into small pieces and mix with walnuts. In a fruit jar, add mayonnaise, apple cider vinegar, sugar and lemon juice. Shake well. Pour dressing over salad and mix well. *Serves 6*

Kary Blunk • Russell
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

POP OF PINK! SPRINGTIME SALAD

Salad

- 1 bunch tender, garden-fresh asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces
- ½ cup fresh peas (or frozen, thawed)
- sea salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- handfuls of salad greens
- 2 radishes, thinly sliced
- ½ cup feta cheese, crumbled
- ½ avocado, diced
- ¼ cup toasted nuts (pistachios, almonds, walnuts or pepitas), chopped
- ½ cup roasted chickpeas (optional)

Dressing

- ¼ cup fresh basil
- 1 small clove garlic
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt

Blanch asparagus in boiling salt water for 1 minute until tender but still bright green. Transfer to ice water for 1 minute. After draining, dry asparagus and mix it with the peas in a bowl. In a food processor, pulse together basil, garlic, lemon juice, zest, vinegar, olive oil and ¼ teaspoon sea salt. Add half of the dressing to the asparagus and pea mixture and toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Arrange salad greens, layer asparagus and pea mixture, radishes, feta cheese, avocado, nuts and chickpeas. Drizzle with remaining dressing, season with salt and pepper. *Serves 4*

Angela Bell • Grundy Center
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative

COTTAGE CHEESE FRUIT SALAD

- 1 24-ounce carton cottage cheese
- 1 15-ounce can mandarin oranges, drained
- 1 15-ounce can fruit cocktail, drained
- 1 20-ounce can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows
- 2 cups whipped topping
- 1 cup pecans, chopped (optional)

Combine all ingredients and mix well. *Serves 8*

Raymond Robbins • Fort Madison
Access Energy Cooperative

BROCCOLI AND CAULIFLOWER SALAD

- 2 cups broccoli
- 2 cups cauliflower
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- white pepper, to taste

Mix all ingredients together. *Serves 6-8*

Nancy Aldrich • Ankeny
Consumers Energy

WANTED:

TAILGATING RECIPES

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

Deadline is May 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

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




 A man in a blue polo shirt and a young child in a green shirt are kneeling on a lawn, planting a small tree. The man is holding the tree's trunk while the child uses a blue shovel to work the soil around its base. The background shows a blurred outdoor setting with other people and greenery.

PROTECT NEW TREES BY PUTTING THEM IN SAFE PLACES

BY SCOTT FLOOD

“Why can’t they just leave my trees alone?”

If you’ve ever wondered that as you’ve watched a tree-trimming crew change the look of your favorite tree, you’ll find the reason in rural Ohio. At a little after 4 p.m. on the steamy Thursday afternoon of Aug. 14, 2003 – with everyone’s air conditioners cranked up to MAX – a sagging transmission power line in the Buckeye State came in contact with nearby tree branches. In minutes, 45 million Americans and 10 million Canadians had no air conditioning or any kind of electric power.

Transmission lines are a critical element of the U.S. power grid. These lines crisscross North America, some held up by slim poles, while others hang below towers resembling science-fiction robots. The giant wires suspended from both types

can carry enough electricity to power more than a million homes, moving it from distant power plants to electric cooperatives and other users.

Federal regulators placed most of the blame for the 2003 blackout on technology that failed to reroute power properly after the transmission line touched the trees. But they also recognized the problem would not have happened if those trees had been a safe distance away from the line. The outage event led to strict rules your electric co-op and other electric utilities are required to follow to prevent large-scale blackouts.

Co-ops are required to document that every piece of equipment and every foot of our power lines are a safe distance from trees and other vegetation. If your home received a visit from one of our tree-trimming crews, it was likely because your trees

were closer to power lines than the rules allow, and your electric co-op was legally required to act.

You have every reason to be proud of your home and yard, and the last thing we want to do is find ourselves altering or removing a prized part of your landscaping. We’d rather help you avoid conflict between electricity and greenery altogether. How? By reminding you to plant your new trees, shrubs or other vegetation where they won’t grow into power lines or other electric equipment.

Consider growth

Whether you want to plant a tree, a decorative shrub or something else, it’s helpful to consider how it will grow over the next 20 or 30 years. Consider the eventual height and how wide the canopy of branches is likely to spread.

For example, even small trees and shrubs should be planted at least 20 feet from power lines. If you can't plant that far away, make sure you choose a species that won't top out at more than 15 feet high. Trees that will be up to 40 feet high or less should be at least 25 feet from electricity, and larger trees should be at least 50 feet away.

Call before you dig

Thinking about what's above the ground is only part of tree planting safety. Before you grab a shovel and start digging, contact 811 to ensure you will avoid accidentally cutting into underground utility lines. The service will send people to your property to mark the approximate locations of utility lines. Because it can be challenging to pinpoint exact locations, use only hand tools when digging within a couple feet of the markings.

All vegetation requires planning

Trees aren't the only type of vegetation requiring thoughtful planting. If there's a pad-mounted

transformer in your yard, you might be tempted to hide it behind colorful flowers and neatly trimmed shrubs. Unfortunately, if there's a problem, crews will need clear access to the transformer. That's why it's always a good idea to keep plantings at least 10 feet from the transformer's doors and at least 4 feet from its sides. Otherwise, crews responding to a power problem may need to remove part of your landscaping.

Finally, if you notice your trees or other vegetation have grown dangerously close to power lines or equipment, don't reach for your chainsaw and try to trim them on your own. Let your local electric co-op know or hire a professional arborist. Tree trimming is more dangerous than most people realize, and you don't want to find yourself in the emergency room – or be the person who plunges your neighbors into the dark!

Scott Flood writes for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.



Whether you want to plant a tree, a decorative shrub or something else, it's helpful to consider how it will grow over the next 20 or 30 years. Consider the eventual height and how wide the canopy of branches is likely to spread.



Plant Trees Safely

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.

LOW TREE ZONE

Avoid planting within 20 ft. of power lines. If planting is unavoidable, only plant shrubs and small trees that reach a mature height of 15 ft. or less.

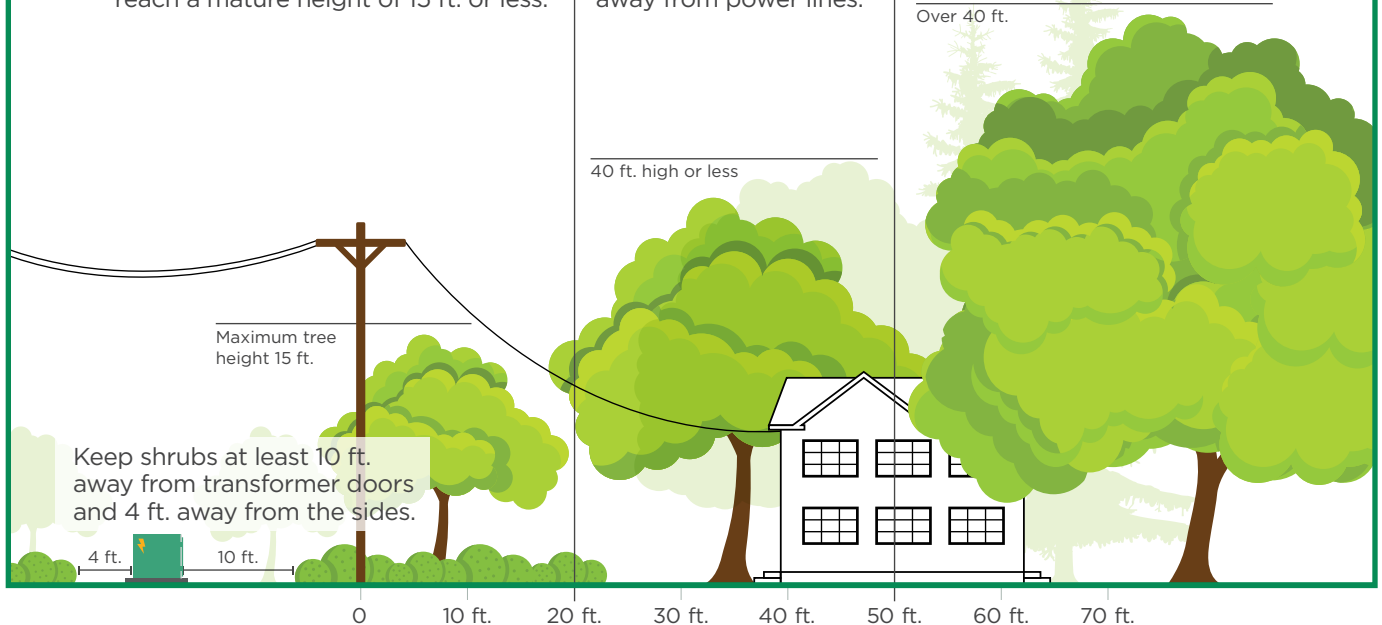
MEDIUM TREE ZONE

Plant medium trees (under 40 ft. when mature) at least 25 ft. away from power lines.

LARGE TREE ZONE

Plant large trees (over 40 ft. when mature) at least 50 ft. away from power lines.

Over 40 ft.



OUTSTANDING CAPITAL CREDIT CHECKS

Are you on the list of members who haven't received or cashed a capital credit check?

One advantage of belonging to a rural electric cooperative is receiving your share of capital credits. Any earnings left over after all expenses and/or reserves are



paid are allocated to members as capital credits. They represent your share of ownership and can also be referred to as patronage dividends.

Each year, hundreds of capital credit checks are returned to Chariton Valley Electric

Cooperative (CVEC) for one reason or another. The list below is of former members from 2010 whose checks have either been returned to the cooperative or have not been cashed.

If your name is on the list, contact CVEC at 641-932-7126. Verify the address, phone number and Social Security number associated with the account. Upon verification, a replacement check will be mailed.

If you know someone on the list, inform them their name is on the list, and they will need to contact CVEC.

If the person on the list is deceased, the executor of the estate of the deceased member should contact CVEC for further instructions to close out the patronage dividends.

A

ADAMS TANIA L

B

BEARD JAMES P
BOETTCHER JENNIFER R

C

CAMPBELL JIM A
CARROLL DAVID K
OR PAIGE L
CARTER ESTATE JUDY A
CARTER GILBERT W
OR SANDRA
CARTER TERESA E OR DUKE
CHAPMAN MITCHELL D
CUNNINGHAM DIXIE E

D

DILLINER AMY S
DIXON KEMBERLYN S
DRYSDALE BRUCE
OR KAREN S

E

ELLIOTT AARON A
ELLIOTT JAMES A
OR SANDRA J

F

FERGUSON JOE P OR TONI
FISHER ESTATE EVELYN M
FITZSIMMONS DON
OR MARLENE
FOLTZ ROBERT L OR TINA L
FRAZIER BRUCE A

FYNAARDT JACOB P
OR JENNIFER

G

GILLEN JERRY L
GORACZKOWSKI
NATHAN T

H

HARLAND MICHAEL T
HARTZ PATRICIA
HOBART CHRISTOPHER P
OR DEB
HOFFMAN R WAYNE
HOLMES JOHN R JACK
HOWARD BARRY B
HOWIE KIM
HUGHES MALCOLM
OR BARBARA
HUGHES PHIL D

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IRWIN MITCHELL R

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JASPER MICHAEL P
JENSEN G W
JONES DERICK J
JUDGE CHRISTINA L

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KENNEDY GENE V
OR DOROTHY
KNOWLES JOHN P OR LOIS
KOFFMAN PATRICK W
KOSMAN AMY E

KRELL BLAIR

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LEADON MARANDA K
LISK RICHARD L

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MACKEY GEORGE P
OR BARBARA
MAJOR JOHN W
MCCOMBS RONALD
OR MACY M
MCGEE ERMA
MCKIM DANA M
MICKLES JERRY G
OR SUSAN
MILLER ESTATE DEAN F
MITCHELL HANNAH H
MONIOT R SCOTT
OR DONNA L

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O'BRIEN ESTATE JIM
OGDEN JACOB T

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PARIS RHONDA L
PROVENZANO JOHN C

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RICHESON ESTATE JON G
ROMINGER JOSHUA J
RUSSO SHANNON

S

SEDLOCK BARBARA
SHUBAT STEPHEN L

SINDT SR JERRY R

SMALL CASSANDRA L
SMITH JUDY K
OR DONALD D
SOUTHERN IA TIE
SPENCER DONNA M
STAMPS MAURICE
STANSBERRY CRYSTAL
STEVENS BROTHERS

T

THOMAS CAROL
TRAVIS JUSTIN J

V

VALLIERE MICHAEL
VANDEVICK STUART K
OR LACY
VISSER LINDSEY A

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WAY LAURANDA M
WELLS JOHN DAVID
WHISPERING BREEZES LLC
WHITE MICHELE L
WIGNALL ESTATE CAROL A
WILLIAMS ESTATE NICK
WILLIAMSON DAVE A
WIRTJES CHRIS G
WRIGHT JANET K

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YOUNG ESTATE EUGENE W

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ZELLER TRACY OR CAREY R

A MOUSETRAP BUILDS A CENTURY-OLD BUSINESS

Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door. That's exactly how Kness Manufacturing Company got started in 1924 by its founder, Austin Enos "Brick" Kness, who invented the first multiple-catch mousetrap while working as a janitor at a western Iowa high school. Mice were invading students' lunches, so the enterprising young inventor took matters into his own hands and created the prototype for the Ketch-All® Multiple Catch Mousetrap.

Today, the company now known as Kness Pest Defense, has manufactured high-quality products for a century and become a global success story. Located in Albia since 1944, the company's team of experienced industry professionals believes in supplying innovative, reliable and easy-to-use pest control products of the highest quality to customers across the world.

"Kness is a third-generation, family-owned company built on a strong Midwestern work ethic and family values," explains Dan Crew, who has served as the company's general manager since 2019. "There is a special charm about the Midwest that makes it special to operate a business here."

Centered on a sense of community

At the heart of the company's success are its employees, who continuously collaborate and innovate to deliver industry-leading products to customers. As part of its commitment to area communities, Kness strives to provide jobs that give employees a sense of purpose. Some of its employees are also sourced through Ragtime Industries in Albia, The Well Resource Center in Pella and First Resources in Ottumwa.

"Our 30 employees are the ones working to manufacture the products day in and day out," Crew says. "When they have ideas, we listen. Many of the innovative solutions



Kness Manufacturing Company's first plant in Albia. The company moved to the community in 1944.

that we have developed over the decades come from our employees having an idea to do something better or more efficiently."

Every team member is an important part of their dedication to customers, as well as setting high-quality standards in the industry. All Kness products are hand-tested before being packaged, and this quality is reflected in the company's less than 1% return rate.

Kness embodies a philosophy of doing things the American Way, which means investing in the community. Annually, the company awards 15-20 scholarships for students to pursue postsecondary education. It also donates to community service organizations, including the local police department, county sheriff's department and animal shelter, to name a few.

Solutions for home and yard invaders

Beyond mousetraps, Kness' pest defense products offer solutions for the entire spectrum of home and yard invaders. Common pest frustrations include anything from ants taking over the kitchen to groundhogs tearing up the garden. Their products

offer solutions for the whole span of home and yard invaders, giving customers the background, warning signs and tips to tackle whatever pest infestation or problem they are facing.

Consumers can find the company's products at many locations throughout Iowa, including area stores such as Earl May Seed & Nursery; Hy-Vee; Lockridge, Inc.; and Theisen Supply, Inc. A complete list of stores is available at www.kness.com. Plus, distributors nationwide work with commercial needs in all 50 states.

Celebrating 100 years

As an expression of gratitude for the Albia community, Kness will hold an open house from 10 a.m. to noon on June 12. All community members are invited to attend, and simple refreshments of cake and beverages will be provided along with facility tours.

"The open house is just a small way that we can give back to a community that continues to give us so much," Crew says. "We are a company that has succeeded by demonstrating family values and a family atmosphere. This philosophy extends to the friends and neighbors of our great community."

WHY SOLAR IS NOT FREE

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

The ability to generate your own renewable energy at home often piques people's interest. The concept of "free" energy from the sun sounds appealing – and many less-than-reputable vendors often make this claim – but the truth is, solar power isn't actually free. There are costs associated with capturing that energy for use in your home.

Prices for a solar energy system and installation vary, but adding solar typically comes with a five-figure price tag. Solar energy systems only provide power when the sun is shining. You still rely on your electric power cooperative for power at night and when the skies are cloudy. You will still have a monthly electric bill unless you disconnect entirely from local electric service.

Solar might be a good investment for you, or it might not. Several factors impact how well the investment pencils out, including where you live, home orientation and shading, electric bill rate structure and cost, available incentives and tax credits, your budget and credit rating.

If you are considering solar on your home, take these steps first:

1 Ensure your home is as energy-efficient as possible. It wouldn't make sense to put a new motor on a boat with holes in it, so why would you put a solar system on an energy-wasting home? Invest in reducing wasted energy before investing in creating new energy. A more efficient home means a smaller – and lower-cost – solar energy system. Solar systems are typically designed to produce the amount of energy a home uses in a year, so if you complete energy efficiency improvements before installing a solar system, make sure the solar contractor accounts for those energy savings.

2 Check with your electric cooperative about the requirements to install solar and how it will impact your bill. If you decide to install solar panels, working with your electric co-op is essential, as you will need to take necessary steps, such as signing an interconnection agreement to ensure the system is properly connected to the electric grid.

3 Get at least three quotes.

Compare each contractor's recommended system design, equipment and cost. It's a significant investment, so you want to know your options.

There are several ways to pay for a solar energy system and installation. It can be bought outright with cash or financed by a loan. There is also the option to install a solar system through a lease or power purchase agreement.

Loans, leases and power purchase agreements can impact the sale of a home. Although a solar system may increase the value of your home, some buyers – or their lenders – are not interested in taking on leases or power purchase agreements.

Before you consider a leap to solar, improve your home's energy efficiency and empower yourself by thoroughly weighing the costs and benefits.

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



Get at least three solar quotes to compare each contractor's recommended system design, equipment and cost.



Make your home as energy-efficient as possible before purchasing a solar energy system.



A more efficient home means a smaller – and lower-cost – solar energy system.



Installing a residential solar system doesn't necessarily equate to \$0 energy bills. You will need to rely on your electric utility for electricity when your system is not producing power.

HONORING THE “GHOST ARMY” OF WORLD WAR II

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

Do you ever hear something that makes you snap to attention? It happened to me this spring when I heard the words “Ghost Army” during a radio news broadcast.

The news report mentioned that this mysterious military unit included Iowan John Cantrell (1923-1990) of Des Moines. The Ghost Army made news that day because the soldiers (most of whom are now deceased) received the Congressional Gold Medal, Congress’s highest honor.

Ghost Army saved lives

The Ghost Army used inflatable tanks, phony uniforms, special effects and other trickery to deceive German forces during World War II, diverting attention from larger military units and saving thousands of American lives in the process.

As I researched the Ghost Army, I kept thinking, “I’m a lifelong history buff. I’ve written multiple books about Iowa history. Why haven’t I heard of the Ghost Army before?” The answer is simple. Those soldiers’ contributions remained classified for decades, with many veterans taking the secret to their graves.

Activated on Jan. 20, 1944, the Ghost Army (officially known as the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops) used visual, sonic and radio deception to fool German forces during World War II’s final year. With 82 officers and 1,023 men, this top-secret unit could simulate two whole divisions – approximately 30,000 men, according to the National WWII Museum’s newest special exhibit, “Ghost Army: The Combat Con Artists of World War II.”

U.S. Army planners in London, England, were inspired by how the Allies had used deception to mislead the Germans about the location of



Sen. Grassley with Caleb Sinnwell.



Sen. Grassley with David Cantrell, son of John Cantrell.

In 2021, Sen. Chuck Grassley attended Caleb Sinnwell’s (his parents are members of Butler County REC) National History Day award ceremony at Nashua-Plainfield High School. Sen. Grassley co-sponsored legislation to honor the Ghost Army with the Ghost Army Congressional Gold Medal Act and garnered congressional support for the bill until it was passed and signed into law in 2022. All this culminated in a March 2024 ceremony in Washington, D.C., when members (living and deceased) of the Ghost Army received the Congressional Gold Medal.

the D-Day landings. This led to the creation of the Ghost Army, which included soldiers from all walks of life. Many were West Point graduates and former Army Specialized Training Program participants.

The Ghost Army also recruited art students and young professionals from ad agencies, communications companies and other creative professions to be assigned to the 23rd. Following the war, some went on to legendary careers, like fashion designer Bill Blass and painter and sculptor Ellsworth Kelly.

Waging war with imagination

Armed with nothing heavier than .50 caliber machine guns, the soldiers of the 23rd took part in 22 large-scale deceptions in Europe from Normandy to the Rhine River. The unit waged war with imagination and illusion to trick the enemy, thanks to inflatable tanks and vehicles, fake radio traffic, sound effects and phony generals.

The 23rd, along with the 3133rd Signal Service Company in Italy, helped liberate Europe from the grip of Nazi tyranny. Following the war, the unit’s soldiers were sworn to secrecy, and records were officially classified until the mid-1990s.

This incredible story has a remarkable Iowa twist, thanks to Caleb Sinnwell of Nashua. In middle school, Sinnwell won first place in the National History Day project for his work to research and build a website on the Ghost Army.

As Memorial Day approaches, I’m grateful for the service of the Ghost Army. Rarely has such a small group had so great an impact on the course of history. I’m also inspired by Sinnwell, whose hard work proves that just one person can make a positive difference that resonates throughout history.

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



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