



Chariton Valley  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
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JUNE 2025

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



**"Shine the Light" on a  
community volunteer**

**CVEC awards scholarships**

**Camping recipes**

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*Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine (ISSN: 2770-8683) is published monthly by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, a not-for-profit organization representing Iowa's member-owned local electric cooperatives. Association address: 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. The phrase ***Iowa Electric Cooperative Living*** is a mark registered within the state of Iowa to the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. The magazine does not accept advertising.

**Editorial Office**  
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA  
50322-2992. Telephone: 515-276-5350.

**Email Address**  
editor@ieclmagazine.com. *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine does not assume responsibility for unsolicited items.

**Website**  
[www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com)

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

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

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## ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Nate Fluit, a Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to [editor@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:editor@ieclmagazine.com). You could receive \$100!

# TAKING OUR MESSAGE OF POWER RELIABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

BY ETHAN HOHENADEL



Electric cooperatives exist to improve quality of life for our member-consumers, plain and simple. A big part of our success over

the decades has been our ability to advocate for rural Iowa priorities on state and federal levels.

At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), we organize legislative fly-ins to Washington, D.C., each year so electric cooperative leaders can talk face-to-face with our elected legislators about timely issues and concerns. We have built a strong reputation for effective grassroots advocacy, and these fly-ins help ensure that Iowa electric co-op employees and directors can speak directly to policymakers about how federal legislation impacts our member-consumers and communities on the local level.

In late April, IAEC coordinated a group of nearly 30 advocates who were able to meet with all six members of the Iowa congressional delegation, including Sen. Chuck Grassley, Sen. Joni Ernst, Rep. Randy Feenstra, Rep. Ashley Hinson, Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks and Rep. Zach Nunn. Our discussions during the individual meetings centered on these issues:

- Requesting continued funding of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Electric Loan program. Electric co-ops repay these loans with interest as they build a more resilient grid.
- Asking our legislators to oppose cuts to USDA and U.S. Department of Energy infrastructure grant programs as electric co-ops work to deploy new energy technologies, build a more resilient grid and defend against cyber threats.
- Imploring legislators to support Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster recovery programs and mitigation programs that are essential for electric co-ops as they restore power and rebuild the electric system following major storm events in Iowa.
- Asking legislators to support and pass additional permitting reform legislation, so we can keep electricity reliable and affordable for the member-consumers we serve.
- Asking our legislators to optimally fund the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. Over the decades, Iowa's electric cooperatives have served as resourceful intermediaries for these grants and loans, which boost rural economies and create or retain local jobs.

We are grateful to all members of the Iowa congressional delegation and their staff for taking time out of their busy schedules to meet with us in their D.C. offices. We were able to share local stories of how federal programs help keep power affordable and reliable for the members we serve, and our group also provided specific examples of rural development success.

It takes a lot of effort to organize these meetings each year, but IAEC's policy and advocacy team believes in the adage that if you're not at the table, you could find yourself on the menu. We are proud to carry on our statewide legacy of advocating for Iowa's member-consumers at the legislative table.

*Ethan Hohenadel is the director of policy and advocacy for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

### WIN A BLACKSTONE CAMPING GRIDDLE!

Satisfy your hunger for amazing food with this Blackstone 22-inch Adventure Ready propane griddle. This Blackstone also comes with a matching hard cover to help keep your griddle clean between uses.

#### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than June 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 Cuisinart® electric skillet from the April issue was **Abby Schulz**, a **Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** member-consumer.



**ENTER ONLINE BY JUNE 30!**

# INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION: WHY WE FACILITATE SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

BY TROY AMOSS



At Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC), we believe in giving young people a chance to learn, grow and explore future careers – right here

at home. That's why this summer we offered internship opportunities in both our operations/linework and office/accounting departments.

These internships aren't just about keeping someone busy for a few months. They're about providing real, hands-on experience. For those interested in linework or trades careers, it's a chance to get out in the

field with our crews, learn how the system works and see what it takes to keep the lights on. For students who are drawn to numbers, business or office work, we offer opportunities to assist with accounting, billing and other key parts of our daily operations.

We want our interns to walk away with useful skills and a better idea of what they might want to do after school. But we also benefit from their ideas and willingness to learn. It's a two-way street, and we're always impressed by what our interns bring to the table.

This summer, we're excited to welcome two interns to our team:

**Grant Powers**, a student at Albia High School, will be working with our operations and line crew team. Grant will get hands-on experience in the field, learn about the daily responsibilities of our linemen and gain insight into the electric utility industry.

**Ethan Stalzer**, a high school graduate of Albia and a current student at the University of Northern Iowa, will be joining our office staff. He will assist with accounting and other key tasks that keep the cooperative running smoothly, while gaining exposure to the business side of the electric industry.

We're thrilled to have them on board and look forward to seeing what they accomplish during their time here.

Supporting local students and helping them explore career paths is just one more way we live out the cooperative difference. And who knows – some of these interns may just find their way back to us down the road, ready to take on a full-time role.

Thanks for supporting programs like this. When we invest in young people, we're investing in the future of our co-op and our community.

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

*Happy*  
**4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY**

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative will be closed Friday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. We wish you and your family a safe and joyful holiday as we celebrate our nation's freedom!



**Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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## ELECTRICAL SAFETY DEMONSTRATIONS FOR LOCAL STUDENTS

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) participated in a safety demonstration during the Monroe County Farm Bureau and Albia FFA Ag Safety Day on May 1. A total of 138 third-grade students from three area schools attended the event, where CVEC employees showcased how to stay safe around electricity and demonstrated proper precautions near power lines.

Safety and education are two of CVEC's highest priorities. We're always excited for opportunities to help teach local youth the importance of electrical safety.



If your school or organization is interested in learning more about CVEC's safety programs, please contact our office at 641-932-7126.



# CVEC EMBRACES COMMUNITY SPIRIT DURING ALBIA'S ANNUAL RESTORATION DAYS PARADE

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) proudly joined in the fun during Albia's 40th annual Restoration Days Parade this April, celebrating four decades of small-town charm and community tradition.

This year's theme, "Funky Town – 1970s," brought out the bell-bottoms, bright colors and disco flair. CVEC volunteers handed out candy and shared smiles along the parade route, spreading good vibes throughout the heart of Albia.

CVEC's involvement in community events like Restoration Days reflects our commitment to being more than just your electric provider. We're your neighbors, your supporters and your fellow parade-goers – always proud to power and participate in what makes our community shine.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR: CVEC ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR MONDAY, AUG. 4

### SAVE THE DATE

- Monday, Aug. 4
- CVEC Headquarters – Albia

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is excited to invite members to the 2025 Annual Meeting, scheduled for Monday, Aug. 4, at the CVEC headquarters in Albia. This year's theme, "Focused on What Matters: Service, Community, Sustainability," reflects the cooperative's unwavering commitment to its core values.

From day one, CVEC has prioritized delivering reliable, member-driven service, supporting the communities we power and making decisions that promote long-term sustainability. This year's meeting theme serves as a clear and straightforward reminder of these guiding priorities.

**"The annual meeting is more than a business obligation, it's a celebration of what makes cooperatives unique," says Troy Amoss, CVEC CEO/general manager. "We're owned by those we serve, and this meeting gives our members a voice, a vote and a direct connection to the future of their cooperative."**

Members attending the meeting can expect a brief update on the cooperative's financial health, highlights from the past year, director

election results and a look ahead at future initiatives. As always, the meeting will include a member gift, prize drawings, a meal and valuable opportunities to connect with CVEC board members and staff.

Time and additional event details to be announced soon.

Stay tuned for more information in next month's newsletter and in the official annual meeting packet that each member will receive in July. We look forward to seeing you there as we remain focused on what matters: *service, community and sustainability*.





# YOUR BLUEPRINT FOR AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT NEW HOME

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Prioritizing energy efficiency when building a new home can create future savings and make living more comfortable. It might cost a little more upfront, but it will pay off in the long run.

Let's explore two approaches: Following an energy efficiency certification plan or adding energy-efficient designs and equipment to your construction project.

There are several efficiency certifications available for new-construction homes that may qualify for discounted homeowner's insurance, tax credits and other incentives.

## Boosting savings of efficiency certifications

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification ensures the home uses less energy while prioritizing sustainable resources and healthy indoor air quality. LEED-certified homes use 20% to 30% less energy than the average home – with some homes saving up to 60% – and can cost the same as non-LEED homes with proper planning, according to the U.S. Green Building Council.

Passive House Certification requires the home to be so efficient it needs little to no heating and

cooling equipment while remaining comfortable for its occupants. To achieve up to 90% less energy use than the average home, the certification focuses on maximizing the efficiency of the building envelope – all components that separate the indoors from the outdoors – including proper insulation levels, air sealing and high-efficiency windows.

ENERGY STAR® NextGen Certification for New Homes recognizes houses that are 20% more efficient than the average home and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 80%.



Although various certifications are available, you don't have to follow a set guide.

### Incorporating efficiency principles

In addition to integrating a certification into your home, consider adding these energy efficiency principles to your new home build.

■ **Advanced framing.** Advanced framing techniques maximize the amount of insulated area and save on material costs in wood-framed homes. This technique can save up to \$500 for a 1,200-square-foot home and \$1,000 for a 2,400-square-foot home on material costs, between 3% to 5% on labor costs and up to 5% on annual heating and cooling costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Choose a contractor who is familiar with these techniques, and check with your local building officials to ensure compliance with local codes.

■ **Orientation to the sun.** The importance of a home's orientation is often overlooked. According to the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors, homes oriented to the sun's path use less energy for heating and cooling to reduce energy bills and improve comfort.

■ **Attic insulation.** If you are building or buying a new home that doesn't allow options for orientation or framing, you might be able to request higher insulation levels in the attic. Increasing the insulation levels likely won't cost much more for materials and labor, but it can help you use less energy and save money in the long run.

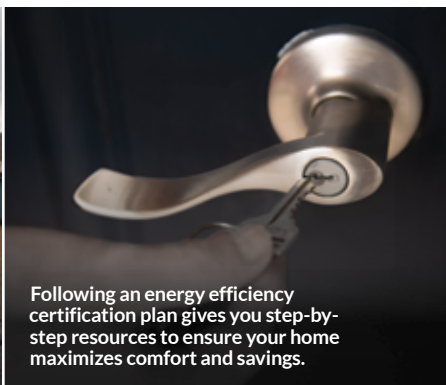
■ **Heating and cooling equipment.** By using energy modeling tools that calculate the home's heating and cooling needs, equipment can be purchased in the correct size. Investing in a more efficient building envelope that is well-insulated and air-sealed can reduce the home's heating and cooling load, making it possible to have a smaller, less expensive heating and cooling system. This saves money on equipment costs and lowers energy use.

Optimizing the efficiency of a new home requires a whole-house approach. Analyze all systems and how they work together to ensure maximum efficiency for a safe and comfortable home.

*Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*



Properly insulating while building a home can reduce the expense of your heating and cooling equipment and lead to long-term energy savings.



Following an energy efficiency certification plan gives you step-by-step resources to ensure your home maximizes comfort and savings.



Consider framing techniques, insulation levels, and heating and cooling equipment to maximize your new home's energy efficiency.

## EFFICIENCY ESSENTIALS FOR YOUR NEW HOME PLAN

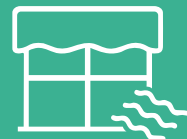
A few thoughtful additions to your building plans can make a big difference in how efficiently – and comfortably – you'll live for years to come.



### Seal it tight.

Thorough air sealing around doors, windows and ductwork prevents drafts

and reduces energy loss. Proper air sealing can lead to savings on heating and cooling costs and improve indoor air quality.



### Choose the right windows.

Select ENERGY STAR®-certified windows with a low U-factor

and the appropriate solar heat gain coefficient for Iowa. This helps enhance insulation and can lower energy bills.



### Plan smart lighting.

Use LED lighting throughout the home, and install fixtures with occupancy sensors or smart switches. These strategies

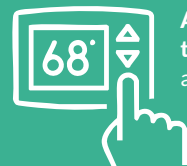
can reduce lighting energy consumption by 10% to 90%.



### Select efficient appliances.

Choose ENERGY STAR-rated appliances, such as refrigerators, dishwashers

and washing machines, to decrease energy use by 10% to 50% and reduce utility costs.



### Add a programmable thermostat.

Installing a programmable or smart thermostat can save up to 10% annually

on heating and cooling expenses by adjusting temperatures when you're asleep or away.



## BREAKFAST HASH

- 1 16-ounce package bacon, chopped
- 1 20-ounce package hash browns
- 16 ounces shredded cheddar cheese
- 2-3 red and green peppers, chopped
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 3-4 eggs

Cook chopped bacon in cast iron skillet over campfire or stove on high heat. When cooked, drain some grease, if desired, then add hash browns. Continue cooking, adding cheese and peppers. Stir occasionally until hash browns are almost ready and cheese is melted. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add eggs and stir, cooking eggs until set. Serves 3-4

Ben Sinclair • Brooklyn  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## HAMBURGER MEAL IN A PACKET

- 1 large ground beef patty
- 1 slice onion
- ¼ cup carrots, cut small
- ½ cup potatoes, cut small
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon margarine
- 1 teaspoon water

Put beef patty on a large sheet of aluminum foil. Top with onion, carrots and potatoes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add margarine and water. Close packet and grill or bake at 350 degrees F for 50 minutes. Serves 1

Pat Lynch • New Hampton  
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

## HICKORY SMOKED BAKED BEANS

- 1 pound hamburger
- 1 pound bacon
- 1 32-ounce can pork and beans
- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans, drained
- 1 cup ketchup
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 3 tablespoons liquid smoke

Brown hamburger and fry bacon separately. In a large bowl, combine both beans, hamburger and bacon and mix well. Add remaining ingredients and cook 6-8 hours in slow cooker.

Anna Domnick • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## SAUSAGE AND PEPPERS FOIL PACKS

- 8 Italian sausage links
- 4 bell peppers, thinly sliced
- 2 large onions, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- fresh parsley, chopped

Heat grill to high. Grill sausages 3 minutes per side, until charred. Divide sausage between four sheets of foil. Top with peppers and onions. Drizzle each with olive oil, then season with salt and pepper. Fold foil to close into packets and grill for 13-15 minutes, until peppers and onions are tender and sausage is cooked. Garnish with parsley. Serves 4

Marta Smigowska • Marshalltown  
Consumers Energy



## CAMPERS' DELIGHT

- 2 envelopes instant chicken and noodles soup mix
- 5 cups water or chicken broth
- 1 can chicken
- 2 cups Bisquick mix
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Mix the chicken and noodle soup mix with water or broth until dissolved. Add the canned chicken and bring soup mixture to a rolling boil in a large camping pan, 6 quarts or larger. Meanwhile, mix the Bisquick with milk and vegetable oil following the biscuit recipe. Drop the dough on top of the soup by spoonful. Lower the temperature, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

Mark Smith • Osceola  
Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## CRESCENT ROLL CAMPFIRE TREATS

- 1 package crescent rolls
- butter
- filling options: pudding, pie filling, whipped topping, chocolate, peanut butter, etc.

Butter the end of a dowel rod. Press a crescent roll around the buttered end, sealing any holes by pressing the dough together. Roast over the campfire until golden brown and the dough slides off the dowel rod easily. Fill with your choice of filling. Be creative!

Hana Hartter • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## BASQUE REGION POTATOES

- $\frac{1}{2}$  pound bacon, cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 1 12-ounce package Little Sizzlers link sausages, cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 8-10 medium size potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 2 12-ounce cans/bottles beer
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Heat a cast iron Dutch oven over campfire. Add bacon, sausages and onion. Fry until cooked through. Stir in the potatoes and peppers. Add one can of beer and cover. Stir often and add additional beer as needed. Serve when potatoes are tender. Salt and pepper as desired. Serves 6-8

Deb Foster • Greene  
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

## BEST BURGERS

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon ketchup
- 1 pound ground beef
- condiments
- buns

Mix all ingredients together and form into four patties. Cook on grill or stove top. Serve with condiments and buns. Serves 4

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

Visit [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) and search our online archive of hundreds of recipes in various categories.



## CAMPFIRE DUTCH OVEN SCRAMBLE

- 1 pound ground breakfast sausage
- 1 dozen eggs
- 3-4 potatoes, cubed
- 1 8-ounce package shredded cheddar cheese
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Cook sausage in the bottom of an open Dutch oven over a fire. No need to drain the grease. Meanwhile, beat eggs in a bowl. Add potatoes on top of sausage and pour eggs on top. Cover with cheese. Place lid on Dutch oven, cover with coals and bake for 25-45 minutes, depending on the heat. Check the doneness of the eggs after 25 minutes and cook longer if needed. Potatoes can be substituted with sweet potatoes or one bag of shredded hash browns. Serves 8

Tefna Greiner • Packwood  
Access Energy Cooperative

## CAMPING BISCUITS AND GRAVY

- 1 pound bulk breakfast sausage
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon butter
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 8 premade biscuits

Crumble sausage and cook in frying pan on stove or campfire. Add flour, stir and cook for 2 minutes. Add milk, stirring constantly. Bring just to a boil, then lower to medium heat and continue to stir until desired thickness. When ready to serve, add butter and thoroughly stir into gravy. Season with salt and pepper if needed. Split biscuits and spoon hot gravy on top. Serves 8

Richard Foreman • Birmingham  
Access Energy Cooperative

WANTED:

## HARVEST SEASON FAVORITES

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

Deadline is June 30

Submit your favorite harvest season recipes. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.

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MAIL: Recipes

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# POWERING ON: BEHIND THE SCENES OF A MAJOR RESTORATION EFFORT

BY ANGELA CATTON

When Winter Storm Nyla's ice, snow and gusty winds toppled 11 miles of transmission lines and rendered 20 substations inoperable on March 19, the staff at Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) knew they were facing one of their most significant challenges in recent history.

NIPCO – a generation and transmission cooperative – supplies wholesale electric power to seven distribution cooperatives covering 6,500 square miles in western Iowa. These distribution cooperatives supply retail power to more than 30,000 member-consumers.

“We started getting reports of damage Wednesday morning,” explains Matt Washburn, NIPCO executive vice president and general manager. “By noon, we realized this wouldn’t be a typical outage response.”

The storm wreaked havoc across Crawford, Harrison, Monona, Shelby and Woodbury counties, with Harrison and western Monona counties bearing the brunt of the damage. Thousands of member-consumers served by NIPCO member cooperatives faced outages lasting up to 84 hours, including those in Onawa and surrounding areas.

The restoration effort would require strategic and well-timed behind-the-

scenes coordination across multiple departments at NIPCO and tapping external partners. While NIPCO routinely updates and practices its documented emergency response plan for widespread damage and prolonged outages, carrying it out in a real-world situation felt both familiar and unnervingly unpredictable.

## **Glimmers of hope in the darkness**

As soon as the weather cleared, NIPCO crews began assessing the damage. The cooperative contracted with a local pilot to get aerial views of damaged lines in harder-to-access areas. Washburn immediately recognized the co-op would need extensive support.

“In a situation like this, you quickly realize the value of the cooperative model,” Washburn explains. “A few phone calls set in motion a cascade of support that would have been impossible to coordinate without our existing relationships.”

Support arrived from East River Electric Power Cooperative (Madison, South Dakota) with eight crew members and Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Humboldt) with 15 crew members. Contractors from Watts Electric were redirected from routine upgrade work to restoration efforts, bringing the total to 43 transmission lineworkers. Each team provided specialized equipment to

navigate difficult conditions like thick mud from melting snow and ice.

Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), based in Cedar Rapids, and L&O Power Cooperative, based in Rock Rapids, offered access to their surplus replacement poles, conductors and specialized equipment inventories, helping NIPCO overcome supply challenges.

## **Spotlighting communications efforts**

NIPCO's communications team informed member cooperatives and the public through news releases, social media and a storm update page on their website.

At the end of the first day, there were a lot of end-users still in the dark, both literally and figuratively. The communications team asked Washburn if he would livestream a message via NIPCO's Facebook page. It was raw, unedited and authentic.

Within hours, Washburn's video update was viewed nearly 3,000 times; by the next morning, that number had more than doubled.

Washburn became the face of the restoration effort, recording twice-daily video updates from the field shared across social media, with some updates garnering almost 25,000 views.



Seeing the work being done and showing that getting the power back on was personal to the entire team working on the restoration built a strong coalition of support from those without power. The team's commitment to keeping crews safe was on display, and the videos gave member-consumers information, hope and heroes to root for throughout the storm's aftermath.

### Support from state partners

By the second day, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) contacted state emergency management officials to request a disaster declaration.

"The response from the state was immediate," notes Scott Meinecke, IAEC director of safety and loss control. "Gov. Reynolds issued a disaster proclamation on March 20 for five of the heaviest-hit Iowa counties that gave us access to additional resources and established a clear channel for ongoing state support."

The proclamation temporarily suspended regulatory provisions related to hours of service for disaster repair crews and transportation requirements for disaster repairs.

### Let there be light

NIPCO's transmission network was designed with multiple pathways to

deliver power, allowing operators to reroute electricity around damaged sections. However, NIPCO's Vice President of Engineering and Operations Jayme Huber explains, "Winter Storm Nyla brought down three transmission lines that support the looped system, rendering the system serving western Monona County and Harrison County inoperable."

By Saturday evening, crews had repaired the transmission mainlines, restoring power to several substations by redirecting electricity through intact portions of the system while repairs continued. This redundant design feature allowed NIPCO to announce system functionality at 9:10 p.m. on Saturday, March 22, less than four days after the monumental storm.

### Power and gratitude

At its April 29 meeting, NIPCO's board of directors unanimously passed a resolution of appreciation for all who contributed to the restoration.

"These aren't just workers; they're neighbors helping neighbors," says NIPCO Board President Louis Reed, who also serves on Western Iowa Power Cooperative's board. "Some of these folks put cooperative members before their own families. That deserves more than just a thank you."

As NIPCO completed final repairs in early April, staff began documenting lessons learned to improve future emergency response.

"Every crisis teaches you something," reflects Washburn. "This experience truly reinforced that the cooperative difference isn't just marketing language – it's a tangible advantage when facing challenges of this magnitude."

For the communities served by NIPCO and their member distribution cooperatives, that advantage meant the difference between days and potentially weeks without power. As one Onawa resident commented on social media: "There are not enough THANK YOUS to say for all you are doing ... After seeing the downed lines between Turin and Onawa today, it could have been so much worse. Situations like these only make us stronger. Go Team Power!"

That spirit – embodied in NIPCO's "Power On" message throughout the crisis – represents both the literal restoration of electricity and the enduring resilience of rural Iowa communities coming together to support the cooperative model that serves them.

*Angela Catton is the vice president of communications and development for Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative.*



Heavy coatings of ice on transmission lines paired with high winds produced galloping lines that brought down scores of transmission structures in the NIPCO system.



Melting snow and ice created muddy conditions that trapped trucks and slowed restoration efforts.

Line crews took a quick break for lunch, served buffet-style off a truck bed.



Transmission structures were snapped in half and lying on the ground in west Monona County.



# CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT: CVEC AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO FIVE SENIORS

As high school comes to a close and a new chapter begins, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is proud to announce the recipients of its 2025 scholarship awards. These outstanding students have demonstrated not only academic excellence, but also a strong commitment to their communities and a passion for continued learning.

Following a thoughtful selection process that considered academic performance, leadership and community involvement, CVEC is honored to recognize five well-rounded seniors who exemplify the cooperative spirit of dedication, resilience and service.

## **\$1,000 CVEC scholarships for any field of study**



### **Casen Baker**

A graduate of Albia Community High School, Casen is the son of Steph and Rodney Baker. He plans to study

business law at Drake University. In his scholarship essay, Casen shared, "Education is a powerful tool that shapes individuals and strengthens communities. My aspiration to become a lawyer comes from my desire to support those in need and inspire individuals facing adversity." He hopes to use his legal education to advocate for justice, provide mentorship and ensure the law serves as a resource for all – regardless of background or financial status.



### **Lily Buckingham**

Also from Albia Community High School, Lily is the daughter of Josh and Jody Buckingham and will be pursuing

a nursing degree at Indian Hills Community College. Lily's passion

for service is rooted in her love for Albia, writing, "My education will empower me to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to my community... I plan to remain in Albia and continue working at our local hospital to ensure individuals receive compassionate and high-quality care." Her commitment to both healthcare and civic engagement reflects her desire to help Albia thrive for future generations.



### **Avery Halstead**

The daughter of Brock and Teresa Halstead, Avery is a graduate of Albia Community High School. She plans to

study science and nursing at Carroll University. Avery, who currently works as a patient care technician, expressed in her essay, "My education will allow me to have the skills, knowledge and experiences necessary to create a meaningful impact in my community... through patient care, mental health advocacy and mentorship." She hopes to use her nursing career to expand mental health awareness, support underserved patients and inspire the next generation of healthcare professionals.



### **Breanna Messamaker**

Breanna, daughter of Jason and Kendra Messamaker, graduated from Albia Community

High School and will attend Des Moines Community College to study respiratory therapy. In her essay, Breanna wrote, "Ultimately, I want to be more than just a healthcare worker – I want to be someone my community can rely on for care, education and support." Through

her studies and future work, she hopes to provide life-saving respiratory care, advocate for lung health and continue giving back to the community that has shaped her.

## **\$1,500 CVEC scholarship for lineworkers**



### **Nate Ballard**

Nate is the son of Melissa Spurgin and Michael Ballard. A graduate of Albia Community High School, he plans

to attend Midwest Line College to become a journeyman lineman. In his scholarship essay, Nate wrote, "Becoming a lineman is not just a career choice for me; it is a way to serve my community and contribute to its overall safety, well-being and development. Through my education, I will learn how to ensure the safe, reliable delivery of electricity and protect my community from the dangers of faulty systems. I plan to continue learning and mentoring future linemen to ensure the future success and safety of our electrical infrastructure."

CVEC is proud to invest in the next generation of leaders and lineworkers through our scholarship program. These recipients embody the values of hard work, perseverance and service. We are confident they will make a positive impact in their fields and communities.

**We extend our sincere congratulations to Casen, Lily, Avery, Breanna and Nate. Best wishes as you pursue your goals and continue to shine brightly in all you do!**



# RUSSELL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES \$5,600 GRANT THROUGH OPERATION ROUND UP



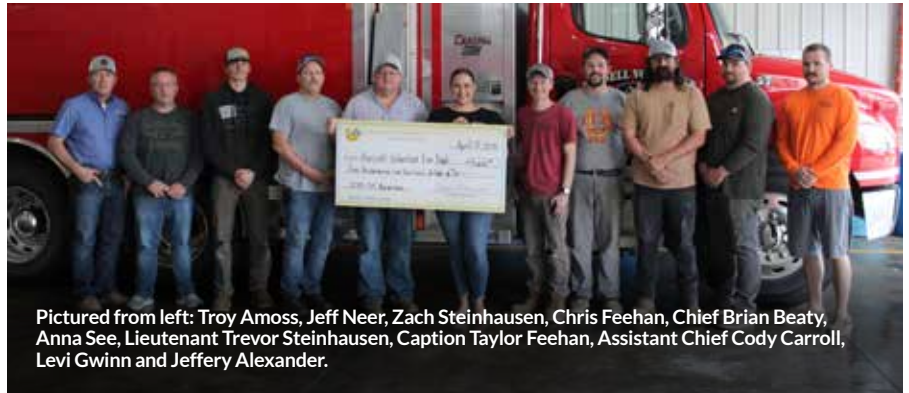
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is excited to announce that the

Russell Volunteer Fire Department has been awarded a \$5,600 grant through the first quarter of its 2025 Operation Round Up® program. The funds will be used to purchase a new large-diameter hose, a vital piece of equipment that will enhance the department's firefighting capabilities and improve safety for both firefighters and the residents they protect.

For small, rural fire departments like Russell's, maintaining up-to-date equipment is crucial, yet often challenging due to limited funding. This grant will allow the department to better respond to emergencies, protect property and ensure the safety of their dedicated volunteer team. It's just one example of how CVEC's Operation Round Up program makes a real, tangible difference in the communities it serves.

## Empowering our community

The Operation Round Up program embodies the cooperative spirit



Pictured from left: Troy Amoss, Jeff Neer, Zach Steinhausen, Chris Feehan, Chief Brian Beaty, Anna See, Lieutenant Trevor Steinhausen, Caption Taylor Feehan, Assistant Chief Cody Carroll, Levi Gwinn and Jeffery Alexander.

## How you can get involved

CVEC encourages local nonprofits and community groups to apply for future Operation Round Up grants. Applications are reviewed quarterly, with the next deadline set for June 30.

If your organization is interested in applying for a grant or would like more information about the program, visit [www.cvrec.com](http://www.cvrec.com).

by turning small contributions into significant, lasting impacts. CVEC members voluntarily round up their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar, with the extra change pooled together to fund grants for local organizations and service projects.

"It's incredible what a little spare change can do when we all pitch in," says Troy Amoss, CEO/general manager of CVEC. "Thanks to our members rounding up their bills, we're able to support important projects like

this that make a meaningful difference in our communities."

Since its launch, Operation Round Up has supported a wide range of initiatives, including emergency services, food banks, youth programs and community improvement efforts. To date, the program has awarded \$118,699.11 to 35 organizations throughout the CVEC service area. This demonstrates how collective action – no matter how small – can lead to lasting change.

# STAY COOL AND SAVE: MEMBER REBATES ON ENERGY-EFFICIENT COOLING

As summer temperatures climb, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) wants to help you stay comfortable – without the sticker shock on your energy bill. That's why CVEC offers rebates for members who invest in energy-efficient cooling equipment.

Upgrading to an ENERGY STAR®-rated air conditioner or installing a smart

thermostat can make a big difference in both comfort and cost. These efficient systems use less energy to cool your home, helping reduce demand during peak summer months.

Check out our website or give us a call to learn about current rebate opportunities and how to apply. Stay cool, save money and make your home more energy smart this season.



# NOMINATE A COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER BY JUNE 30

## Your nominee could win \$3,000 for their local charity

Iowa's electric cooperatives are excited to announce the return of a statewide contest, which celebrates our cooperative commitment to community. Called "Shine the Light," the contest will accept nominations in June and award three winners with a \$3,000 check to their local charity or community organization.

"We've been truly inspired by the growth of this contest in our first five years," says Erin Campbell, director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. "So many people throughout the areas served by Iowa's electric cooperatives deserve to be recognized for making a positive impact."

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the Shine the Light contest will accept contest entries online during the month of June. In addition to receiving a \$3,000 donation for their charity or nonprofit of choice, the winners will also be featured in the September issue of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine.

## How to nominate

Member-consumers, employees and retirees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers. If you receive electricity from an electric cooperative in Iowa, you're a co-op member-consumer and invited to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians. Nominees from previous years can be nominated again for another chance to win.



### Step 1:

Go to [www.iowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.iowaShineTheLight.com) from June 1-30 to make a nomination and to review the contest rules. You can also learn about past winners of the contest.

### Step 2:

As a nominator, provide your contact information and answer the following 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?**



# THANKS, DAD

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

There's a saying that almost any man can be a father, but it takes someone special to be a dad. I've been thinking a lot about my dad lately as I take a more active role in the management of my family's Century Farm in Calhoun County.

Growing up on the farm, my dad was always teaching me. Sometimes this involved rural culture appreciation – also known as tagging along to the farmers' co-op in Lake City or Snyder Implement.

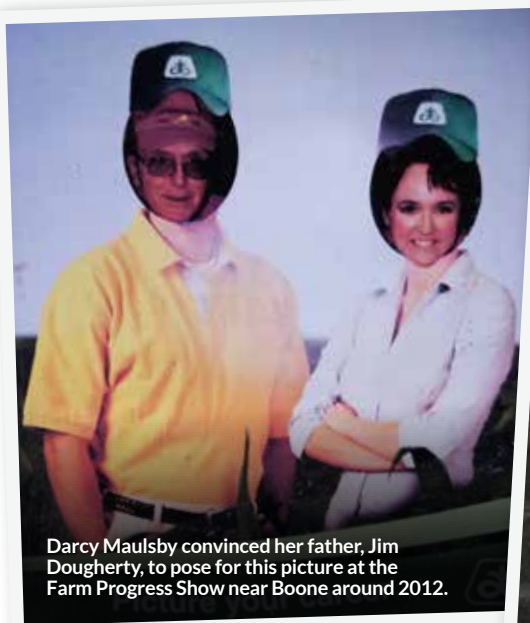
Often, his lessons revolved around tough love. I'll never forget one muddy, cold afternoon at chore time. It was my job to feed the hogs that lived in a dirt lot southeast of the barn. I put on my muck boots, filled two 5-gallon buckets with corn, and prepared to run the gauntlet. Hungry hogs show no mercy.

I was nimble – until I heard that dreaded sucking sound. When I lifted my foot up to take the next step, my boot stayed behind. I plunged face-first into an ooze of mud and manure. Those hogs trampled me in their delight to devour the spilled corn. Shocked, stunned and scared, I could think of nothing better than yelling and crying.

## **"Be a man!"**

My dad came running from the barnyard to see what was wrong. After sizing up the situation, this flustered, annoyed farmer did the only thing he knew to do. "Be a man!" he shouted. In some circles, this unconventional advice is better known as "cowboy up." No matter what you call it, this taught me the power of grit, instead of crumbling when life gets tough.

You'd think I'd have taken this to heart, but you'd be wrong. Part two of my dad's lessons in tough love



Darcy Maulsby convinced her father, Jim Dougherty, to pose for this picture at the Farm Progress Show near Boone around 2012.

occurred following an incident at Mark's Super Valu in Lake City when I was in high school. I was shopping by the milk cooler when a crazed customer crashed a shopping cart into my back and my ankles. Ouch is an understatement, although I was more surprised than hurt.

I told my dad about it when I got home. In my naivety, I assumed he'd show exceptional concern and compassion. Instead, he said, "Didn't you hear it coming?" Yeah, I admitted, I had heard a strange ruckus. "Well then, pay more attention to your surroundings." Message sent; message received. Situational awareness is a skill that still serves me well.

## **Leaving a legacy**

Through the years, I learned it was probably smart to listen to my dad. When I went to college, I didn't know what I wanted to study, although I showed some ability with writing and communication. My dad (an Iowa State University alum) suggested I enroll at Iowa State and study ag journalism. He figured my experience as a farm kid would help me carve a niche.



Jim Dougherty (1937-2019) and his dog, Libby, took a break on the front steps of his farmhouse in 2014.

He was right. That education helped prepare me for a career that has allowed me to generate an income, launch a side gig as a book author, enjoy lifelong learning, take advantage of opportunities for travel (across Iowa and around the world) and build friendships I treasure.

Lest you think my dad knew everything, not all his advice was solid. "Stay off that damn internet," comes to mind.

I can still hear my dad's voice in so many ways. Although he died at age 82 in October 2019, I'm grateful a part of him lives on through me. That's how it should be. Good fathers provide and guide. The best leave a legacy of wisdom and love that endures.

Do you have stories of your father? Share them with me at [yettergirl@yahoo.com](mailto:yettergirl@yahoo.com).

*Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at [www.darcymaulsby.com](http://www.darcymaulsby.com).*



IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine  
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June 2025

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