



Chariton Valley  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
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JULY 2026

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

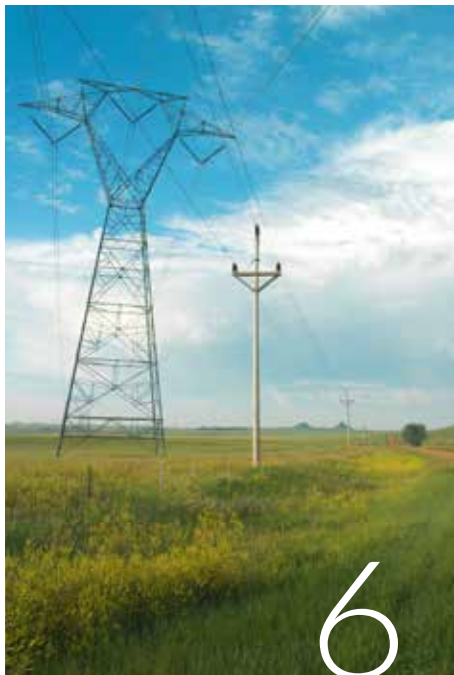
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## ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Lacey Miller, a Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc. 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!

# PROTECTING CO-OP MEMBERS' INTERESTS DURING THE 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BY HALEY MOON



With new majority leaders in both chambers, new committee leadership and major issues, such as property tax reform and eminent domain, on the agenda, Iowa lawmakers entered the 2026 legislative session facing a full workload. After extending 12 days beyond the scheduled adjournment date, the General Assembly concluded its work with a marathon weekend of negotiations and final votes.

For Iowa's electric cooperatives, energy policy remained a central focus throughout the session. As lawmakers considered a wide range of proposals affecting the energy sector, electric cooperatives worked closely with policymakers to ensure the voices of Iowa's rural communities and member-consumers were part of the conversation. We are always focused on protecting affordable and reliable electric service, and we do so at the Statehouse by supporting various legislative proposals and preventing harmful policies from advancing.

## Key energy issues under consideration

One harmful proposal would have established a third-party solar program in Iowa. While supporters viewed the proposal as a way to expand solar development, electric cooperatives and other stakeholders raised concerns about potential cost shifts to consumers and impacts on grid reliability. Ultimately, the legislation did not advance, helping preserve Iowa's balanced approach to energy policy and protecting consumers from potential increases in electricity costs.

Another priority during the session was legislation aimed at strengthening protections for utility employees.

The proposal would have increased criminal penalties for individuals who assault, threaten or harass public utility workers while they are performing their duties. These employees play a critical role in keeping the lights on and restoring service during emergencies, often working in difficult and hazardous conditions. The bill received broad support in the Senate but ultimately stalled in the House. We remain encouraged by the strong bipartisan recognition of the issue and look forward to continuing efforts to advance these important protections in the future.

## Advocating for co-op members

Lawmakers also considered a large economic development package that included a proposal to require a statewide load forecasting and transmission report. Because utilities already conduct extensive forecasting through existing planning processes, we had concerns about the necessity

and scope of information requests and the cost that could ultimately affect ratepayers. Although the legislation passed, electric cooperatives were actively engaged throughout the process to advocate for practical implementation and to help protect the interests of member-consumers.

As Iowa's political landscape continues to evolve, particularly with the upcoming elections in November, electric cooperatives remain committed to working collaboratively with policymakers, community leaders and industry partners to address the challenges and opportunities ahead. By advocating for sound energy policy and protecting the interests of the communities we serve, we will continue our mission of delivering safe, reliable and affordable electricity while helping Iowa communities thrive for generations to come.

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

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

## WIN A BOSE PORTABLE OUTDOOR SPEAKER

Take your favorite music wherever summer adventures lead with the Bose SoundLink Flex Portable Speaker. Delivering rich, high-fidelity sound in a compact, durable design, this Bluetooth speaker is waterproof, dustproof and even floats, making it perfect for the lake, campground or backyard gathering. With up to 12 hours of battery life, it's built to keep the music playing long after the sun goes down.

### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than July 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified.

The winner of \$100 in beef certificates from the May issue was **Travis Meester**, a **Grundy County REC** member-consumer.



**ENTER ONLINE BY JULY 31!**

# CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF RURAL ELECTRIFICATION — AND LOOKING AHEAD TO CVEC'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY

BY TROY AMOSS



At the end of May, my wife and I traveled to Washington, D.C., to help one of our sons get settled as he begins a summer internship.

While I was there, I

had the opportunity to attend a special event hosted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) commemorating the 90th anniversary of the Rural Electrification Act (REA). It was an honor to represent Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) and join cooperative leaders from across the country in celebrating one of the most transformative pieces of legislation in American history.

When the REA was signed into law in 1936, only about 10% of rural homes and farms had access to electricity. Investor-owned utilities often viewed rural areas as too costly to serve, leaving millions of Americans without the conveniences and opportunities that electricity provided. The REA changed that by making low-interest



Troy Amoss and  
Jim Matheson, CEO of NRECA



Brooke L. Rollins, Secretary of Agriculture



Jim Matheson, CEO of NRECA



Karl Elmshäuser, RUS Administrator,  
and Troy Amoss



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loans available for the construction of rural electric systems, paving the way for the formation of electric cooperatives across the country.

The impact of that legislation cannot be overstated. Today, nearly every rural home and farm in America has access to reliable electric service thanks in large part to the cooperative model and the continued partnership between electric cooperatives and the USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS), the successor to the REA.

### A legacy that changed rural America

During the anniversary event, I was asked to share why that partnership remains important today. My answer was simple: USDA financing continues to help electric cooperatives invest in the infrastructure our members

depend on while keeping rates affordable. As I shared during the event, "Having the USDA support rural America like they do through the utility service, whether it be electric, broadband, water, telephone ... is very important because it allows us to borrow money at a cheaper rate to keep America rolling."

That statement is just as true today as it was 90 years ago. While the challenges facing rural America have changed, the need for reliable infrastructure remains. Cooperatives are investing in modern electric systems, strengthening reliability, embracing new technologies and preparing for future growth, all while remaining focused on serving our members.

## Reflecting on CVEC's cooperative journey

As we reflect on this national milestone, it is especially meaningful here at CVEC. Next year, our co-op will celebrate its own milestone – our 80th anniversary. Since energizing our first meter in 1947, this cooperative has been dedicated to improving quality of life in rural southeast Iowa by providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

For nearly eight decades, generations of members, employees and directors have worked together to build and strengthen the cooperative we know today. As we begin looking ahead to our 80th year, I find it fitting that we do so on the heels of celebrating the 90th anniversary of the REA. Without that landmark legislation, cooperatives like CVEC would not exist.

The cooperative model was built on neighbors coming together to solve a problem that no one else was willing to tackle. That same spirit continues to guide us today. While the technology has changed dramatically over the years, our mission remains the same: serving our members and communities with integrity, accountability and a commitment to the future.

The 90th anniversary of the REA reminds us how far rural America has come. CVEC's upcoming 80th anniversary reminds us that we are part of that remarkable story. I look forward to celebrating that milestone with you next year as we honor our past and continue building for the future.

## Continuing the tradition at our Annual Meeting

However, before we celebrate our 80th anniversary next year, we'll gather next month for CVEC's 79th Annual Meeting. As a member-owned cooperative, our Annual Meeting is an important reminder that the cooperative belongs to you, our members. I encourage you to participate and help us continue the legacy that began nearly 80 years ago.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you.

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

# FOUR RUNNING FOR THREE DIRECTOR SEATS

Three board of director terms will expire at the Annual Meeting of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) on Aug. 3.

Four candidates have filed petitions for the three open director positions.

## DISTRICT 2



**Kevin Halbmaier**  
Monroe County

Kevin is a retired Hy-Vee store director with 34 years

of experience in business management, finance and customer service. A CVEC member for 32 years, he has been active in numerous community organizations, including the Albia Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club and Monroe County Hospice board. He believes the cooperative should focus on controlling costs, educating members and maintaining strong community connections.

## DISTRICT 5



**Greg Dorpinghaus**  
Albia

Recently retired, Greg brings business ownership, financial and operational

experience to the cooperative. He has been active in numerous community organizations and believes the cooperative should focus on affordable electricity while preparing for future energy needs.



**Richard Welsh**  
(Incumbent)  
Albia

Richard has served on the CVEC board for 27 years

and brings extensive leadership and cooperative experience. He currently represents CVEC on several industry boards and believes strong local leadership is essential to maintaining and supporting rural communities.

## DISTRICT 4



**Karla Heffron**  
(Incumbent)  
Melrose

Karla and her husband, Steve, are

involved in farming and operate a Beck's Hybrids seed dealership in Monroe County. With experience in agriculture, business management and community leadership, Karla currently serves as treasurer on the CVEC board and remains active in several local and statewide organizations.

## Important Annual Meeting Information

Official Annual Meeting notices and ballots will be mailed to all members in the coming weeks. Members are encouraged to review the candidate information included in the Annual Meeting materials and participate in the cooperative election process.

**Additional information, including full candidate biographies and Annual Meeting details, will also be available in the official Annual Meeting booklet.**



# WHAT IS FERC AND WHY DOES IT MATTER TO ELECTRIC CO-OPS?

BY CATHY CASH

FERC has a role in how co-ops can best serve their members by upholding grid reliability and safety, and in keeping costs affordable.

Electric cooperatives were formed to serve members with affordable, reliable and safe power. But what role, if any, does the federal government play in ensuring that happens?

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is an independent agency in Washington, D.C., with authority over the transmission and wholesale of electricity in interstate commerce.

The commission also regulates the interstate commerce of natural gas and oil and the siting of natural gas and hydropower facilities. Basically, FERC oversees how energy moves across the country by high-voltage power lines or large pipelines.

Definitely big-picture stuff.

## The federal role in the power grid

FERC doesn't regulate your local distribution co-op. But it does exert authority over five generation and transmission co-ops and all the wholesale electricity markets where co-ops buy their power supply. By setting the markets' transmission rates that electric power companies and utilities, including co-ops, must pay, the federal agency can ultimately influence retail prices.

Mary Ann Ralls, senior director, regulatory counsel for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), notes that while state utility commissions have more immediate control over co-op operations and building power lines, the federal agency's influence fills in the gaps.

"State regulation over co-ops is like Swiss cheese – there are many holes where states don't regulate," she said. "FERC's authority is akin to a buffet – a handful of co-ops are subject to the entire scope of regulation, while the vast majority of co-ops must focus on a few items."

The commission's regulations aim at maintaining fair prices within the wholesale electricity markets run by six regional transmission organizations (RTOs) and independent system operators (ISOs). These FERC-regulated RTOs and ISOs manage parts of the national electric grid.

FERC also monitors these markets for energy supply manipulation that can hike prices. When things go wrong,

the commission can investigate and levy penalties.

Overall, FERC sides with conserving energy and encourages utilities to find ways to reduce demand, which eventually can place downward pressure on monthly bills.

The commission largely lacks authority over electric transmission in terms of siting and construction. That falls under state and local authorities.

FERC's authority over building generation is also limited to approving, licensing and inspecting hydropower plants.

Regarding natural gas, FERC has the final say in the construction and operation of liquefied natural gas terminals, pipelines and storage facilities. It reviews gas projects in terms of their impact on the environment, land use, geology and the economy.

And, being a public agency, all FERC's final decisions can be challenged in court.

### Keeping the lights on across America

When it comes to grid reliability, the buck stops with FERC. The commission directs the national grid watchdog – North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) – and enforces its mandatory reliability rules and requirements on grid operators and owners of the U.S. bulk power system, including utilities and energy producers.

The commission tasked NERC as the electric reliability organization for the continental U.S. after Congress called for a single point of contact following the historic blackout of Aug. 14, 2003, which left more than 50 million people in the Northeast and parts of the Midwest without electricity for periods ranging from several hours to several days.

FERC can require NERC to set new reliability standards or update current rules as needed to protect the grid's ability to serve today's increased demand.

### Who makes the decisions at FERC?

The body is made up of five commissioners appointed by the president and confirmed by the U.S. Senate for five-year terms. The chair presides over open, public meetings on the third Thursday of the month, where the commission votes on orders to act on or approve projects or set precedents. You can even watch these meetings at home from the live link on the FERC website.

While its regulatory influence may not have a hand directly in co-op operations to serve consumers, FERC does have a role in how co-ops can best serve their members by

upholding grid reliability and safety and keeping costs affordable.

"Irrespective of the level of regulation FERC has over a co-op, it is incumbent upon NRECA, working with its members, to impress on the commission that ultimately the co-op's obligation is that the consumer-member at the end of the line has affordable, reliable and safe electric service," said Ralls. "And it is FERC's responsibility through its regulations to support the co-op's achievement of this goal."

*Cathy Cash writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*



FERC exerts authority over five generation and transmission co-ops and all the wholesale electricity markets where electric co-ops purchase their power supply. Photo Source: Basin Electric Power Cooperative



FERC's authority over building generation is also limited to only approving, licensing and inspecting hydropower plants. Photo Source: NRECA



## HOMEMADE BUTTER PECAN ICE CREAM

- 3 cups pecans  
salt, to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter, plus additional for a drizzle
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1½ quarts plus up to ¼ cup milk
- 4 eggs
- 2 cans sweetened condensed milk
- ½ pint whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon vanilla  
ice  
ice cream salt

Salt pecans to taste and drizzle with butter. Bake at 350 degrees F for 10 minutes. Melt brown sugar with 2 tablespoons butter. Add a small amount of milk, less than ¼ cup. Set aside to cool. Mix eggs, sweetened condensed milk, whipping cream, 1½ quarts milk and vanilla. Add to the brown sugar mixture, then add pecans. Pour into ice cream maker and use ice cream salt to melt ice. Serves 20-24

Natalie Herrington • Nevada  
Consumers Energy

## POPSIE'S ICE CREAM PIE

- 1½ cups graham cracker crumbs
- ¼ cup sugar
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened
- ¼ cup corn syrup
- ¼ cup peanut butter
- ¼ cup salted peanuts

Mix graham cracker crumbs, sugar and melted butter; press into a 9-inch pie pan. Spoon softened ice cream into crust. Mix corn syrup and peanut butter; drizzle on top of ice cream. Sprinkle salted peanuts on top. Freeze at least 2 hours. Serves 8

Betsy Jess • Alden  
Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative

## OATMEAL CRÈME PIE DESSERT

- 1 box Little Debbie oatmeal crème pies  
butter
- ½ gallon vanilla ice cream, softened
- 1 8-ounce container whipped topping, thawed
- chocolate syrup
- nuts, optional

Press oatmeal crème pies to cover the bottom of a buttered 9x13-inch pan to make a crust. Mix ice cream and whipped topping. Spread over pie crust and freeze. Cut into squares when ready to serve and top with chocolate syrup and nuts of your choice. Serves 12

Mark Martens • Wellman  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## STRAWBERRY DELIGHT

- 1 sleeve graham crackers, crushed
- 1 cup sugar, divided
- ¼ cup margarine, melted
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 eggs
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 3-ounce package strawberry Jell-O
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 cups unsweetened strawberries, crushed
- 2 cups vanilla ice cream

Mix graham cracker crumbs, ½ cup sugar and margarine. Press into 9x13-inch pan. Beat cream cheese, ½ cup sugar, eggs and vanilla extract together. Pour over crust and bake at 375 degrees F for 15 minutes. Cool thoroughly. Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Chill until it begins to thicken. Add strawberries and ice cream and stir until smooth. Pour over filling and freeze until firm. You can use fresh or frozen strawberries. Let stand at room temperature 10 minutes before serving. Serves 12

Molly Depping • Dike  
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative

## CHOCOLATE TOFFEE DESSERT

- 1 cup oatmeal
- ½ cup coconut
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 3 tablespoons cocoa
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ gallon vanilla ice cream, softened

Mix oatmeal, coconut, brown sugar and melted butter together well. Bake in a shallow pan at 350 degrees F for 10 minutes. Toss lightly with a fork and cool. Put half the mixture in a 9x13-inch pan. In a small bowl, cream softened butter, cocoa and powdered sugar, mixing well. Add egg and vanilla, beat until light colored. In a large bowl, place softened ice cream and stir until smooth. Add chocolate mixture and beat until well blended. Pour ice cream mixture over crumb mixture in pan and top with remaining crumbs. Freeze. Serves 12

Linda Korver • Orange City  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## APPLE PIE ICE CREAM

- 16 oatmeal cookies, crushed
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted, divided
- 4 large apples, peeled, cored and sliced
- 2 cups and 6 tablespoons white sugar, divided
- 1 tablespoon and 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon, divided
- 3 cups half and half
- 1 tablespoon vanilla bean paste
- 8 large egg yolks
- 3 cups heavy whipping cream
- caramel ice cream topping, optional

Mix the crushed cookies with 2 tablespoons melted butter and press into a baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees F for 5 minutes. Remove and cool completely, then crumble. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter in a skillet over medium heat. Stir in apple slices, 6 tablespoons sugar and 2 teaspoons cinnamon. Cook until apples have lightly browned and the sugar has begun to caramelize, about 10 minutes. Remove from the pan and allow to cool completely. Pour half and half into a saucepan, add 2 cups sugar and the vanilla bean paste, stir to combine. Bring mixture to a simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally. Measure egg yolks into a separate bowl and beat until light yellow in color. Temper egg yolks by very slowly drizzling in about 2 cups of hot half and half mixture into the bowl with the egg yolks while whisking quickly. Then, pour the tempered egg yolk mixture back into the saucepan, whisking gently as you add it back in. Simmer over low heat for 5-7 minutes, until it thickens. The mixture should just barely start to stick to the back of a wooden spoon. Remove from heat, add heavy cream and 1 tablespoon cinnamon. Stir to combine, then cover and refrigerate until cool. Once completely cool, freeze the mixture in ice cream maker according to manufacturer's directions. Stir in cooled oatmeal cookie crumbles and caramelized apple mixture and transfer to a freezer container. You can also add a caramel ice cream topping, if desired. Freeze and enjoy! Yields 1 gallon

Emily McDowell • Paullina  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

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



## SALTED CARAMEL SAUCE

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup butter
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla
- ¾ teaspoon salt

Heat sugar and water in a saucepan until sugar is dissolved. Add butter and let melt. Bring to boil over medium heat. Do not stir until it's a deep golden color, about 10-15 minutes. Remove from heat and add cream in a slow, steady stream, whisking quickly until well combined. Add vanilla and salt and stir again. Allow to cool. Store in refrigerator for up to two weeks. This sauce is great on ice cream, cheesecake, crepes or for dipping soft pretzels. Yields 1½ cups

Marcy Gherian • Alvord  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM

- 2 boxes frozen strawberries, thawed
- 2 cans sweetened condensed milk
- 6 cans strawberry pop

Thaw strawberries and stir together by hand with strawberry pop and sweetened condensed milk. As the pop fizzes, put in an ice cream freezer and freeze in usual manner. Yields 1½ gallons, approximately 48 4-ounce servings or 32 6-ounce servings

Darlene Thomas • Somers  
Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association

### WANTED:

## TWISTS ON TURKEY

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Deadline is July 31

With Thanksgiving in mind, we're looking for your "twists" on turkey for our November issue. Think beyond the full bird to brines, casseroles, appetizers and your favorite ways to use turkey leftovers. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.



EMAIL: [recipes@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:recipes@ieclmagazine.com)

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Des Moines, IA 50322



# HOW YOU CAN HELP DURING PEAK DEMAND

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Your electric utility works hard to ensure safe, reliable power is delivered to homes and businesses 24/7. To make sure everyone has the power they need, generation must match consumption and have the capacity to adapt to changing energy demands.

## Why peak demand matters

Peak demand is the period during a day, month or year when electricity use is highest. It's caused by many people using energy-consuming equipment at the same time. It differs based on geography, weather and time of year. For example, demand is typically highest on hot summer afternoons and cold

winter mornings. Most utilities also experience daily peaks when people are getting ready in the mornings and returning home in the evenings.

When everyone uses more energy at the same time, it puts more stress on the electric grid and requires more expensive electricity to meet the need. Electricity pricing is based on supply and demand. Electricity prices are higher when demand is higher, which costs the utility more.

## Shift your use, reduce the strain

To reduce energy use and strain on the grid during peak times, we can adopt habits in our homes.

Let's look at two examples.

Joe and John arrive home from work at 5:30 p.m. They both turn on the oven to make dinner.

While John waits for the oven to preheat, he throws in a load of laundry. He finishes dinner, cleans up and starts the dishwasher. Then, he moves the clothes to the dryer.

Joe finishes dinner, loads the dishwasher and sets it to start at 10 p.m. He puts a load of laundry in the washing machine and later that evening switches it over to the dryer.

Although they use the same appliances and amount of energy, John uses it all at once, running multiple appliances during peak

hours, creating higher demand and more strain on the electric grid while using more expensive energy.

To lower your demand, spread electricity use throughout the day and avoid peak times whenever possible. This will reduce the utility's cost of supplying electricity to your home. Another benefit of shifting your use to midday is the integration of renewable energy, such as solar, which produces power when the sun is shining.

Large appliances, including washers, dryers, ovens, water heaters and air conditioners, have the biggest

impact. Using them during off-peak hours or one at a time can help.

### Let technology do the work

Automate as much as possible. Most electric vehicle chargers can be set to charge during scheduled hours with built-in timers or apps. Most modern dishwashers have delay-start features. If you have a pool, set the pool pump to run in the middle of the day, especially if you live in a region with high solar output.

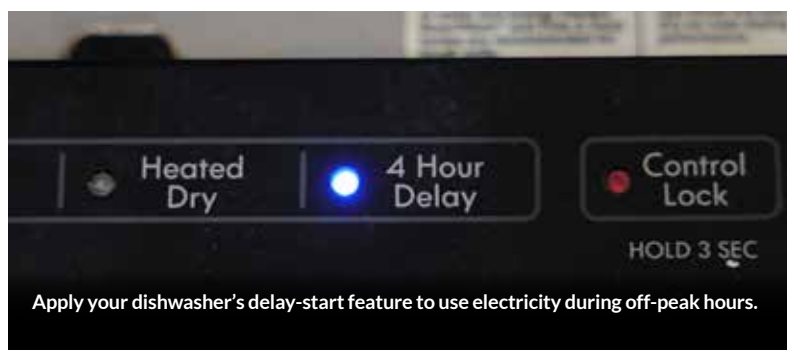
You can also automate air conditioning. Some utilities offer programs that pre-cool homes during off-peak hours to reduce

demand during peak times. Simple, free adjustments, such as closing your curtains on hot afternoons and evenings, can help, too.

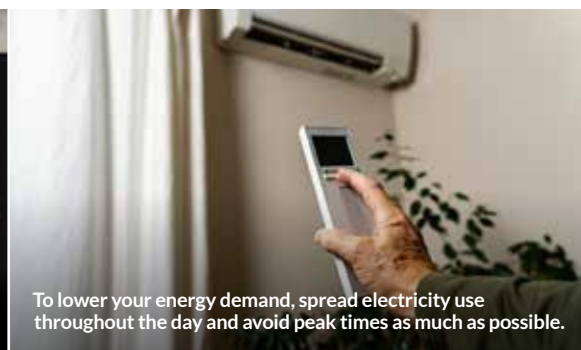
Keep in mind that extreme weather, whether freezing temperatures or a heat wave, puts extra stress on the grid. Conserving energy during extreme weather events can help prevent outages.

Spreading out your energy use helps your utility keep costs down and benefits your local energy grid.

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



Apply your dishwasher's delay-start feature to use electricity during off-peak hours.



To lower your energy demand, spread electricity use throughout the day and avoid peak times as much as possible.

## 7 WAYS IOWANS CAN SAVE ENERGY THIS SUMMER

Summer is in full swing across Iowa, and so is the season of higher energy use. Air conditioners work harder during hot, humid weather, but a few simple steps can help keep your home comfortable while managing energy costs. Try these energy-saving tips for the remainder of the summer season.



### 1. Block the sun's heat.

Keep blinds, shades or curtains closed during the hottest parts of the day, especially on south- and west-facing windows. This can help reduce heat gain and lessen the workload on your air conditioner.



### 2. Adjust your thermostat.

Set your thermostat at the highest comfortable temperature when you're home and raise it a few degrees when you're away. A programmable or smart thermostat can make these adjustments automatically.



### 3. Use ceiling fans wisely.

Ceiling fans can help you feel cooler, allowing you to rely less on air conditioning. Use ceiling fans in a counter-clockwise rotation in the summer. Be sure to turn fans off when you leave a room since they cool people, not the room itself.



### 4. Maintain your cooling system.

A clean, well-maintained air conditioner operates more efficiently. Check or replace air filters regularly and make sure vents and registers are not blocked by furniture, rugs or curtains.



### 5. Seal leaks and keep cool air inside.

Small gaps around windows and doors can allow cooled air to escape and hot air to enter. Adding weatherstripping or caulk can improve comfort and reduce energy waste.



### 6. Limit heat-producing activities.

Appliances and lighting generate heat that can make your air conditioner work harder. Use LED light bulbs and consider grilling outdoors or using smaller appliances instead of turning on the oven during the hottest parts of the day.



### 7. Save on water-heating costs.

Water heating is one of the largest energy expenses in many homes. Setting your water heater to 120 degrees F can reduce energy use while still providing plenty of hot water for most households.

Even small changes can make a difference. By adopting a few energy-saving habits this summer, you can stay comfortable and help keep energy costs under control.

# CAPITAL CREDITS: RETURNING VALUE TO OUR MEMBERS

One of the unique benefits of being a member of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is that you are more than just a customer – you are a member-owner of the cooperative.

Because CVEC operates as a not-for-profit electric cooperative, any margins remaining after operating expenses are allocated back to members in the form of capital credits. These margins are either reinvested into the electric system to maintain reliable service or returned to members over time as the cooperative's financial condition allows.

This year, CVEC will return \$250,000 in capital credits to members, continuing a long-standing tradition of sharing the cooperative's success with the people it serves.

Since the cooperative's inception, more than \$9.2 million has been returned to members through capital credits – demonstrating the value of

local ownership and the cooperative business model.

Capital credits are one of the clearest differences between cooperatives and investor-owned utilities. Instead of profits going to outside shareholders, margins stay local and benefit the members who use the cooperative's services.

## Investing in reliability and returning value

While returning value to members remains important, CVEC also continues to responsibly invest in our electric system to maintain safe, reliable and affordable power for the future. In 2025 alone, more than \$2 million was invested in system improvements and infrastructure upgrades across the service territory.

Members receiving \$100 or more in capital credits will receive a check in mid-July. Members receiving less than \$100 will automatically receive the

amount as a credit on their active CVEC account.

At CVEC, every financial decision is made with members in mind – balancing reliability, affordability and long-term stewardship of the cooperative your membership helps power every day.

## Don't lose track of your capital credits

Even if you move off CVEC lines, you may still have capital credits allocated in your name that could be returned to you in the future.

Because capital credits are tied to your membership and electric usage over time, former members may still receive retirement checks years after moving away.

To help ensure future capital credit checks reach you, please notify the cooperative anytime your mailing address or contact information changes by calling CVEC's office at 641-932-7126.

# JOIN US FOR THE 79TH ANNUAL MEETING

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) members are invited to join us for the 79th Annual Meeting on Monday, Aug. 3.

This year's event will once again feature a convenient drive-through format at CVEC headquarters in Albia, allowing members to participate from the comfort of their vehicle while still enjoying the traditions of an Annual Meeting.

At CVEC, the Annual Meeting is more than an event – it's an opportunity for member-owners to stay informed, participate in cooperative governance and celebrate the strength of the communities we serve.

We look forward to seeing you there! If you haven't already received your Annual Meeting materials in

the mail, be on the lookout, as they contain important information, voting details and event information.

## Annual Meeting prize drawings

Every member who participates in the drive-through Annual Meeting will automatically be entered for a chance to win exciting energy bill credits, including:

### Grand prize

- \$500 energy bill credit

### Additional prizes

- Ten \$100 energy bill credits

Members who return their completed ballot by mail before the deadline will also be entered into a separate drawing for:

- One \$250 energy bill credit
- Five \$50 energy bill credits

Winners do not need to be present during the business meeting to win.

## Drive-through details

The CVEC Annual Meeting drive-through event will take place Monday, Aug. 3, from 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at CVEC headquarters located at 2090 Highway 5 South in Albia.

Members will simply drive through the designated route to:

- Register
- Drop off ballots
- Pick up their complimentary meal
- Receive their Annual Meeting gift

Be sure to bring your registration ticket with you for a quicker check-in process.

# HELP US PRESERVE CVEC ANNUAL MEETING HISTORY

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative (CVEC) is working to preserve pieces of our cooperative's history, and we're asking for members' help in locating past Annual Meeting gifts and door prizes.

Over the years, CVEC Annual Meetings have become known not only for cooperative business and fellowship, but also for the unique

gifts members received and remembered fondly. Many of these items became part of our members' homes, workshops, kitchens, garages and everyday lives.

As part of our historical memorabilia efforts, we would love to collect, borrow or photograph these items to help preserve the story of our cooperative.



"Mary Ellen Lathen, computer operator, is holding the fuse tester and a fuse. A fuse tester will be given to all members who attended the annual meeting."  
- Iowa REC News, Sept. 1980

**Below are some of the Annual Meeting gifts and promotional items we are currently aware of, along with several gaps we are hoping members can help fill in:**

|           |                                   |      |                                             |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1947-1979 | Unknown                           | 1996 | Flashlight                                  |
| 1980      | Fuse tester                       | 1997 | \$2 bill                                    |
| 1981      | Cookie canister                   | 1998 | Rain gauge                                  |
| 1982      | Flashlight with red flare cone    | 1999 | Fly swatter (shaped like a house)*          |
| 1983      | Indoor / outdoor thermometer      | 2000 | Tote bag                                    |
| 1984      | 10-inch ice scrapper              | 2001 | Unknown                                     |
| 1985      | 6-piece precision screwdriver set | 2002 | Compact fluorescent light bulb              |
| 1986      | Unknown                           | 2003 | Rain gauge / phone card                     |
| 1987      | Combination bottle and can opener | 2004 | Chip clip / flashlight / new Iowa quarter   |
| 1988      | Unknown                           | 2005 | Unknown                                     |
| 1989      | REC cap                           | 2006 | Electrical cord / koozie / calendar         |
| 1990      | Oven mitt                         | 2007 | American Made Cutlery super parer knife     |
| 1991      | Pocket flashlight / keychain      | 2008 | American Made Cutlery paring knife          |
| 1992      | Paper stapler                     | 2009 | American Made Cutlery cook's utility knife* |
| 1993      | Coffee mug                        | 2010 | Unknown                                     |
| 1994      | Four-in-one screwdriver           | 2011 | Unknown                                     |
| 1995      | Nail clipper / knife set          | 2012 | White coffee cup with green lid and sleeve  |



"Bernard Dicks shows everyone the door prize he received when he attended the meeting."  
- Iowa REC News, Nov. 1999

**Note:** CVEC has all Annual Meeting gifts from 2013 to the present. Items marked with an asterisk (\*) have already been located and added to our historical collection.

If you still have one of these items – or another Annual Meeting gift not listed – we would love to hear from you. Items may be loaned temporarily for photographs and documentation or donated to the cooperative's historical collection.

In addition to Annual Meeting memorabilia, we will gladly accept or photograph other historical cooperative items as well, including old photos, newsletters, newspaper clippings, employee items, equipment, uniforms and other CVEC keepsakes.

These items help tell the story of our cooperative and preserve the legacy of the members, employees and communities who helped shape CVEC through the years.

If you have memorabilia to share or information about past Annual Meeting gifts and prizes, please contact the cooperative office at 641-932-7126.

**Thank you for helping preserve CVEC history for future generations.**



# SEE IOWA'S BEST LINeworkERS IN ACTION AT THE STATE FAIR

If you've ever wondered what it takes to keep the lights on, the second annual Iowa Electric Utilities Lineman Rodeo offers a front-row seat to one of the most skilled and essential professions in the utility industry.

The rodeo will take place Friday, Aug. 21, at Elwell Family Park on the Iowa State Fairgrounds. The event begins at 8 a.m., with gates opening at 7 a.m. Admission is free with paid fair admission.

Organized by the Iowa Utility Association and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the rodeo is supported by MidAmerican Energy, Alliant Energy, ITC and Prairie Energy Cooperative. The competition showcases the precision, expertise and commitment to safety required of lineworkers who build and maintain the electric grid.

## Putting skills to the test

Journeyman and apprentice teams will compete in four challenging

events designed to test the skills they use every day in the field. Competitions include pole climbing, cutout changes and simulated rescue scenarios. Contestants will be judged on safety, accuracy and efficiency as they complete each task.

Several Iowa electric cooperatives will be represented, including Prairie Energy Cooperative, T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative and Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative. The event provides an opportunity for cooperative lineworkers to demonstrate their expertise while connecting with fairgoers from across the state.

Scott Meinecke, director of safety and loss control for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, and Don Kelchen of ITC will serve as event emcees.

## More than a competition

In addition to the rodeo events, visitors can explore vendor and utility



exhibits throughout the day. Electric utilities, sponsors and industry partners will host tent spaces where attendees can learn more about careers in the utility industry, pick up promotional items and visit with lineworkers and other professionals.

Students and young people interested in a career in linework are especially encouraged to attend. Lineworkers will be available to answer questions about training, apprenticeships and career opportunities in this high-demand field.

Whether you're interested in utility careers or simply want to see some of Iowa's best lineworkers in action, the rodeo offers an entertaining and educational experience for the whole family.

# WANTED: RURAL IOWA PHOTOS

We're always looking for stunning images for the cover of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine. If we select your photo for a cover, we'll award you \$100.

## RECEIVE \$100 FOR A PUBLISHED PHOTO

### How to enter:

- 1 Snap a photo capturing rural Iowa (image must be high quality, at least 1MB large; if taken on a phone, send us the largest version – bigger is better!).
- 2 Send us the original, high-resolution image file in an email to [editor@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:editor@ieclmagazine.com) with "Cover Submission" in the subject line.
- 3 Include your **name**, **service address** and the **name of your electric cooperative** in the email body to ensure you qualify for our contest. A **phone number** is also appreciated in case we need to contact you.

All eligible entries are reviewed and considered for each edition of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living*. Keep an eye out for next month's winner!



# FOUNDING FARMER: HOW GEORGE WASHINGTON SHAPED AMERICA AND AGRICULTURE

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

Photo Source:  
Library of Congress

As our nation celebrates 250 years, few figures embody the promise and hope of America more than George Washington. I've always appreciated how he considered himself a farmer first and a statesman second.

I shared some stories about Washington when I was invited to give Memorial Day speeches at two local cemeteries this year. I wasn't sure if people would find this history as interesting as I do. Turns out the answer is yes!

Washington viewed agriculture as the backbone of a successful nation. While he proclaimed he'd "rather be on my farm than be emperor of the world," he was away from home for nearly nine years during the American Revolution. Then, he was gone again for another eight years (1789-1797) to serve as America's first president.

He always harbored a deep desire, though, to return to his beloved Mount Vernon. There, he could study and implement farming innovations and devote his life to the improvement of American agriculture. "Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful, and most noble employment of man," Washington stated.

## **"Freedom and property rights are inseparable"**

Washington's rural roots ran deep. He was born on a Virginia plantation in 1732. By the time he was 17, he pursued a lucrative career as a surveyor. He surveyed tens of thousands of acres during the next 50 years, from Virginia's western frontier to Mount Vernon itself.

Washington understood the importance of private property and its unique place in American society. "Freedom and property rights are inseparable," Washington wrote. "You can't have one without the other."



His favorite property was Mount Vernon, which came into the Washington family in 1674. He inherited the estate in 1761. The land was divided into five farms that encompassed nearly 8,000 acres of land during Washington's lifetime.

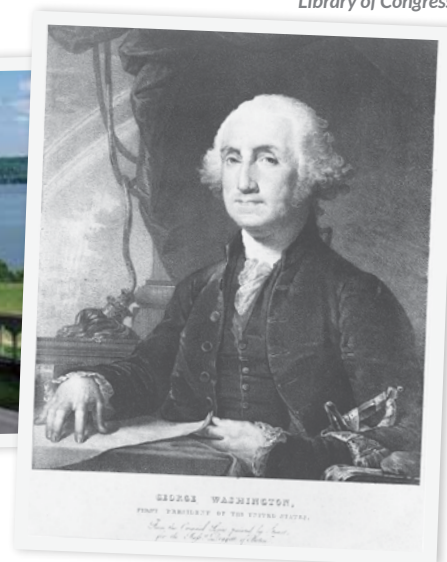
Washington was an exceptional farm manager. Mount Vernon included a diverse array of enterprises, from a grist mill to a whiskey distillery. It's interesting to note that whiskey-making was far and away Washington's most profitable ag business. By 1799, the year he passed away, his distillery was one of the largest in America.

He also had the mind of an accountant. He was a stickler for detailed records. "I shall begrudge no reasonable expense that will contribute to the improvement and neatness of my farms – for nothing pleases me better than to see them in good order, and everything trim, handsome and thriving about them," Washington wrote.

## **Crop rotations to composting**

For decades, tobacco was the main cash crop at Mount Vernon. By the 1760s, however, Washington knew this labor-intensive crop was an unsustainable option, due to the way tobacco plants depleted the soil and hastened erosion.

As he studied alternatives, Washington focused on crop rotations and soil



regeneration – two things that are near and dear to my heart. He implemented a seven-year crop rotation of wheat, grains, pasture and other crops on Mount Vernon's farms.

Washington also focused on finding a fertilizer that would invigorate the lackluster soils at Mount Vernon. Nothing seemed to work as well as a mixture of manure and plant material that he allowed to "brew" together in a simple structure strategically located next to his stables.

Constructed around 1787, this was likely the first building in America devoted to composting.

Washington's switch from ineffective, old farming practices to new solutions was emblematic of America's pivot away from an eroding relationship with England. It's also symbolic of freedom and progress – things that continue to define the American spirit.

To Washington, America's success relied on advanced agricultural science, the sustainable harvest of the land's natural resources and a strong rural foundation. These are all worth celebrating as we honor America 250.

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



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