

living with energy IN IOWA

APRIL 2021



Chariton Valley
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Learn more about serving as a CVEC director ► See Page 5

Visit our website at www.cvrec.com

**CVEC's Operation Round Up
powers local programs**

**Celebrating lineworker
commitment in April**

**Pecan-inspired
recipes**

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If we select your photo, you'll
be awarded with **\$100**.**



living with energy IN IOWA

Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives of Iowa
www.touchstoneenergy.com

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ON THE COVER



Congratulations to Kay Popelka, a Consumers Energy member, for supplying the cover image for this month's issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine! She captured this photo during a recent Tulip Time Festival in Pella. 🌷

Spring forward with safety in mind

BY SCOTT MEINECKE

Spring is in full swing, and there are several safety precautions to be mindful of this season:

Call before you dig

April is National Safe Digging Month for a reason! Many of us will be working on landscaping and home improvement projects. Remember to contact Iowa One Call at least two business days before you dig to any depth so underground utilities can be properly located and marked. It's the law, and it could save your life or prevent serious damage. Before you dig, call Iowa One Call at 8-1-1 or visit www.IowaOneCall.com to process your request.



Move over or slow down on the road

We need your help in keeping our lineworkers, engineers and maintenance workers safe on Iowa's roadways. If you see any vehicle stopped on the side of the road with flashing lights activated, you are required by law to move over or slow down, preferably both. Please give our employees room on the road; their families thank you!

Kids at play

Talk to your children about the dangers of electricity and to stay away from power lines, utility poles and pad-mounted transformers. Keep kites, balloons and flying toys away from electric equipment and always assume power lines are energized and dangerous. Never use electricity near pools or water without using ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets.

When thunder roars, go indoors

Storm season has returned and there is no safe place from lightning when you're outside. Be aware of weather forecasts and watch for developing thunderstorms as lightning can strike many miles

ahead of a storm front. If you hear thunder, seek shelter immediately because it indicates lightning is within 10 miles of you. Safe shelters include inside a building or in an enclosed metal-topped vehicle. Authorities warn against outdoor activity until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder is heard.

Safety in the field

As you head into the fields to plant, keep a 10-foot clearance between your equipment and power lines at all times. Take time to study where all overhead power lines, poles and guy wires are located on your property and inform your workers about them. Plan your route between fields and on public roads so that you avoid low-hanging power lines; never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path. When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter to help make certain that contact is not made with a line.

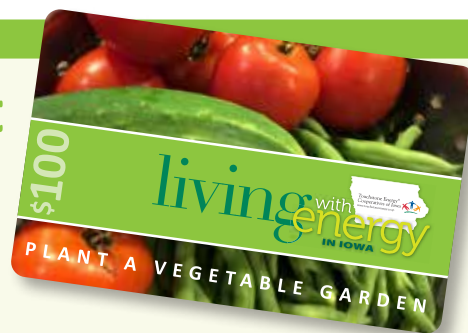


If equipment comes into contact with a power line, assume the line is energized and deadly. The operator should NOT get off the machinery unless in immediate danger. If the operator touches the ground and the equipment at the same time, they will become a channel for electricity. Instead, the operator should stay on the equipment and contact the local electric utility or 911 immediately to report the incident so power lines can be deenergized safely before exiting. ⚡

Scott Meinecke is the director of safety and loss control for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a \$100 gift card to plant a vegetable garden



It's almost time to plant a garden, and there are some steps you can take to make your home garden more efficient. Learn more on Pages 10-11 of this issue. Plus, we'll award one lucky winner with a \$100 gift card from a local nursery to plant your garden this year! ⚡

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com no later than April 30, 2021. 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 Breville Juice Fountain from the February issue was Dawn Reiser from Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative.

A letter of appreciation to the employees of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative



Dear CVEC Employees,

I want to express my sincerest admiration for the amazing dedication and commitment you

all demonstrate day in and day out. It takes a team of committed and caring people to power the lives of our cooperative members 24/7.

I know, not just anyone can do this job. Being an electric cooperative employee means you work as a first responder when the lights go out, no matter the time of day or the weather. Often, you are called upon during

weather's worst to restore power and help our members. Oftentimes, you answer the call for help during family birthdays, holidays and vacations. You know this is part of the job and understand the need to make personal sacrifices to get the lights back on safely and quickly for our members, families and neighbors. I thank you for this, but also want to thank your families, as they too understand this commitment and make sacrifices.

While the linemen may be the most visible employees at CVEC, it is important to note our team of highly skilled professionals are working just as hard behind the scenes ensuring everything runs effectively and efficiently. I thank our operations department who provide ongoing expertise and guidance on the operations side of the cooperative, our member service representatives who are always standing by to answer calls and questions, our information technology experts who continuously monitor our system to help safeguard sensitive data and everyone else who contributes in remarkable ways! Without them, our linemen would not be able to power

the communities we serve.

I acknowledge this past year has been especially challenging as we implemented additional safety precautions to better serve our members as the pandemic continued to evolve. I want to thank you for your patience and grace as we worked through new procedures to keep everyone safe, including our members.

I extend my most heartfelt appreciation for the dedication and commitment to excellence each of you continue to demonstrate. You have committed your careers to the cooperative and invested time and energy in learning new skills and growing professionally. I know you would have it no other way, as each of you genuinely care about the members we serve.

You have all earned my respect and admiration. May you continue to inspire each other and our members to power on!

Thank you once again for your continuous dedication and commitment. ⚡

L.P. Sells
CEO/General Manager

UPCOMING HOLIDAY HOURS

Happy Easter!

CVEC's office will be closed on Friday, April 2, in observance of Good Friday. ⚡

 Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



Office

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Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Closed Saturdays, Sundays and holidays

Telephone Numbers

Days, nights or holidays:
641-932-7126 (local)
or 800-475-1702

We accept



Website

www.cvrec.com

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

**HAPPY
ADMINISTRATIVE
PROFESSIONALS
DAY!**

April 21

Thank you for your hard work, tireless effort and every day enthusiasm. Your work is key to our success!

SAVE THE DATE

**CVEC
ANNUAL
MEETING
2021**

The annual meeting of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held on

MONDAY, AUG. 2, 2021

Watch future issues of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine for all the details! ⚡

Thank your CVEC lineworkers on April 12

If you were asked to associate an image or a person with CVEC, I bet you would picture a lineman. One of the most visible employees of the cooperative, linemen work tirelessly to ensure our communities receive uninterrupted power 24/7.

"Lineman" is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. This is understandable as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, having to brave stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb 40 feet in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Being a lineman is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain their willingness to leave the comfort of their homes to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions,



when most are sheltering comfortably at home? This dedication and sense of service to the community is truly what sets them apart. That's why CVEC sets aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

Our dedicated and beloved linemen are proud to represent CVEC, and they deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way. Join us on Lineworker Appreciation Day, April 12, and thank a lineman for their exceptional service that keeps the power on! ⚡

HOW YOUR CO-OP WORKS

Active participation in your co-op is crucial for its success

Are you interested in serving as a director for CVEC? A director's responsibility consists of having the knowledge to set policies and approve strategic plans that are the basis for operating the cooperative. A director must have the time to attend monthly board meetings, other special sessions and educational seminars. These special sessions and seminars are necessary in order to keep directors informed on the always evolving aspects of the electric utility industry.

CVEC board members have a crucial role in shaping the cooperative's future. As a board member, you will work alongside a group of people who share a like-minded commitment to the co-op's democratic process.

Directors whose terms expire at



this year's annual meeting in August include:

- **Norm Major** – District 5
- **Wes Green** – District 3
- **Vacant Seat** – District 2

Any interested member who would like to seek election must complete the director candidate petition packet and submit the signatures of at least 15 members in good standing with the cooperative who reside in the district for which the individual is seeking the nomination.

You may request a packet by visiting our website: www.cvrec.com, calling 641-932-7126 or emailing election@cvrec.com.

Prospective board candidates must submit the required forms to CVEC no later than June 3, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. CDT. ⚡

The power of Operation Round Up®

It started as a simple idea 29 years ago at one cooperative in South Carolina. Just round up co-op members' electric bills to the next nearest dollar, and then use it to do good work in the community. Today, hundreds of electric co-ops throughout the country, including Chariton Valley Electric, use this idea to help members and organizations close to home.

All co-ops adhere to the seven cooperative principles, including "Concern for Community." The Operation Round Up® program is the perfect embodiment of this core principle. The average co-op member donates \$6 with a maximum possible contribution of \$11.88 per year. This may not seem like a large amount, but when combined with the nearly 4,000 CVEC members who participate, it adds up to make a significant impact.

In this program's first year alone, over \$25,000 was collected, with \$21,300 distributed to these worthwhile community, youth, educational and environmental programs.

- The Monroe County South Central Iowa Community Action Program (SCICAP) – \$3,500
- The Seymour Food Pantry – \$300
- The Moravia Betterment Society – \$4,000
- The Albia Police Department – \$2,000
- The King Opera House – \$5,000
- The Moravia Ruritan Club – \$1,500
- The Moravia Historical Society – \$5,000

These partnerships have allowed CVEC to make a broader impact on members and the communities in our service territory.

CVEC is grateful to the members who have donated their small change so far, to help change lives each month. We are excited for this program to continue and hope our membership continues to see the value and benefit this program brings to our communities. ⚡



A brotherhood of linemen connected through cooperative service

BY ANGELA CATTON

Electric cooperatives set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on. Lineworkers are some of the most visible people at your local co-op, and every day of the year, we appreciate the commitment and passion they bring to serving members.

In many families, the tradition of being a lineman may involve some family members across generations. For the Freml family of western Iowa, all six children in a single generation became linemen.

A legacy begins

The Freml co-op story begins in Denison in the 1950s, on a 200-acre family farm. Wesley (Wes) and Rita Freml were grain farmers who also raised livestock and received their electric service from South Crawford Rural Electric Cooperative (which eventually became Western Iowa Power Cooperative).

The Fremls raised six children – all boys – on that farm. Sons Jim, Tom, Charley, Rich, Joe and Gerry were responsible for contributing to the operation. While having six sons to carry on the operation would have been a dream come true for Wes, he quickly realized he was facing a dilemma – farm work was tough, and there wasn't enough land to pass along to six boys. How could he secure a future for his sons, raised with a foundation of service to their neighbors and the agricultural community?

Jim. Wes' eldest son, Jim, seemed curious when the local REC guys came around the farm. "Dad worked horse teams with a few guys who worked for the REC, and he had spoken to them about their experiences," he explains. A neighbor, Vernon Newman, also



Wes Freml with his sons (left to right) Jim, Charley, Rich, Joe, Tom and Gerry in 2010.

Photo Credit: Ed Thompson, October 2010 issue of Rural Electric magazine. Used with permission.

served on the board of directors.

Wes took Jim to the REC, where they learned there would be an opening due to an upcoming retirement. The timing was perfect for Jim, so he went to power line school at Northwest Iowa Vocational School (now known as Northwest Iowa Community College) in Sheldon. He graduated in 1973 and went to work for South Crawford Rural Electric Cooperative.

Following in their brother's footsteps

Tom. Tom had an affinity for farm work and often performed odd jobs for several neighboring farms. "We were Baby Boomers and at that time, every family had a big batch of kids," Tom says. "Since land was scarce, I knew I might have to consider another career but wanted to stay in a rural setting. I also enjoyed working for the neighbors we knew so well."

Tom talked with Jim about his work and soon realized that work for a co-op provided opportunities to serve the rural community.

Tom completed his education at Northwest Iowa Vocational School, graduating just one year and three months after his big brother. Tom went to work for Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO) in Creston.

Charley. Charley was convinced his career would take on a different trajectory. Following high school, he worked at the local meat-packing plant. The work was hard. "You wore rubber boots and gloves all day long. I wasn't happy in that environment," recalls Charley.

Wes saw the careers Jim and Tom were building and felt compelled to give Charley a gentle push. He offered to pay Charley's tuition to Northwest Iowa Vocational School if Charley could pay for his room and board. "I was a saver," Charley adds. Covering room and board was easy, and he couldn't pass on the opportunity. He graduated from the lineman program in 1977 and went to work for Glidden REC, which later became Raccoon Valley REC.



Gerry. Wes had helped his youngest son Gerry rent and work ground while he was still in high school. Gerry enjoyed the work but was experiencing the pressures of the farming economy in the early 1980s. Gerry admits, “I saw no future in it. I knew I wanted to go to school in Sheldon, too.” Two weeks after graduation, Gerry headed for power line school, graduating in 1981. Soon after, he accepted a position with Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) on the Harlan Outpost crew.

Rich. Rich worked for the local Safeway grocery store and thoroughly enjoyed it. “This was going to be my career,” Rich says. “But when the national office closed many of Iowa’s stores, I was forced to consider other options.” Rich trained in law enforcement, walked beans and even acquired a CDL (chauffeurs driving license) and worked a pop-route.

Rich felt uninspired. Brother Gerry had learned of an opening for a boom truck operator at Nishnabotna Valley REC in Harlan and Rich was soon hired (in 1983). After four years of driving the boom truck, Rich began assisting with installing radio-controlled switches at member locations to support the co-op’s load management program. From there, Rich moved into member services.

Joe. Joe also became a lineman after completing coursework in telecommunications at Des Moines Area Community College. Joe took employment with an Iowa co-op, but it was a telephone cooperative in Lake Mills. As telephone companies underwent deregulation, Joe was bounced from telco to telco and became frustrated with the experience. He went to work for Adams County REC, which became

Southwest REC, in Corning. Joe died in 2012.

The surviving brothers, except for Gerry, who serves as crew foreman for NIPCO’s Harlan Outpost, are enjoying retirement from their respected cooperatives. Gerry will soon follow in their footsteps, too.

Foundation for the next generation

Rita Freml passed in 2004 and Wes in 2014, leaving a legacy of cooperative linemen. “Dad was really proud of that school in Sheldon,” Gerry says. “When he passed, the family created two \$500 scholarships in their name for students pursuing linework.” The next generation of Freml

lineworkers continues in Jim’s son Lance who serves as a journeyman lineman for Pella Cooperative Electric Association.

While linework has its challenges and can be dangerous, it can also be gratifying. Like the Freml brothers’ experiences, lineworkers know that their service benefits rural communities.

“When storms take out the power, and you get the lights turned back on, members really appreciate the work of the co-op,” Charley says. “It’s rewarding work to serve co-op members.” ⚡

Angela Catton is the manager of member relations and development for Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative.





Glazed Pecans

- 1 pound pecan halves**
- ½ cup sugar**
- oil**

Boil pecans in water for 1 minute and rinse under hot water. In a large bowl, add sugar to pecans and stir until sugar is dissolved into pecans. Heat oil and fry pecans ½ pound at a time. Fry for 3-5 minutes or until golden in color. Remove from oil and drain in sieve. Spread on paper to cool. Great to share in little bags or jars as Easter gifts! *Serves 10-14*

Camilla Williamson • Albia
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Peach Praline Pie

- 4 cups peaches**
- ½ cup sugar**
- 2 tablespoons quick tapioca**
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice**
- ¼ cup flour**
- ¼ cup brown sugar**
- ½ cup pecans**
- ¼ cup butter, softened**
- pie shell**

Combine peaches, sugar, tapioca and lemon juice. Set aside for 15 minutes. Mix flour, brown sugar, pecans and butter into a praline mixture. Place ⅓ praline mixture in the bottom of pie shell. Pour in peach mixture. Crumble the remaining praline mixture on top of peaches. Bake at 350 degrees F for 25 minutes.

Patrice Bottjen • Remsen
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

Pecan Pie Bars

- 2 cups flour**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- 1 cup margarine or butter, softened**
- 5 eggs**
- 1 cup white sugar**
- 1 cup light corn syrup**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla**
- 2 cups chopped pecans**

Make crust by mixing flour, brown sugar and margarine (can substitute brown sugar with ½ cup white sugar). Press in 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees F for 10 minutes. Mix eggs, white sugar, corn syrup, vanilla and pecans together. Pour over partially baked crust. Bake bars at 325 degrees F for 40 minutes or until they reach the consistency of pecan pie. *Makes approximately 24 bars*

Allyson Bailey • Hamilton
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Frosted Pecan Bars

- 1 cup pecans, chopped**
- 1½ cups butter, divided**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- 1 cup white sugar**
- 2 eggs**
- 2½ teaspoons vanilla, divided**
- 1½ cups flour**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- pinch of salt**
- 2 cups powdered sugar**
- 3 tablespoons hot water**
- 18 pecan halves**

Sprinkle chopped pecans over bottom of greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Melt 1 cup butter, then combine with brown sugar, white sugar, eggs and 2 teaspoons vanilla. Beat well. Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Add to wet ingredients and mix well. Pour batter (it will be very thick) over chopped pecans. Spread evenly and bake at 350 degrees F for 35-40 minutes. Brown ½ cup butter over low heat. Add powdered sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla and hot water. Beat with electric hand mixer until smooth. Quickly spread over warm bars and top with pecan halves. Cut when cool. *Makes 18 bars*

Jennine Maas • Casey
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative

Tips Source:
American Pecan
Council

STORING PECANS

To protect the pecan's rich oils and buttery taste, do not store shelled pecans at room temperature. For the best quality, always keep your shelled pecans in the refrigerator. They'll keep for about nine months in an airtight container, and up to two years in a sealed plastic bag in the freezer.

Pecan Chicken

- 1 cup pecans
- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 4 skinless chicken breasts
- salt and pepper
- ¼ cup honey mustard
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, approximately

Grind pecans in food processor. Combine pecans, breadcrumbs and basil in a bowl. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Brush each chicken breast with honey mustard and coat in crumb mixture. Place chicken on baking sheet then drizzle with olive oil. Bake at 400 degrees F for 15-20 minutes. *Serves 4*

Karen Schwickerath • Waverly
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

Kentucky Pecan Pie

- 1 cup white corn syrup
- 1 cup dark brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup butter or margarine, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 whole eggs, slightly beaten
- 9-inch unbaked pie shell
- 1 heaping cup whole pecans, shelled
- whipped cream or ice cream, optional

Combine syrup, sugar, salt, butter and vanilla, mix well. Add slightly beaten eggs. Pour into unbaked pie shell. Sprinkle pecans all over. Bake at 350 degrees F for 45-50 minutes for a gas oven. If using an electric oven, add 15-20 minutes to baking time. Test pie after 45 minutes. If a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, it's done. When cooled, top with whipped cream or ice cream if desired.

Raymond Robbins • Fort Madison
Access Energy Cooperative

Pecan Pie Muffins

- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- ½ cup flour
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup butter, melted

Mix pecans, brown sugar and flour in medium-sized bowl. In a separate bowl, beat eggs well and mix in butter. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and mix well. Fill muffin tins with foil or silicone liners and add ⅔ cup batter to each. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20 -25 minutes. *Yield: 12 muffins*

Sheryl Murphy • Mystic
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Pecan-Cinnamon-Apple Pork Chops

- 2 tablespoons butter, divided
- 4 boneless pork loin chops
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 4 medium tart apples, thinly sliced
- 4 tablespoons chopped pecans

In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon butter over medium heat. Add pork chops and cook 6-8 minutes on each side or until a meat thermometer reads 145 degrees. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Remove pork chops when cooked; keep warm. Add apples, pecans, brown sugar mixture and remaining butter to pan. Cook and stir until apples are tender. Serve apple pecan mixture with pork chops. *Serves 4*

Jackie Netherton • Ida Grove
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

PECANS AND PRODUCE

Pecans contain polyphenols, specifically flavonoids, which are the types of bioactive compounds found in brightly colored produce. Flavonoids are powerful antioxidant agents.

PECAN POINTS

HEART-SMART

Scientific evidence suggests that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, such as pecans, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease.

PECAN POINTS

LOW IN CARBS, HIGH IN FIBER

In each 1-ounce serving of raw pecans you get 12 grams of "good" mono-unsaturated fat, with 0 cholesterol or sodium. Compared to other nuts, pecans are among the lowest in carbs and highest in fiber.

PECAN POINTS

Wanted: Spectacular Sandwiches The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

Whether they are hot or cold, toasted or grilled, on a bun or bread, sandwiches are a versatile canvas for creativity. If we run your recipe in the magazine, we'll send a \$25 credit for your electric co-op to apply to your power bill. Recipes submitted also may be archived on our website at www.livingwithenergyiowa.com.

The deadline is April 30, 2021. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions. **Also provide the number of servings per recipe.**

EMAIL:

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

MAIL:

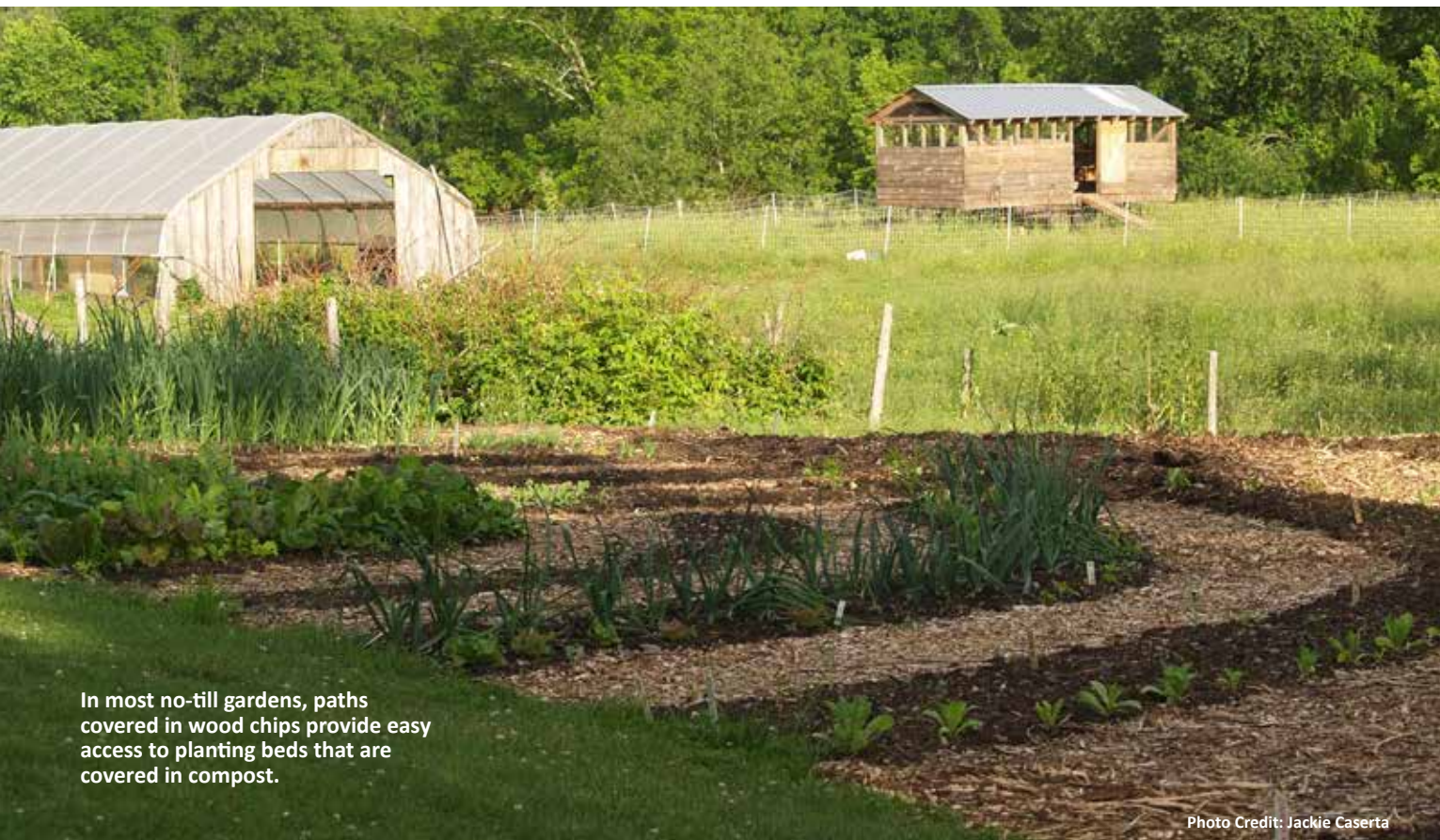
Recipes

Living with Energy in Iowa
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48
Des Moines, IA 50322-2992



Tips for planting an efficient,

BY PAT KEEGAN AND BRAD THIESSEN



In most no-till gardens, paths covered in wood chips provide easy access to planting beds that are covered in compost.

Photo Credit: Jackie Caserta



Photo Source: USDA

It's almost time to plant a garden, and there are some steps you can take to make your home garden more efficient.

Try no-till gardening

One exciting approach to gardening is no-till, also known as no-dig. No-till gardens have been gaining ground with farmers in recent years, partly because of the energy savings. The principles behind no-till gardening work well for large farms as well as smaller home gardens. No-till can be done without chemicals. Research shows that this approach can produce more fruits and vegetables within a few years, and they get better over the long term. Best of all, this approach to gardening takes less time and effort – and you won't even have to

fire up the rototiller!

Two ideas are at the heart of no-till gardening. First, don't break up the soil. We usually think that by breaking up the soil and mixing it up, we keep weeds from growing. But tilling can bring weed seeds that are deep in the soil to the top where they can germinate and grow. Tilling also destroys microbes in the soil that bring nutrients to the plants.

Incorporate compost and mulch

The second idea is to spread thick layers of compost and other mulch on top of the soil. When compost and other mulch are spread on top, they feed the soil from above, the same way leaves in a forest fall to the ground, decompose and turn into rich soil over time. When you build up the soil by spreading layers of compost

No-till growing can be done on commercial farms as well as home gardens.

no-till garden



and other mulch on top, the weed seeds are kept dormant. Mulch keeps the soil moist, so less water is used to irrigate, which means less electricity use for pumping water from your well or community water system.

Your no-till garden can be planted at ground-level or in raised beds. Start by laying weed-blocking material on top of the old dirt. Sheets of cardboard are often used because they will decompose over time. Then spread at least 4 inches of weed-free soil or compost on top.

If the soil under the cardboard is reasonably loose, you can probably start planting right away. Your garden may be less productive the first year but will grow healthier and have less weeds every season from then on. If the ground is heavily compacted or clay, you may have to till in some compost or healthy soil before laying down the cardboard and give it a year for the new mix to get looser.

In the fall, you can cut the dead plants at ground level and leave the roots in the ground to decompose

over the winter. You may also want to plant a cover crop, like peas, fava beans or barley late in the growing season. Setting up a no-till garden takes a fair bit of work, but it will require less maintenance in the future and get healthier every year.

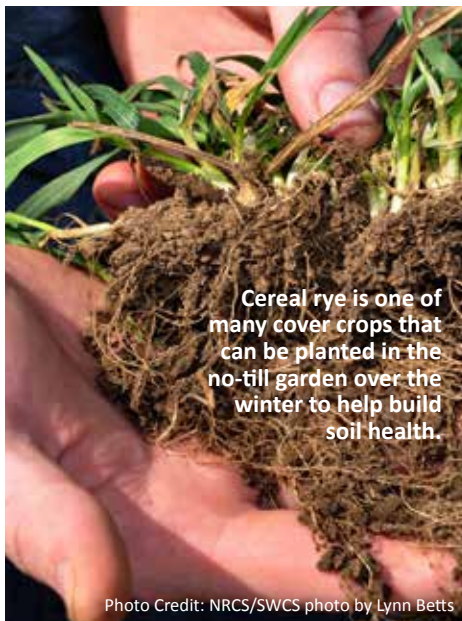
If you're ready to try your hand at planting a no-till garden, many colleges and universities offer classes and resources for folks who are not enrolled as students. You can also watch a variety of videos online that can guide you through setup and long-term care.

These tips will help you prepare for a more energy-efficient garden this season. Happy planting and eating! ⚡

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.

Tips to reduce energy use related to gardening:

- Use drip systems, which lose less water to evaporation.
- Add timers as a convenient way to control irrigation, but be sure to override the timer and shut off watering cycles when a rain shower can do the job.
- Consider purchasing a rain barrel for energy efficient watering.
- Learn how to store your produce to reduce waste.
- Make sure your freezer is energy efficient.



Investing in your electric system

At CVEC, we use a piece of equipment called a circuit recloser, a device that protects electric lines by momentarily interrupting service when a fault occurs, then attempting to restore the power automatically if the fault clears. This keeps outages from occurring when temporary problems arise, such as tree branches touching a line, animals or any other foreign object that comes into contact with exposed lines, downed power lines, equipment failure, broken poles or weather-related issues. CVEC currently has

220 operating reclosers on our system.

Most reclosers are combined with a circuit breaker that trips if an overcurrent is detected with an electronic reclosing function, which automatically brings back power to the line if the fault quickly clears itself. By this logic, 80% of outages can be resolved by a simple close operation. However, you may notice a “blink” in your service.

So why are reclosers such an important piece of equipment for CVEC? There are two primary reasons:

Fewer prolonged power outages:

Reclosers are excellent for preventing these types of temporary short-circuits from causing power outages that last for an extended period. As a result, CVEC can keep the power on for our members in which other solutions would have created prolonged outages. This provides our members a more reliable service.

Power restoration: Reclosers attempt to automatically restore power when a fault occurs. If the reclosure device is successful, there is no need for a lineman to visit the site, pinpoint the problem and restore it. However, if the fault remains in contact with the exposed line and causes an outage, CVEC crews are dispatched to evaluate the issue and restore power. When this device is successful, it saves time and money for CVEC and our members, while again, providing members with greater reliability and continuity in their electricity service. ⚡



What do you think the cost of a single recloser/breaker combination is?

- A. \$1,235 B. \$1,517
C. \$1,794 D. \$2,063

Answer: C

SAFETY MATTERS

Know what's below: Steps for safe digging

Spring is here, and there's never been a better time to get outside and enjoy the fresh air. Perhaps you are making plans for a new garden or maybe an entire lawn makeover! However, as you're planning are planning to revamp your backyard oasis, remember to keep safety in mind for all projects – especially those that require digging near underground utility lines.

Most of us never think about the electric, gas, water and other utility lines buried below the ground, but hitting one of these lines while digging is not the reminder you'll want – trust us! CVEC reminds all our members who are planning a digging project to call 8-1-1 at least three business days before you start. You can also submit a request online by visiting www.iowaonecall.com. Here's how the process works:

After you call 8-1-1 or submit your request online, all affected utilities will be notified of your intent to dig. It may take the utilities a few days to

get to your request, so please be patient. The affected utilities will send someone out to mark the buried lines with paint or flags. Before you break ground:

- 1 Confirm that all the utilities have responded to your request.
- 2 If you placed your request by phone, use the process explained by your 8-1-1 call center representative.
- 3 If you submitted your request online, refer to your 8-1-1 center ticket to confirm everything.

By taking this critical step before you break ground on your project, you can help protect not only yourself but our community. Disrupting an underground utility line can interrupt service, cause injuries and cost money to repair, so remember to call 8-1-1 first and know what's below! ⚡

5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Always call 8-1-1 first. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:



1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before your work begins. The operator will notify the utilities affected by your project.

2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for affected utilities to respond to your request. They will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.

2-3

3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded to your request by comparing the marks to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. The markers are your guide for the duration of your project.



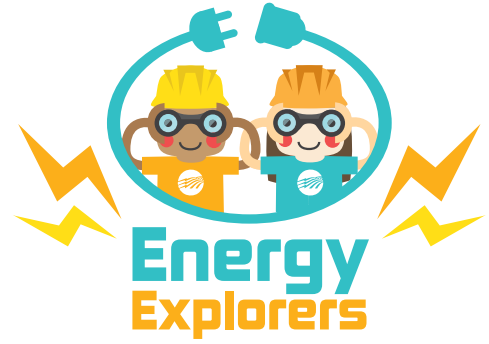
5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project location.



THANK A LINEWORKER!

This month, we're recognizing lineworkers for the amazing job they do to make sure we have electricity! Think about all the ways you use electricity every day. Do you use a phone, watch TV, play video games or turn on lights? You're able to do **all** of these things because of lineworkers!



Below is space to write a short thank you note to your local lineworkers. Write your note, then ask an adult to help you send it back to us so we can share it with our crews.



WE ♥ OUR
LINEWORKERS

Send your note to the mailing address below, or snap a photo with your phone and email it to us!

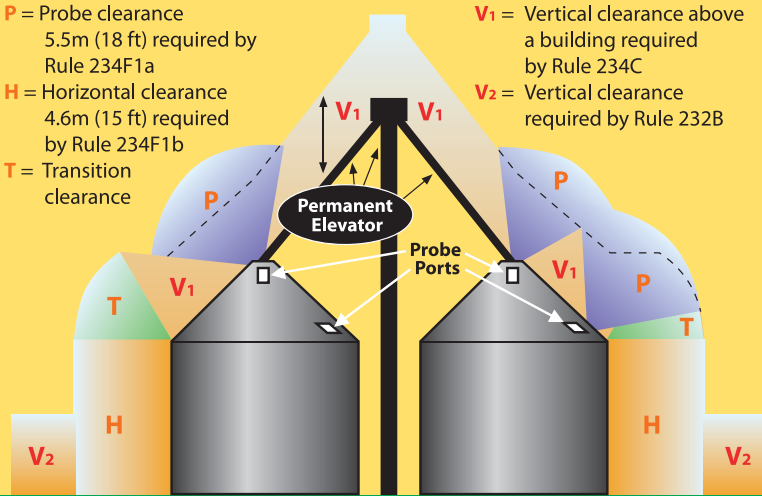
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.
PO Box 486
Albia, IA 52531

-OR-

akerber@cvrec.com

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

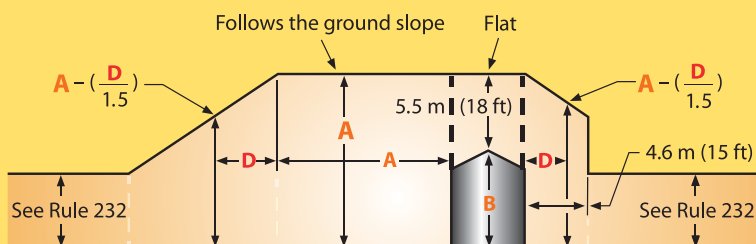
- P** = Probe clearance
5.5m (18 ft) required by Rule 234F1a
- H** = Horizontal clearance
4.6m (15 ft) required by Rule 234F1b
- T** = Transition clearance
- V₁** = Vertical clearance above a building required by Rule 234C
- V₂** = Vertical clearance required by Rule 232B



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

ELEVATION

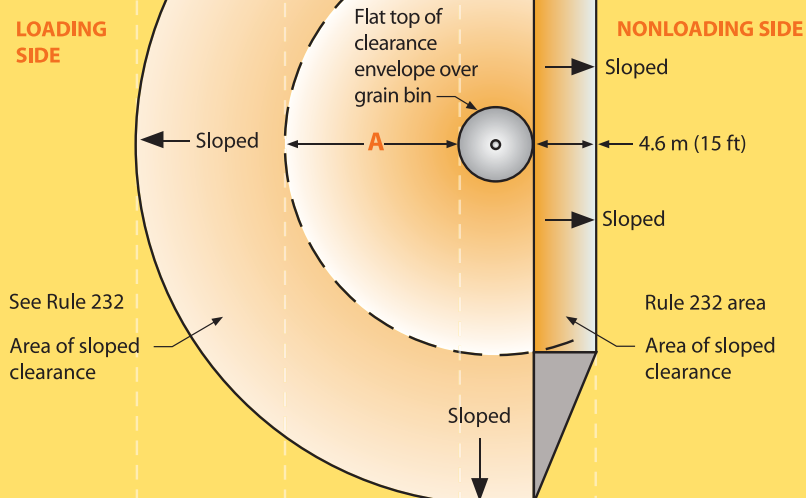


- B** = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin
- A** = $B + 5.5\text{m (18 ft)}$
- D** = Variable horizontal dimension

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 Board has adopted this language.

Your local electric cooperative is required by the Iowa Utilities Board 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. ⚡

Disclaimer

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.

Challenges of today's cooking

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

I've never been someone who hates to cook. I get tired of it, like most of us do by having to come up with something different all of the time. My well-worn recipe books open automatically to the favorites of our family. Since it's just Kent and me at home, the requirements are simpler; I don't feel the need to provide a "well-balanced" meal each evening. He takes on a lot more grilling. And we've downsized to smaller baking dishes and don't need the 9x13-inch pans anymore.

This contrasts with the years we had three teenaged boys at home, plus lots of their friends. My hazy memory of those years was that I was constantly either cooking, baking or cleaning up from the cooking and baking. One day at the grocery store a lady looked at my overflowing cart and commented, "You must be stocking up!" I winced. It was one week's groceries. Those days have passed.

What becomes more problematic now is when our family gets together for meals at our house. With COVID restrictions, this hasn't happened for a while, but as things loosen up, we will once again get to enjoy each other's company, if not each other's food.

Family preferences

My daughter-in-law hates onions. I long ago gave up on using even minced ones, as she'll pick them out. She says it's more the texture than the taste that repulses her. Often, I'll add the onions last, taking a portion out for her beforehand.

My son-in-law is vegan. This has forced a whole new way to look at meals, so we end up eating a lot of pasta when they're over, with meat as a side dish to add if desired. Frequently, he'll bring his own main dish, and I'll try to add a few

side dishes (such as a relish tray or potatoes mashed with soy milk) to the spread.

My mother is gluten-free. She long ago discovered that gluten is found in the strangest things, like toothpaste and Worcestershire sauce. You have to become an avid label reader to avoid problems. She's tried all the mixes and the flours and the recipes and says most of them taste like sand. I feel guilty every time I invite my family over for my homemade buns, knowing she's can't partake and will have to gnaw on a gluten-free cracker.

Meal planning

If the whole family comes at once, it takes the skills of a D-Day commander to figure out things that

everyone can and will eat. I start a list of what I can provide and what each person will need to bring themselves. Sometimes it feels as if we're each eating a separate meal.

Kent recently had a brilliant idea. Communal meals should be peanut butter-based. Or better yet, just pass around a jar of peanut butter with a knife and everyone can help themselves. Who can argue with peanut butter? Well, except those who have peanut allergies, so it's back to the drawing board. 🦋

Valerie Van Kooten is a writer from Pella who loves living in the country and telling its stories. She and her husband Kent have three married sons, two incredibly adorable grandsons and a lovely granddaughter.



POWERING EVERY MOMENT

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And in between, we all do very different things.

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