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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



Understanding the factors
behind the rate adjustment

Inside Iowa's power
plant museum

Seafood recipes

CVEC awards Operation Round Up grants ▶ See Page 12

CONTENTS



6



8



10

VOLUME 78 • ISSUE 3

3

STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE

Energy issues key in 2025 Legislative Session

3

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a \$100 gift card for landscaping

14

SAFETY MATTERS

Grain bin safety notice

15

OUT BACK

The power of the assist

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Rene Carson, 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!

ENERGY ISSUES AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BY HALEY MOON



Energy policy remains a top priority for Iowa lawmakers in the current state legislative session. Since the 91st General Assembly began on Jan. 13, legislative leaders

and Gov. Reynolds have emphasized key issues that could impact how electricity reaches Iowans in their homes and businesses. As always, Iowa's electric cooperatives are actively engaged in these discussions to ensure the voices of co-op member-consumers are heard and that the best interests of rural Iowa are considered.

The following are key legislative issues under discussion and their potential impact on your local electric cooperative:

Service territory protections

Protecting the state's defined electric service areas remains the top priority for Iowa's electric cooperatives. This law, established nearly 50 years ago, is essential for cooperatives to invest in local economic development, maintain affordable rates and ensure reliable service. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives remains vigilant in safeguarding these protections from legislative proposals that could undermine them. Learn more at www.ProtectRuralIowa.com.

Third-party solar developments

Proposals in the legislature aim to establish third-party community solar programs in Iowa. These arrangements are different from the community solar programs available from some Iowa electric co-ops. You may have received information at your home or heard of neighbors being approached about subscribing to or leasing land for non co-op community solar projects.

While electric cooperatives support a diverse energy generation mix, there are concerns that these entities do not adhere to the same consumer protection

standards required of public utilities. Additionally, these projects could disrupt assigned service territories that are crucial for co-ops. If you have questions about solar energy or are approached by one of these third-party entities, please contact your local cooperative for more information.

Governor's energy priorities

Gov. Reynolds has outlined several energy-related priorities aimed at shaping Iowa's future in energy generation, transmission and distribution. These initiatives cover a wide range of topics, including how investor-owned utilities plan for and set rates and invest in new energy projects, ways the state of Iowa can examine the potential of nuclear energy, and making funds available for water infrastructure projects.

One issue of particular importance to electric cooperatives is the Right of First Refusal (ROFR). ROFR grants Iowa-based electric utilities the first opportunity to construct and maintain regional transmission projects within the state. Electric cooperatives support ROFR, as it enables Iowa's utilities to continue working together on critical

infrastructure projects that help maintain reliable electricity service.

Iowa's electric utilities employ thousands of Iowans to design, maintain and repair power lines in the state to ensure power continues to flow during our most extreme weather conditions. They invest in our communities and utilize Iowa companies as suppliers while working with landowners to protect Iowans' interests. Learn more at www.IowaElectricHomeTeam.com.

Staying engaged in the legislative process

As the legislative session progresses, your local electric cooperative directors and staff are actively engaging with lawmakers to advocate for policies that protect and strengthen rural Iowa's energy future.

For more information on these issues or to stay updated on legislative developments, please contact your local cooperative.

Haley Moon is the senior manager of policy and advocacy for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN A \$100 GIFT CARD FOR LANDSCAPING!

Planting season will soon be here! Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of a typical household's energy use, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. To help with your spring landscaping projects, we're giving away a \$100 gift card from a local garden center or nursery.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than March 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 stainless steel bread machine from the January issue was **Lisa Liles**, an **Access Energy Cooperative** member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY MARCH 31!

UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS BEHIND THE RATE ADJUSTMENT

BY TROY AMOSS



In my last article, I introduced Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative's (CVEC) upcoming rate adjustment, which will take

effect on your May bill. In this article, I want to dive deeper into the factors driving this change and how CVEC is working hard to manage costs while still providing the reliable service you depend on.

What's driving the change?

As much as we try to control our expenses, there are a few factors beyond our control that are influencing the need for this rate adjustment. Here's a closer look:

1 Rising fuel costs

The cost of fuel used to generate electricity has risen worldwide. These higher costs directly impact what CVEC pays for the electricity we purchase to deliver to you – our members. Additionally, while renewable energy sources are an important

part of the transition to a sustainable future, they often come with higher initial costs and infrastructure expenses, which can further impact electricity prices.

2 Infrastructure maintenance and modernization

CVEC's electric system spans hundreds of miles, connecting rural communities and ensuring every member has access to reliable power. Maintaining and upgrading this system is essential but costly. We are continually upgrading poles, wires, transformers and substations to help reduce outages and improve service quality. In addition, these investments increase CVEC's assets, ensuring long-term reliability and strengthening the cooperative's infrastructure for future generations.

3 Regulatory compliance

Ongoing changes in federal and state regulations require CVEC to invest in new equipment and systems to ensure safety, reliability and sustainability. While these regulations are important, they come with added costs.

4 Investments in technology

Advancements in technology allow us to provide more reliable service and improve the efficiency of our operations. From smart meters to improved outage detection, these investments help CVEC serve you better, but they have upfront costs.

How CVEC is controlling costs

Although many of these factors are beyond our control, CVEC is doing everything we can to manage expenses and minimize the impact of the rate adjustment. The following are a few ways we work to control costs:

■ Energy efficiency programs.

We promote programs that

help members save energy. By lowering usage, members can reduce their bills, even as rates change.

■ **Strategic planning.** CVEC's leadership is constantly reviewing operational expenses and looking for ways to cut costs without compromising service quality.

■ **Smart investments.** Every investment we make is carefully considered. We prioritize upgrades and adopt cost-effective solutions to ensure that every dollar spent directly benefits our members and supports our mission to provide reliable and affordable power.

Commitment to members

At CVEC, we are here to serve you, our members – not to make a profit. Every decision we make is focused on providing reliable, affordable power, while maintaining a commitment to sustainability. This rate adjustment is necessary to help us continue meeting your needs while preparing for the future.

In the final article of this series, I'll share how CVEC plans to support our members during times of change. I'll provide tips for managing your energy costs and offer more details on how to learn about the rate adjustment. Stay tuned and thank you for your continued trust in us.

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



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CHARITON VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ADVOCATES FOR AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE POWER

Nearly 170 senior staff and directors from Iowa electric cooperatives, including Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC), traveled to downtown Des Moines on Jan. 14 to attend our annual reception at the start of the 91st General Assembly of the Iowa Legislature.

“Meeting with our legislators is crucial to ensuring they understand the challenges and priorities of Iowa’s electric cooperatives. At the reception, we had productive discussions with Austin Harris and Amy Sinclair about the importance of protecting defined service territories and maintaining reliable, affordable electricity for our members. These face-to-face conversations allow us to advocate for rural Iowans and emphasize the vital role co-ops play in powering our communities,” says Troy Amoss, CEO/general manager of CVEC.

At the event, co-op advocates had the opportunity to discuss concerns and priorities face to face with their state legislators. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the reception in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and FUEL Iowa.

These conversations reinforced the need to address several key issues that could impact the affordability and reliability of electricity for the communities we serve.

Our top legislative priority this session is protecting the state’s defined electric service territories. In Iowa, your



Pictured from left to right: John Houser, director; Norm Major, director; Rep. Austin Harris; Marchelle Brown, director; and Troy Amoss, CEO/general manager.



Pictured from left to right: Norm Major, director; Marchelle Brown, director; Sen. Amy Sinclair; John Houser, director; and Troy Amoss, CEO/general manager.



CEO/General Manager Troy Amoss (right) and co-op directors discuss the importance of protecting defined service territories and maintaining reliable, affordable electricity for CVEC members with Rep. Harris.

location determines which electric utility serves your home, farm or business. For almost 50 years, these defined electric service areas have provided certainty, allowing electric cooperatives to maintain affordable rates, strengthen grid resiliency and invest in economic development throughout rural Iowa. We strongly oppose any efforts to change or amend the service territory law. You can learn more about this issue at www.ProtectRuralIowa.com.

Advocacy continues throughout the session

In the coming months, Iowa’s 91st General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to

Iowa’s rural economy. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, Iowa electric cooperatives will continue advocating for a balanced approach to energy policy that prioritizes reliability, affordability and local decision-making.

We’ll have another opportunity to champion our members’ needs at our annual Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) Day on the Hill event on March 19. This event serves as another chance for cooperative leaders to connect with legislators and advocate for policies that benefit rural Iowa.

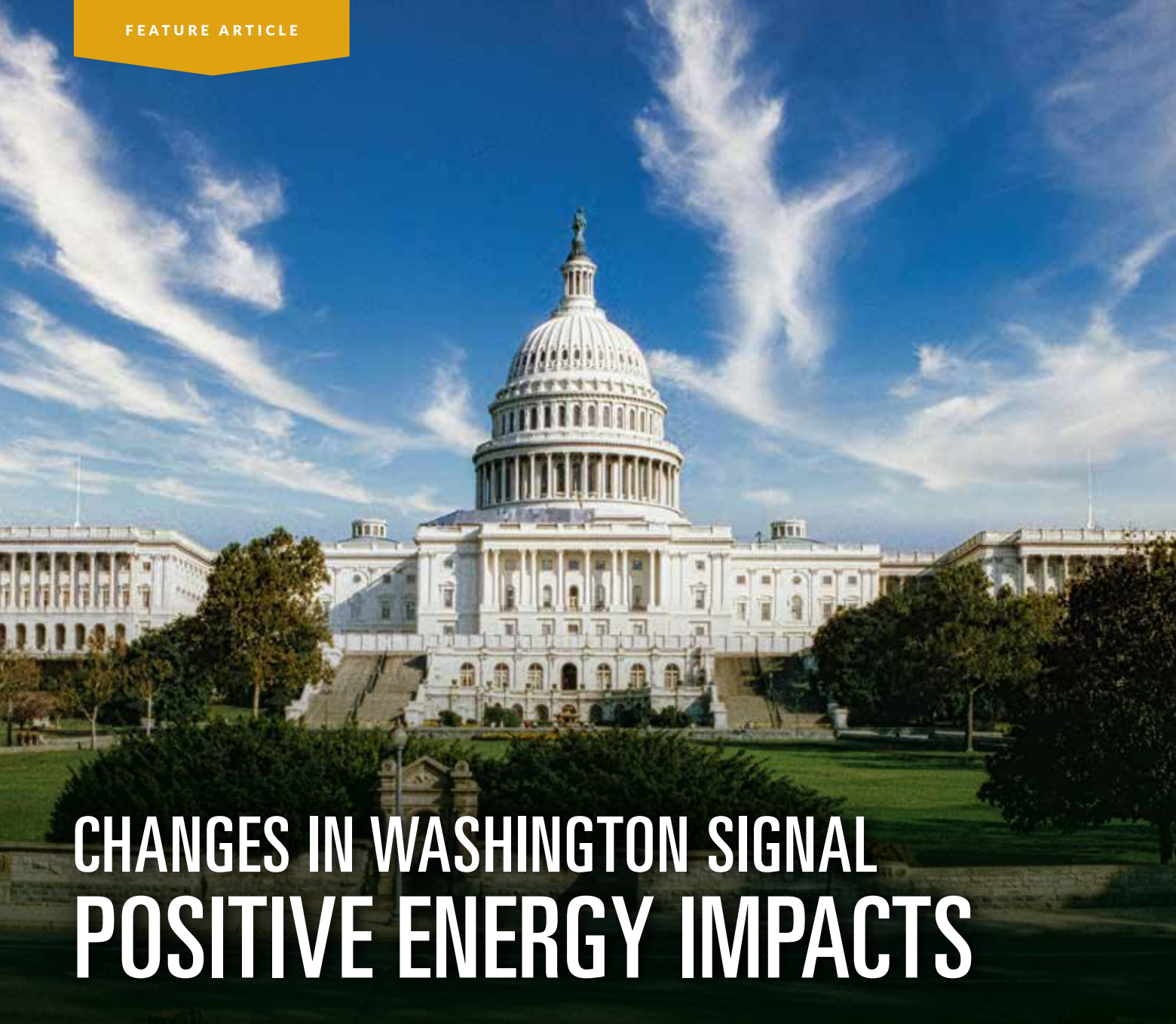
Learn more about our advocacy efforts and how you can support Iowa’s electric cooperatives by visiting www.IARuralpower.org.

WINTER MORATORIUM ENDS

Members who qualified for energy assistance during the winter moratorium – please be advised the moratorium ends **April 1**.

If your account is past due, you must contact our office **before April 1, 2025**, to make payment arrangements and avoid service interruption.





CHANGES IN WASHINGTON SIGNAL POSITIVE ENERGY IMPACTS

BY SCOTT FLOOD

The 2024 election centered on widespread frustration with America's economy and immigration. While energy policy didn't receive as much time in the campaigning spotlight, the second Trump presidency is likely to result in significant changes in how our nation approaches its ever-growing demand for electric power. For electric cooperatives, it appears those changes will be positive.

"America is at an energy crossroads, and the reliability of the electric grid hangs in the balance," explained Jim

Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), in a message expressing the association's desire to work closely with President Trump and Congress to protect energy affordability and reliability. "Critical generation resources are being retired faster than they can be reliably replaced. At the same time, electricity demand is skyrocketing as power-hungry data centers and new manufacturing facilities come online. Smart energy policies that keep the lights on are more important than ever."

A critical juncture in energy policy

Shortly after the election, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) warned that many regions face an elevated risk of electricity shortfalls in the face of extreme weather such as prolonged cold snaps. NERC, the nation's grid watchdog, reiterated that older power plants are being retired at the same time Americans are using more electricity. While solar and wind farms have been sprouting up, they can't deliver the always-available electricity that coal- and gas-fired plants have

long provided. Hurricanes Helene and Milton compounded the problem by damaging critical grid infrastructure.

The first Trump administration scaled back many of President Obama's initiatives to replace fossil fuels with "clean power," so observers expect President Trump's team to overturn many of the Biden administration's energy-related policies. NRECA has been urging officials to eliminate regulatory burdens such as the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) power plant rule – which many believe exceeds the EPA's legal authority – and to encourage the U.S. Department of Energy and other agencies to take steps that will eliminate bureaucratic roadblocks and bolster the long-term reliability of the nation's grid.

Advocating for reliable, affordable power

Electric cooperatives' vision for America's energy future calls for a durable plan to ensure our member-consumers and the largely rural communities they call home will have reliable and affordable access to electricity in the face of the nation's skyrocketing demand.

Electric cooperatives are comfortable taking a leadership role in this effort because we have worked hard with elected officials and their staffs to advocate for our members. Policymakers from both parties have consistently commended electric cooperatives as reputable energy providers and engines of economic development that play a vital role in transforming the local communities they proudly serve.

Solidifying a positive and resilient energy future for co-op communities involves a long list of issues and elements. For example, NRECA is pressing Congress and the Trump administration to take concrete steps to overhaul outdated permitting laws that delay or frustrate efforts to build the new infrastructure tomorrow's energy needs demand. We need to address public lands and conservation regulations that make it challenging to operate powerlines, maintain rights of way and reduce potential wildfire



Electric cooperatives' vision for America's energy future calls for a durable plan to ensure our member-consumers and the largely rural communities they call home will have reliable and affordable access to electricity. Photo Source: Garrett Hubbard



Electric cooperatives are pressing Congress and the Trump administration to take concrete steps to overhaul outdated permitting laws that delay or frustrate efforts to build the new infrastructure tomorrow's energy needs demand. Photo Source: Robb McCormick Photography

threats. Electric cooperatives are also working to support their member-consumers by maintaining federal programs and tax credits that bolster electric reliability and affordability.

While President Trump has earned a reputation for demanding swift action on his priorities, we need to remember that change doesn't happen quickly in Washington. For example, undoing the EPA power plant rule will require a robust regulatory process that will take some time to ensure this repeal can withstand expected legal challenges. While the exact path we'll take is still coming into focus, our top priority is the interest of the local communities

we serve and the everyday Americans who call them home.

We will continue to strengthen our voice by making sure our representatives at the federal and state level are aware of our concerns and the importance of ensuring reliable, affordable electricity for all Americans.

The strength of the electric cooperative movement and the clout we have when we work together are unsurpassed, positioning us for continued success as we work with the new administration.

Scott Flood writes on a variety of energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



MAINE BAKED FISH

- 4-6 white fish fillets, any type
- 1 can cream of shrimp soup
milk
- 1 can small shrimp, drained and rinsed
buttered breadcrumbs

Place fish in a buttered, flat baking dish. Thin the shrimp soup with milk and pour over fish. Add canned shrimp over soup layer. Cover lightly with breadcrumbs. Bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes. Serves 4-6

Jane Person • Batavia
Access Energy Cooperative

BLACKENED WALLEYE

- 2-4 walleye fillets
- 1 stick butter
Zatarain's blackened seasoning, to taste

Rinse the walleye fillets in cold water, pat dry. Place in plastic or metal bowl in the refrigerator. Melt butter in a small pan, then remove from heat and let cool briefly. Pour melted butter over the chilled fillets. Toss with tongs to ensure they are coated entirely. Shake Zatarain's blackened fish spice over the fillets, stir and add spice until the fillets are coated well. Outside, heat a cast iron skillet over a propane fish fryer until smoking hot. Use tongs to put a few fillets into the hot pan. Leave room between fillets. Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side. Remove and enjoy. Serves 2-4

Allyson Bailey • Hamilton
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

CAROL'S MOCK LOBSTER

- 3 quarts water
- 1 tablespoon mixed pickling spices
- 2 bay leaves
- ¼ cup vinegar
- 1 pound frozen haddock or cod fillets, thawed
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
lemon butter, as desired

Bring water to boil on high heat. Place pickling spices in a cheesecloth bag and place in boiling water. Add bay leaves and vinegar. Reduce heat to medium and add fillets. Cook for 2-3 minutes, until the fish turns white. Remove and place fillets on oven broiler rack. Brush with butter and sprinkle with paprika. Broil 3 inches from broiler unit for 7-8 minutes. Don't turn over. Serve with lemon butter. Serves 4

Nancy Pelzer • Ames
Consumers Energy

"NORWEGIAN" FISH BOIL

- 8-10 6-ounce haddock fillets, or any white fish
- 3-5 pounds small red potatoes
- 1 bag pearl onions

Rinse fish and tie fillets in cheesecloth. In a large pot, boil potatoes and onions for approximately 20 minutes. Add fish and boil for an additional 10 minutes. Remove and serve on a large platter. This goes well with coleslaw and lefse. Serves 8-10

Janmarie Olson • Holland
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative

SALMON WITH TOMATOES AND FETA

- 4 4-ounce salmon fillets
- Old Bay seasoning, to taste
- 1½ cups cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- ¾ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ¾ cup lemon juice
- ¾ cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon parsley flakes

Place salmon fillets on individual pieces of foil, pulling the foil up around the sides to form a boat. Sprinkle salmon with Old Bay seasoning. Mix the remaining ingredients in a large bowl. Spoon mixture over the salmon in the foil. Wrap the foil around the salmon and topping, closing the edges. Place in baking dish and bake at 350 degrees F for 30-35 minutes. *Serves 4*

MacKenzie Dreeszen Rutter • Ankeny
Consumers Energy

OYSTERS BURGUNDY

- 10-15 medium oysters
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon green onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons parsley, chopped
- ½ teaspoon garlic, minced
- breadcrumbs
- Parmesan cheese
- paprika

Place oysters and lemon juice in a casserole dish; add salt and pepper to taste. Blend butter, green onion, parsley and garlic. Spread mixture over oysters. Sprinkle top with breadcrumbs, cheese and paprika. Bake at 350 degrees F for about 10 minutes or until crumbs are brown. *Serves 4*

Cheryl Schiller • Donnellson
Access Energy Cooperative

SALMON LOAF

- 1 15.5-ounce can salmon
- ½ cup milk
- ¾ cup soft breadcrumbs
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons onion
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- dash pepper

Drain salmon, reserving liquid. Pour milk over breadcrumbs and let stand for 5 minutes. Then add salmon, liquid reserved from salmon, eggs, onion, lemon juice, parsley and seasonings. Spread in greased pan and bake at 350 degrees F for 40-50 minutes, until firm. Serve plain or with sauce of your choice.

Ardine Dillingham • Hartley
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Visit www.ieclmagazine.com and search our online archive of hundreds of recipes in various categories.



SHRIMP TACOS

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons sour cream
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 cup green cabbage
- ½ cup red cabbage
- 1 pound shrimp, raw
- 1 tablespoon taco seasoning
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 6-8 medium tortillas
- avocado, optional
- tomatoes, optional

In a bowl, combine mayonnaise, sour cream, garlic, cilantro and lime juice for a cilantro lime sauce. Finely shred cabbage and add cilantro lime sauce. Mix well and set aside. Season the shrimp with taco seasoning. Heat oil and butter in a skillet. Once hot, add shrimp and cook for 2 minutes per side until opaque. Warm the tortillas, add a bed of slaw mix and top with shrimp. Add any other ingredients to your liking such as avocado or tomatoes. You can also substitute hoagie buns for tortilla shells and make a po'boy sandwich. *Serves 4-5*

Crystal Hammes • Libertyville
Access Energy Cooperative

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IOWA'S REA POWER PLANT MUSEUM RECEIVES NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

BY MADISON ALERT



The history of electric cooperatives is woven into the fabric of rural America, where a shared sense of purpose has always united individuals in pursuit of a brighter future. Before electrification, rural life was defined by darkness, isolation and relentless challenges. Yet, even in the most trying times, these communities possessed a determined spirit – a vision that would forever change the course of American history. Fueled by grit and willpower, that spirit laid the foundation for one of the most profound and transformative movements in our nation's past: rural electrification.

On May 11, 1935, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7037, establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). This pivotal moment in history created the Rural Electrification Act, a federal loan program that sought to bring the power of electricity to

rural America. While investor-owned utilities resisted, farmers of rural America saw an opportunity and flooded the newly formed program with applications, signaling the dawn of the electric cooperative movement.

Embracing the call for rural electrification

Northern Iowa embraced the call for electrification. Newspapers like the *Hampton Chronicle* served as champions for electrification, urging community support with articles like the March 12, 1936, piece, "Are You Interested in Rural Electrification?" It was a call for unity to bring light to the countryside. And so, Iowa farmers gathered, forming cooperatives that would forever change the landscape of rural life.

The cost of this dream was shared among farmers committing to pay a monthly fee, roughly \$5, for 100 kilowatt-hours of electricity.

It was a leap of faith for many as skepticism and doubt lingered. However, the cooperative spirit ran deep, and farmers' collective perseverance soon proved naysayers wrong.

On Feb. 10, 1937, northern Iowa farmers joined together to incorporate the generation cooperative Federated REA. Days later, REA Deputy Administrator John Carmody announced the decision to fund Federated REA to serve Franklin, Hardin, Wright, Butler, Grundy and Hancock counties in Iowa. The \$222,000 loan laid the groundwork for Iowa's Reeve Power Plant south of Hampton.

A dream becomes reality

The Reeve Power Plant is situated on six acres next to the Rock Island Railroad, which helped ensure that construction materials and fuel could be easily transported to the site. The

winning construction bid of \$51,875 by a local contractor allowed work to begin on Sept. 1, 1937, signifying construction of the power plant was full steam ahead. Concrete was mixed and poured by hand; innovative methods of steam and tarps helped overcome the freezing temperatures of Iowa's winter.

By January 1938, the Reeve Power Plant was fully enclosed, and in mid-March, the first two engines – massive Nordberg powerhouses – were tested and successfully fired up. Then, on March 23, 1938, at 8:30 a.m., the dream became a reality. The Reeve Power Plant began operations, delivering 24-hour electric service to its six rural counties. With that, Federated REA became the first cooperative west of the Mississippi River to generate and distribute farmer-owned electricity, marking the beginning of a new era. In less than seven months, rural electrification had arrived. In the years that followed, two additional engines were added, and crews

braved challenging weather and the struggles that came with expanding.

In 1947, Federated REA merged with the Central Electric Federated Cooperative Association in Pocahontas to form Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Corn Belt Power). This new cooperative structure responded to the soaring demand for electricity, utilizing the Reeve Power Plant to manage overflow from its primary generation facility. During this period of peak demand, energy brownouts became a common occurrence, with sections of the service territory experiencing reduced electricity usage to balance the grid. Concurrently, rural electrification had reached over 90% of U.S. farms, a remarkable achievement that underscored the success of the cooperative business model.

In 1950, Corn Belt Power transitioned the Reeve Power Plant to standby mode after a new generation source was commissioned to meet the grid's growing needs. Despite this change, the site continued to house a substation, providing vital support to the cooperative's members in the region and maintaining its role in the legacy of rural electrification. After serving its membership for decades, the generation plant was finally taken out of commission in 1974.

Maintaining historical significance

In 1988, the plant was donated to the Franklin County Historical Society, and through the efforts of countless volunteers, the REA Power Plant Museum was born. The museum, which opened to the public in 1990 as a Historic Place on the National Register, stands as a powerful reminder of the hard work, sacrifice and unity that made rural electrification possible. In 2002, the museum earned recognition as a point of interest within the Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area.

In December 2024, the Reeve Power Plant was designated as a National Historic Landmark, honoring its legacy as the last remaining original plant built following the 1936 Rural Electrification Act. This recognition commemorates the plant's physical



structure and celebrates the remarkable spirit of innovation and perseverance it represents.

With many thanks to the Franklin County Historical Society and volunteers like Rick Whalen of Hampton, the historic site remains a testament to rural America's transformation. This dedication helps to preserve the spirit of hope, resilience, and effort that made electrification possible, ensuring the story continues to inspire future generations.

Museum exhibits showcase the challenges and triumphs of a bygone era, while displays highlight life before and after electrification. Visitors can also see artifacts like the original three-cylinder engine, circuit panels, transformers and the iconic concrete blocks engraved with "REA." The museum offers a living history of rural America's transformation, powered by the cooperative spirit and the collective will of those who dared to dream of a brighter future.

Madison Alert is the communications specialist/key accounts representative for Franklin REC.



CVEC AWARDS GRANT THROUGH OPERATION ROUND UP

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is excited to announce that Moravia Fire & Rescue has been awarded a \$6,240 grant through our fourth quarter 2024 Operation Round Up® program. This grant will enable the department to purchase a torpedo nozzle set, enhancing its firefighting capabilities and safety measures for the community.

Empowering our community

Operation Round Up is a shining example of the cooperative spirit, transforming small acts of generosity into meaningful community impact. Through the contributions of CVEC members who round up their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar, this program has funded critical projects and services that benefit our local communities.

“We’re continually inspired by the generosity of our members and the tangible difference this program makes,” says Anna See, communications coordinator/executive assistant. “By working together, our members are helping fund projects that improve safety, support vital services and enhance the quality of life in our local area.”



Foundation board leadership updates

At a recent Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative Operation Round Up Foundation board meeting, the following directors were reappointed to serve another term: Angie Folkerts, Lori Johnson and Mindy Stalzer.

Additionally, the Foundation board elected the following officers: Jerry Power, chairman; Steve Hoch, vice chair; Lori Johnson, treasurer; and Jan Stalzer, secretary, for the coming year, ensuring continued strong leadership for this impactful program.

The remaining Operation Round Up Foundation board members are

Ron Hohneke, Tracey Matt and Mark Spragg, who also contribute their time and expertise to guide the Foundation’s efforts.

Join the mission

CVEC encourages eligible organizations to apply for future Operation Round Up grants to help bring impactful projects to life. Applications are reviewed quarterly, and the next deadline is March 31.

To learn more about the program or submit an application, visit www.cvrec.com.

DIRECTOR JOHN HOUSER EARNS NATIONAL BOARD LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is proud to announce that Director John Houser has achieved the Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. This certification represents John’s dedication to furthering his knowledge and leadership skills in the ever-changing energy industry.

The BLC program provides advanced training on key topics such as risk management, power supply, governance, financials, communications and policy development. To earn this credential,

directors must complete 10 specialized courses designed to enhance critical thinking and decision-making through case studies and open discussions.

“Continuing education is essential in today’s evolving energy landscape, and we appreciate John’s commitment to gaining the knowledge and skills that will benefit our members,” says CVEC CEO/General Manager Troy Amoss.

As the electric industry continues to change, cooperative directors play a vital role in ensuring informed leadership and strong governance.

CVEC commends John for his dedication to serving our members and strengthening our cooperative.

Congratulations, Director Houser!



Director John Houser (left) is pictured with Troy Amoss, CEO/general manager of CVEC.

FIRST IOWA STATE BANK: A LEGACY OF COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN

First Iowa State Bank's story is woven into the fabric of Albia's history. Chartered in 1930, the bank emerged from the economic turmoil of the Great Depression when David Bates, a local banker, made a selfless decision. Rather than watch two Albia banks – First National Bank and Iowa Trust and Savings Bank – fail, Bates merged them with his own Albia State Bank, sacrificing his business to preserve the financial well-being of local depositors. This act of community stewardship laid the foundation for First Iowa State Bank, a name derived from the legacy of those three institutions.

Bates' dedication to financial stability didn't end there. He later served as Iowa's Superintendent of Banking and on a commission that contributed to the creation of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), a pivotal safeguard in the American banking system. This rich history of resilience and community focus remains the core of the bank's identity nearly a century later.

Employee-owned, community-focused

In 2017, First Iowa State Bank became 100% employee-owned – the only bank in Iowa with this distinction. This unique structure ensures that every employee has a vested interest in the bank's success, fostering a culture of accountability, stability and long-term commitment to the communities it serves.

"With employee ownership, we're not just working for a paycheck; we're working to build something lasting in the towns where we live, work and raise our families," says Dan Stocker, president and CEO of First Iowa State Bank, who grew up in Albia and returned to the area after attending the University of Northern Iowa. "When someone retires, their shares are sold back to the employees, not to outside corporations. This helps us maintain our identity as a true community bank."

Local decisions, personal relationships

With locations in Albia, Bloomfield, Cantril, Eddyville and Keosauqua,



First Iowa State Bank balances growth with the personal touch that defines community banking. Many of the bank's employees have decades-long careers, fostering relationships that go beyond transactions.

"Our tellers aren't just faces behind a counter – they are people you see at Little League games, church events and school board meetings," Stocker says. "When you call us, you get a real person on the line, not an automated system."

The bank's strong ties to agriculture are evident in its lending team, many of whom are farmers themselves. This firsthand experience provides valuable insights for customers navigating the complexities of ag-related financial decisions.

Embracing technology without losing the human touch

While anchored in tradition, First Iowa State Bank has implemented technology to further strengthen customer relationships. Customers can use the website and mobile app for modern conveniences like mobile deposits, online banking and electronic loan processing.

"Technology helps us stay connected, even with customers who've moved

away from the community," Stocker explains. "We have clients in Des Moines and beyond who still bank with us because they know they can pick up the phone and talk to someone who genuinely cares."

Invested in the communities it serves

Community involvement isn't just encouraged – it's part of the bank's DNA. Employees serve on school boards, coach youth sports, participate in church activities and support local charities. The bank also contributes financially to various causes across its service areas, reinforcing its role as a community cornerstone.

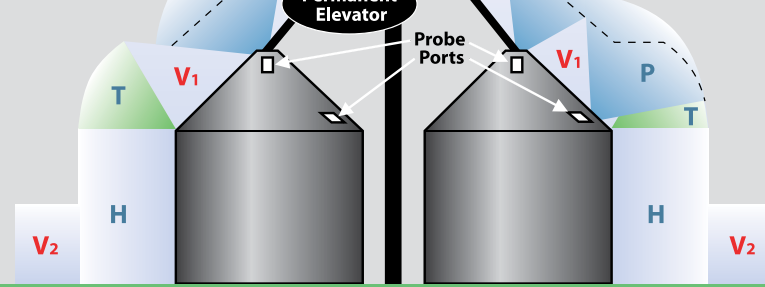
As First Iowa State Bank approaches its 100th anniversary in 2030, its mission remains clear: to provide trusted, locally focused banking services while fostering strong community ties.

Stocker, who has worked at the bank for three decades, adds, "Our history was born out of a crisis, and our future will continue to be built on resilience, relationships and a deep commitment to the people we serve."

Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.

Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators

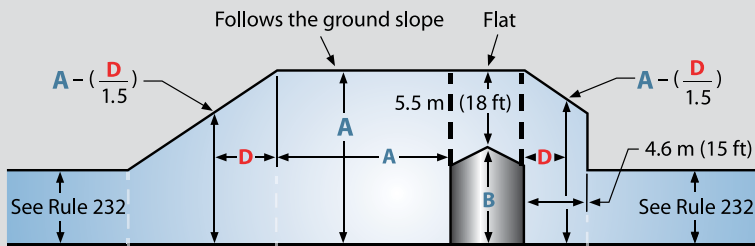
- P** = Probe clearance
5.5m (18 ft) required by Rule 234F1a
- H** = Horizontal clearance
4.6m (15 ft) required by Rule 234F1b
- T** = Transition clearance
- V₁** = Vertical clearance above a building required by Rule 234C
- V₂** = Vertical clearance required by Rule 232B



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Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors or elevators

ELEVATION



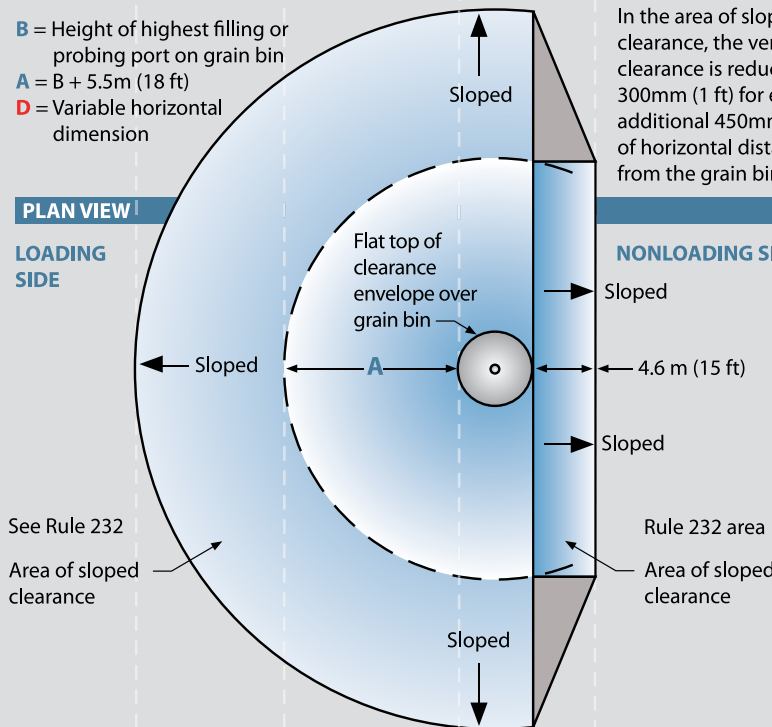
- B** = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin
- A** = B + 5.5m (18 ft)
- D** = Variable horizontal dimension

In the area of sloped clearance, the vertical clearance is reduced by 300mm (1 ft) for each additional 450mm (1.5 ft) of horizontal distance from the grain bin.

PLAN VIEW

LOADING SIDE

NONLOADING SIDE



MAINTAIN PROPER CLEARANCE AROUND GRAIN BINS

The state of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors and elevators. According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 - 25.2(3) b: An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2017 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234F. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after Sept. 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after Dec. 24, 1997. The Iowa Utilities Commission has adopted this language.

Your local electric cooperative is required by the Iowa Utilities Commission to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants and city and county zoning officials. The drawings on this page show the required clearances, but your co-op's policies may be more restrictive. If you have any questions concerning these regulations - or what needs to be done before you begin placing a new grain bin or moving an existing one - please call your electric co-op for help.

These drawings are provided as part of the Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication.

Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents of these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.

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THE POWER OF THE ASSIST

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

Any March Madness fans out there? While it's easy to focus on the superstars in these big games, a talented volleyball player at our local high school got me thinking about teamwork in a different way.

Norah Riedesel is an 18-year-old senior at South Central Calhoun (SCC) High School. This fall, she reached a major milestone of 1,500 career assists. Her accomplishment reminded me of a morning last July when I was in Ames for Iowa Swine Day. (Stick with me – you'd be amazed at what you can learn at farm meetings.)

The keynote speaker, Ross Bernstein, presented "The Champion's Code: Building Relationships Through Life Lessons from the Sports World to the Business World." One of his stories revolved around his youth in southern Minnesota and his passion for hockey. He mentioned his favorite player, Wayne Gretzky, who racked up 894 regular-season goals and 1,963 assists during his storied career.

"When you make a goal, you make one person happy. But an assist makes two people happy," Bernstein said. "Wayne understood the power of the assist."

That wisdom popped back into my head when I decided I should reach out to Norah. "Here's someone who really understands the power of the assist," I thought.

We win or lose together

Norah told me she started playing volleyball in fourth grade. She played right back (a defensive position) during her freshman and sophomore years of high school and became a setter during her junior and senior years.

"There are a lot of things that go into setting," Norah explained. "The biggest skill you need is the ability to make quick decisions on the spot. The first thing I think about is the other team's defense. Every team



Norah Riedesel (front row, third from the right), a senior at South Central Calhoun (SCC) High School, has played a key role on the SCC volleyball team.

has their weakness, so it's important to get the ball to hitters who can put the ball in that weak spot."

Assists are an integral element of teamwork, she added. "The phrase 'bump, set, spike' didn't come from nowhere. Without a good pass, there's probably not a good set. Without a good set, hitters aren't in the position to score."

That's exactly the mindset that led Norah and her fellow SCC Titans to the regional final game last fall. Had they won, they would have competed in the state volleyball tournament.

While Norah's high school volleyball career has ended, the power of the assist is a lesson that will serve her well in life. (She's headed to college to earn her doctorate of physical therapy degree and specialize in sports physical therapy.)

Success beyond sports

Norah is a real-life example of how the power of the assist reflects the talent and heart of a person. The assist combines skill and intention. It embodies your willingness to intentionally give up a chance for personal gain to create the possibility for a teammate to shine.

The assist doesn't just exist in sports. Ever heard of Reggie Young? This



American guitarist (1936-2019) was a leading session musician who performed on various recordings back in the day. His power of the assist made countless artists, including Elvis Presley, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Merle Haggard, sound even better.

The power of the assist also influences the arts. Think of the director who guides the actors in a movie or theater production to excellence. In the publishing world, there's the detail-oriented editor who polishes writers' prose to make these stories more clear, concise and compelling.

The power of the assist is a big responsibility, as Norah reminded me, but it can unleash exceptional results. Even better, it's a mindset that anyone can cultivate. What will your next great assist look like?

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Visit our website at www.cvrec.com



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