

# living with energy

IN IOWA



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AUGUST 2020

CVEC welcomes Leilani Todd as new general manager ▶ See Page 5



Balanced generation  
delivers power for  
CVEC's members

Iowa students take top  
honors for electric  
co-op documentary

Recipes to use  
fresh herbs

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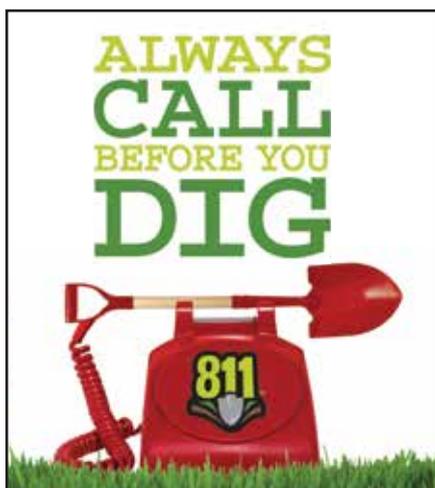
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## Features

### 6 Iowa students break through barriers; take top honors

Five northwest Iowa middle school students are celebrating after winning top honors for their documentary on rural electrification at the 2020 National History Day® national finals.



### 8 Herbalicious recipes

Fresh herbs can elevate any dish! Co-op cooks share their favorite recipes to use the flavor-packed accents. **PLUS:** Find out how you can receive a \$25 credit on your power bill!



### 10 Electric cooperatives' commitment to democratic values

In August, the nation marks the centennial of women's right to vote. Iowa's electric cooperatives have served as incubators for the leadership skills that guide co-op-served communities today.



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### Shining Examples

Five Akron-Westfield students earn top honors retelling the rural electric cooperative story. From left to right: Ben Philips, Hayden Wahlberg, Lainey Schuknecht, Addison Naslund and Josie Jacobs. On Pages 6-7, read more about the students' achievement. Photo by Rachel Rogers, Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative. ⚡

# Adapting to new circumstances as we educate and train

BY KATRINA DAVIS

As a new school year is about to begin, parents and school staff have been learning a lot about the complex challenges of providing quality education and ensuring safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), the statewide trade association for your local electric co-op, we are experiencing similar hurdles. In my role as the director of education and training, I manage and coordinate dozens of conferences, trainings and workshops in a typical calendar year, but this year has been anything BUT typical.



One of our top priorities at IAEC is to provide valuable and relevant training and educational opportunities for the employees and directors of our member cooperatives. As we adapt to physical distancing restrictions to ensure safety, meeting face-to-face has become impractical for most of our usual events. But where some may see obstacles, we are working to identify opportunities to deliver necessary information through virtual formats.

For example, our statewide safety department usually conducts on-site inspections and safety visits with our member co-ops throughout the year. During the pandemic, they have modified their usual face-to-face approach and pivoted to virtual check-ins to provide needed safety communication. It's not a perfect substitution, but the virtual technology allows our job training and safety instructors to keep close contact with operational staff at our member cooperatives without the health risks during the pandemic.

At IAEC, we also manage several in-person conferences for various co-op employee groups like accountants, managers, information technology

professionals, human resources professionals, line superintendents and foremen, and communicators during a typical year. Like many other events across the country, these conferences were canceled in the spring and summer of 2020 due to pandemic-related health concerns. As the dates for our fall conferences come into focus, we're evaluating our options to deliver the training and educational

resources in a virtual format as we adapt to our new reality. Maintaining a safe distance between attendees at a conference center is difficult when you consider how to safely serve meals, coordinate breaks and ensure proper distancing in elevators and restrooms. Even something simple like providing coffee becomes a health concern during the pandemic. Managing large groups of people has suddenly become a challenging effort,

as school administrators are well aware.

So, while our circumstances have been limiting for the time being, we are moving forward in exploring other ways to deliver educational resources to Iowa's electric cooperatives. Advancements in technology make it possible for us to bridge geographical and physical limitations so our association members can continue learning and networking as they serve rural Iowans with safe, affordable, reliable and sustainable power.

As you work to overcome challenges brought on by the pandemic, I hope you embrace new and creative ways to connect and learn. I am confident that we can adapt to our circumstances and thrive if we look out for one another and stay optimistic. ⚡

Katrina Davis is the director of education and training for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

### Win a food dehydrator and cookbook!



Win a six-tray food dehydrator, perfect for food storage like beef jerky, fruits, vegetables and making fruit rolls for the kiddos. Plus, win an essential cookbook to put your food dehydrator to work with instructions and techniques for drying all the most popular fruits and vegetables, along with meat and herbs. ⚡

#### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) no later than Aug. 31, 2020. 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 home improvement gift card from the June issue was Christi Eckhoff, Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative.

# Balanced generation delivers power for

Powering homes, farms and businesses in rural southeast Iowa is a point of pride for Associated Electric Cooperative, the generation and transmission cooperative located in Springfield, Missouri. If you are a member of a co-op in southeast Iowa, Missouri or northeast Oklahoma, your electricity comes from Associated's power plants. This cooperative is owned by members like you and serves 2.1 million people. It's controlled through three tiers, including your distribution cooperative (Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative), a transmission cooperative and a board including representatives from each level.

"Associated generates power for electric cooperatives in our system with values learned from our member-owners," says Emery "Buster" Geisendorfer, member-elected president of Associated's board of directors. "We know they want reliable, affordable power generated in a responsible way. That's how we view the power we generate – it must meet that reliable, affordable and responsible test."

A Lewis County Rural Electric



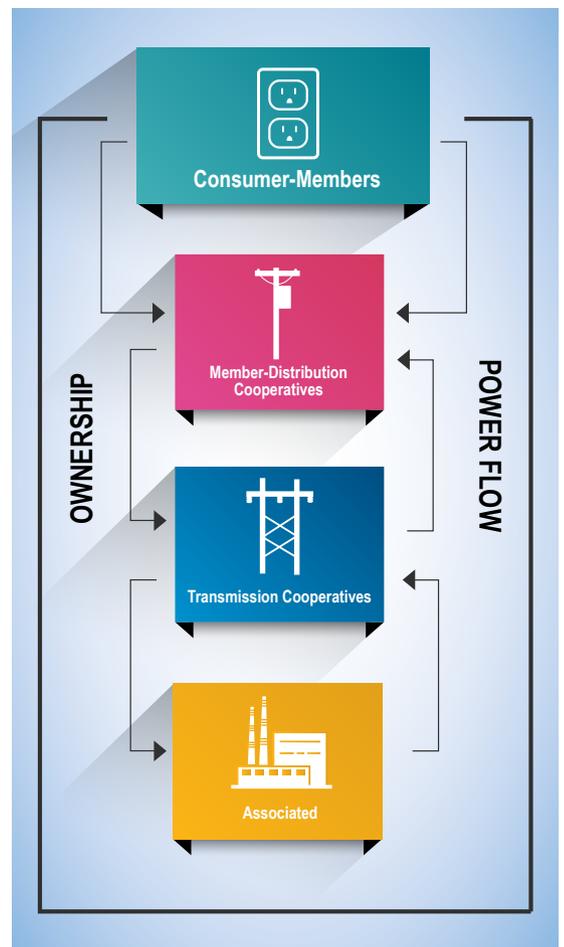
Cooperative member, Buster is a cattleman from Monticello, Missouri. He serves on his local board and is president of Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative, a regional transmission co-op. He says the three-tiered system – distribution, transmission and generation – is a key difference in why and how Associated generates power.

"I'm a member, too," Buster says. "Those who serve our member-owners at every level of the three-tiered system are focused on members."

## Power when you need it

Providing reliable power expected by members requires different types of generation. Associated's fleet – producing electricity generated by natural gas, coal, wind and hydropower – is diverse enough to provide power on the hottest, coldest, driest, windiest and calmest days. Natural gas and coal are the most reliable forms of generation because they operate around the clock. They can be controlled

unlike power sources that use available wind, sunshine or water to operate. There also are adequate supplies of natural gas and coal,



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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



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641-932-7126 (local)  
or 800-475-1702

**Website**  
www.cvrec.com

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We accept  

# CVEC's members

including a 45- to 60-day coal stockpile on-site that keeps each of the plants running when needed.

## Power at a fair price

Electricity is provided to members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. As members ramp up their use, Associated's goal is to ensure reliability, then match members' needs to the most affordable generation resource.

Coal generation supplied about half of member's electricity in 2019. Low prices for natural gas have increased the use of this fuel source in Associated's energy mix, which benefits members. Coal and natural gas are typically less expensive for generation than wind or other renewable sources. Hydropower, the lowest-cost source, is used as much as possible, but is limited in supply by rainfall and is controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## Power generated the right way

A focus on members drives Associated to be responsible caretakers of the natural environment. To balance reliable and affordable electricity with environmental responsibility is not easy or inexpensive but Associated is committed to generating power the right way. Associated and its members have spent more than \$1.1 billion to reduce air emissions since 1994, resulting in more than 70% improvement in air quality. By adding significant amounts of wind power to diversify generating sources, investing in environmental controls and staying up to date with regulations and technologies, Associated complies with environmental regulations at the lowest cost possible for members.

"Having actual end users of its electricity sit on its board of directors makes Associated unique among other generators," says Buster. "Balancing reliable and affordable electricity with

environmental responsibility takes a steadfast commitment and an allocation of resources. It's a priority Associated takes seriously. Their

experience assures Associated meets the needs of its member-owners. I can't imagine a better way to run a business that puts service first." ⚡



Buster Geisendorfer is both a member of his local co-op and president of Associated Electric.

## EMPLOYEE NEWS

# CVEC welcomes new general manager

Leilani Todd assumed her duties as the new general manager of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative on Aug. 1, 2020.

Todd is no stranger to the rural electric cooperative business or hard work. She has over 30 years of experience in finance, operations and human resources and has spent the past 20 years serving electric cooperative members. As a senior manager within the industry, Todd has demonstrated her expertise through her leadership and participation on national and statewide levels. She previously represented rural electric cooperatives on the executive advisory council for the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD), previously chaired the statewide consortia for workforce development in Virginia and served on various other boards.

She is very familiar with southern Iowa as her parents and grandparents are from the area and her father still owns a farm in Mount Ayr. She was raised in northwest Missouri and graduated from Northwest Missouri

State University with a bachelor's degree in accounting.

Todd says she is excited to be moving back to the Midwest and closer to family. "I am so excited for the opportunity to return to the area, to work promoting and supporting our local communities and am passionate about serving the cooperative's members," Todd shares. "I look forward to meeting members and am already impressed with how well the communities work together to support each other. I immediately felt right at home."

Todd succeeds Becky Teno who has served as interim general manager of CVEC since November 2019. CVEC is extremely fortunate to have Becky who has been willing to take on these responsibilities during this process. She has worked for the co-op for the past 11 years, cultivating the culture of the employees and overseeing administration.

Please join CVEC as we welcome Leilani to the cooperative and the community. ⚡



# Iowa students break through

BY ANGELA CATTON

Five northwest Iowa middle school students are celebrating after winning top honors for their documentary on rural electrification at the 2020 National History Day® (NHD) national finals. The NHD awards ceremony was held online in June due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each year, more than 500,000 middle and high school students around the world participate in the NHD program. Iowa sent 69 students to this year's national finals where they competed for top honors against nearly 3,000 other students. "We are proud of our student participants who represented Iowa well on the national level and congratulate them on their achievements," says State Historical Society of Iowa Administrator Susan Kloewer.

Josie Jacobs, Addison Naslund, Ben Philips, Lainey Schuknecht and Hayden Wahlberg, students at Akron-Westfield Middle School in Plymouth County, Iowa, won first place in the junior group division for their 10-minute documentary, "Rural Electrification: Breaking Barriers with the Flip of a Switch." Valorie Philips, Akron-Westfield Middle



This past winter, the Akron-Westfield students met with Ben Philips' great-aunt Wanda Philips. Learning about her experiences was a key element in their research about the history of rural electrification.

School instructor and NHD coach along with parent mentors LeAnne Philips and Arica Schuknecht, provided ongoing guidance to her students during project development.

"What is exceptional about this group's success is that these students have not been together in the same room since the district contest in mid-March," Philips says.

The National History Day in Iowa program has been coordinated by the State Historical Society of Iowa, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, since 1994. Students progress through achievement levels during the competition; however, this year's pandemic restrictions kept the students from showcasing their work in Des Moines and Washington, D.C.

National History Day is a non-profit education organization, which provides a yearlong academic enrichment program that challenges students to research, develop and present papers, exhibits, documentaries, websites and performances about historical topics related to a designated annual theme. This year's theme was "Breaking Barriers in History."

## Why rural electrification?

The five students from Akron-Westfield Middle School chose to tell the story of rural electric cooperatives because they live in the heart of rural America and many of them have relatives who remember the day electricity came to the farm.

Lainey Schuknecht, a seventh grader involved in the project, says that the easiest part of the project was selecting rural electrification as the subject because, "We all liked it and agreed it fit the theme well. It is also an important part of history that doesn't get talked about much."

Student Ben Philips, who lives on Iowa's electric cooperative lines, shares, "My family's farm was one of the last ones in Plymouth County to get electricity through the local REC (rural electric cooperative) before World War II started. In our research, we learned that if farms didn't get connected before the war, they had to wait several more years for electricity until the war was over and electrification work started again."

Ben's family farm was originally served by Plymouth Electric



The students were invited to spend time at North West REC's Orange City office. CEO Lyle Korver provided a tour and talked with them about how cooperatives have evolved in their service to members over the past eight decades. Two students of the group are served by North West REC.

# barriers; take top honors



Cooperative Association, which merged with two other area RECs in 1998 to form North West REC.

Ben's great aunts contributed to the retelling of the rural electrification story, adding a personal perspective to the work. In the students' documentary, Margaret Talbott and Wanda Philips speak of the physical and emotional impacts they felt when their lives – as young women responsible for carrying out many chores on the farm and in their homes – were made better through the introduction of electricity. The students' documentary opens with a quote from Wanda Philips, "A miracle is something that is resoundingly unusual and wonderful, and all of electricity was a miracle to me."

Seventh-grader Addison Naslund, was impressed that, "Electric co-ops are still working to serve many farms across the country today."

## Shining light on the story

In October, the national organization communicates the chosen theme and students must select a related historical subject

IOWA SENT 69 STUDENTS TO THE NATIONAL FINALS

WINNING

TOP HONORS OUT OF 3,000 OTHER STUDENTS

matter. Students must prepare a process paper, which frames the scope of the project in 500 words or less and include an annotated bibliography. For "Rural Electrification: Breaking Barriers with the Flip of a Switch," the group tapped 148 different sources.

North West REC and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (the primary power provider for North West REC) supplied historical photos and resources, such as the book, "The Next Greatest Thing: 50 Years of Rural Electrification In America" (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, 1984). The Iowa students were afforded a special opportunity when American Broadcaster Orion Samuelson agreed to a phone interview. Samuelson, inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame in 2003, is best known for his agricultural reporting. He talked with the students, providing extra commentary to support his videos that the students had already obtained while conducting their research. Samuelson is an enthusiastic proponent of rural

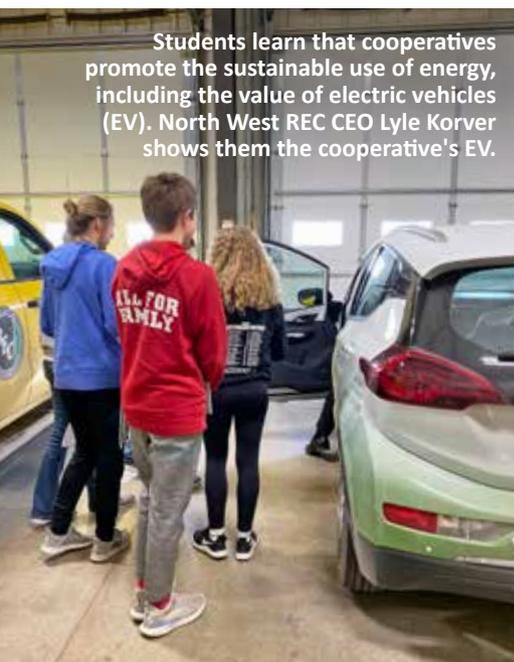
electrification and the value that it brought to rural America.

## Wired to succeed

Students compiled their research and assets and worked as a group during school days in the winter. Then, in mid-March, everything changed. Josie Jacobs, a seventh grader, says, "I thought that sourcing the group's research was the easiest part of the project but the most challenging was finishing the documentary. We had virtual meetings once a week and did sources at home."

Hayden Wahlberg, a seventh grader, has prior experience with NHD projects and won first place at nationals with a previous entry. He says, "This year proved much more difficult because we were not able to meet up and work on the documentary together before nationals."

The story of these five young students' success has much in common with the story of rural electrification and the dedicated work of many individuals to bring electricity to America's farms and rural communities. Success can only be achieved when people work together for a common goal. Addison, Ben, Hayden, Josie and Lainey displayed a high degree of dedication that was also evident more than 80 years ago when hard work and commitment broke through barriers to bring electricity to rural Americans. ⚡



Students learn that cooperatives promote the sustainable use of energy, including the value of electric vehicles (EV). North West REC CEO Lyle Korver shows them the cooperative's EV.

 Watch the video:  
<https://youtu.be/DJKHAX34TfY>

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

# Herbalicious

## RECIPES



## Summer Herb Meatballs

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 8 fresh sage leaves
- 8 large fresh basil leaves
- thyme leaves from 4 sprigs
- rosemary leaves from 1 sprig
- ¼ cup Italian parsley
- 1 large handful of arugula, chopped
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1 teaspoon coarse sea salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 cups tomato or marinara sauce (choose your favorite)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

Combine onion, garlic, herbs and arugula in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Transfer the mixture to a large mixing bowl along with turkey, salt and pepper. Combine, then roll into golf-ball sized meatballs. Begin warming the tomato sauce. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook the meatballs in batches until they're browned, 2-3 minutes each side. Transfer the meatballs to the tomato sauce and let the meatballs cook for 30 minutes. Serve with pasta, rice or summer veggies.

Kelly Pieper • Wever • Access Energy Cooperative

## Bruschetta

- 12 slices of baguette, ¼-inch thick
- 3 roma tomatoes, diced small
- 9 large basil leaves, sliced very thin
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- 6 kalamata olives, pitted and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper

Bake bread on baking sheet at 350 degrees F for 5-6 minutes, turning once. Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl. Spread each toast slice with about 1 tablespoon of topping and enjoy.

Mary Thatcher • Breda  
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

## Herbed Tomatoes

- ⅔ cup canola oil
- ¼ cup vinegar
- ¼ cup parsley, snipped
- ¼ cup green onion, sliced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme or marjoram
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- cherry tomatoes, halved

Combine all ingredients except for tomatoes in a bowl. Stir well and pour over desired amount of cherry tomatoes (or peeled tomatoes). Cover and chill several hours, occasionally spooning the dressing over the tomatoes. Keeps well in refrigerator.

Doris Redding • Parnell  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## Chive Parmesan Potato Chips

- 1 large red potato, may leave unpeeled
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 tablespoons fresh chives, minced
- ¾ teaspoon salt

Using a mandolin slicer, make long, thin slices of potato. Place potato slices and oil in a bowl. Add cheese, chives and salt, tossing to coat. Using an air fryer set at 375 degrees F, place a single layer of potato slices in the basket. Cook until edges are golden brown, about 20 minutes.

Twyla Godbersen • Arthur  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

### IDENTIFYING HERBS

If the stems are tender and green, they're likely to fall into the soft or tender herbs category. Some common varieties include basil, parsley, mint, dill, tarragon and cilantro. Herbs with a harder wooden stem, one you wouldn't really want to eat, such as rosemary, thyme and sage, are generally called hardy (or hard) herbs.

## Thai Quinoa Salad

- 1/2 cup quinoa or rice
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 2 celery stalks, finely diced
- 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and diced
- 2 scallions, white and green parts, finely snipped
- 1/4 cup packed, fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 tablespoons stacked, fresh basil, chopped
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 1/2 teaspoons fish sauce or salt to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes, or more to taste
- sunflower or pumpkin seeds

Soak rice 4 hours or overnight, rinse well. Cook according to package directions to create 1 cup cooked. Add to rice bowl the carrots, celery, cucumbers, scallions, cilantro and basil. Combine carefully. In a small bowl, whisk together lime juice, oil, honey, fish sauce or salt, and pepper flakes. Pour dressing over veggie bowl. To serve: sprinkle with sunflower or pumpkin seeds.

Anita Doughty • Ankeny • Consumers Energy

## Delish Veggie Dip

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup Miracle Whip
- 1 tablespoon dill
- 1 tablespoon chives, chopped
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon onion, minced
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Combine all ingredients together and whisk until blended. Chill 1-2 hours, enjoy!

Mary Gropper • Chelsea  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## Grilled Rosemary Chicken

- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons balsamic or red wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 frying chickens

Combine all above ingredients except for chicken to make a marinade. Place chicken pieces in large plastic bag and pour marinade over. Seal bag and refrigerate 2-3 hours. Grill or broil chicken until juices run clear, about 15 minutes per side.

Janet Winter • Panora • Guthrie County REC

## Sliced Tomatoes with Fresh Herb Dressing

- 4 large ripe tomatoes, sliced
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh chives, chopped
- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- salt and ground pepper, to taste

Arrange tomato slices in a shallow dish. Mix olive oil, herbs, garlic and vinegar. Pour mixture over tomatoes, covering evenly. Top with Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper. Cover and let set for 1 hour before serving.

Laura DeSmet • Larchwood  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## Wanted: Holiday appetizers and snacks The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

Delicious appetizers and snacks are often a favorite part of enjoying the holidays. Share your festive favorites! 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.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com).

The deadline is Aug. 31, 2020. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions.

**NEW: Please also provide the number of servings per recipe.**

**EMAIL:**  
[recipes@livingwithenergyiniowa.com](mailto:recipes@livingwithenergyiniowa.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

### WASHING METHOD

Submerge herbs in a large bowl of cold water and gently agitate with your hands. Transfer damp herbs to a salad spinner and spin dry or spread damp herbs out on a towel or paper towel to dry.

HERB TIPS

### USING LATER

Many clean, fresh and roughly chopped herbs can be frozen in ice cube trays, filled with olive oil or water. These individual herb cubes can be preserved for later use.

HERB TIPS

### STORING METHODS

Tender or harder herbs require different storing methods to best ensure the levels of light, temperature, oxygen and moisture are balanced to avoid spoilage.

HERB TIPS

# Electric cooperatives: A long and lasting commitment to democratic values

BY DERRILL HOLLY AND ANN THELEN



Congress approved the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on June 4, 1919, but it took more than a year for the measure granting women the right to vote to gain ratification by 36 states. On Aug. 18, 2020, the nation marks the centennial of this human rights milestone.

Rural America was built by and owes much of its success to family-run farms and businesses. While fathers and husbands are often celebrated throughout history and heritage, wives and mothers have been full partners in creating thousands of communities. In fact,

electric cooperatives have served as incubators for the leadership skills that guide co-op-served communities today. In Iowa, many female leaders serve as directors, helping to guide their local electric co-op.

## Power and partnership

“Historically, rural wives were always isolated and only had interaction with their husbands and children, but they helped run farms and their homes,” says Betsy Huber, president and CEO of the National Grange.

Founded in 1867, the Grange chapters took root as fraternal

community organizations committed to promoting sound agricultural concepts in the North, South and the expanding West.

By the early 1900s, organizations like the Grange were providing rural women with meaningful leadership opportunities and fueling passions for full engagement in public life that included political participation.

Among the farm women embracing the suffragist cause was Febb Ensminger Burn, a widow from Tennessee, who ultimately played a decisive role in earning women the right to vote and forever changing U.S. history.

Between running her farm and caring for her family, she followed



Erected in 2018, the Burn Memorial depicts Rep. Harry Burn of Niota and his mother, Febb, and honors each of their roles in the ratification of the 19th Amendment.



**Marchelle Brown**  
Centerville  
Chariton Valley  
Electric Cooperative

Director, 2.5 years

*“When I first learned of the open director’s seat, I had recently retired from my full-time job and was intrigued by the opportunity. Being a director involves a lot more than attending monthly meetings. I strive to learn as much as possible through educational opportunities to help continue moving the co-op forward. It’s important to me to help bring new opportunities to our members. As a female board member, I can often bring a different perspective on how the services we provide can positively impact our members’ daily lives.”*

Sue Shelton White, of Jackson, Tennessee, was state chairperson of the National Woman's Party and one of the editors of *The Suffragist* weekly newspaper.



news accounts from Nashville and was turned off by harsh opposition speeches against ratification in the summer of 1920. In August, she penned a seven-page letter to her son, Henry T. Burn, a freshman representative in the House of the Tennessee General Assembly.

"Vote for suffrage and don't keep them in doubt," Burn wrote to her 24-year-old son. "Don't forget to be a good boy and help."

With the letter from his mom in his pocket, Rep. Burn broke a 48-48 deadlock by changing his vote to pass the measure, and women nationwide were guaranteed the right to participate in all national elections.

"Voting is so much more than just a right, it is a privilege," says Amanda Wolfe, an NRECA senior political advisor, who lives in Nashville. "The Suffragettes fought for generations to finally win that privilege 100 years ago, and every time we cast a ballot, we honor their memories."

### Fueling cooperative change

When electric cooperatives were organized years later, many of the same principles honored by rural organizations, including recognition of property rights, were among the fundamental tenets included in co-op charters. Family memberships were vested in heads of households, regardless of gender, and women were among the founding members of



**Crystal Pluth**  
Estherville  
Iowa Lakes Electric  
Cooperative

Director, 8 years

*"I work at a credit union full-time and understand that the cooperative business model is a positive differentiator when it comes to service. I was eager to run for the Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative board of directors when the opportunity came up. As a director, safety for our employees and members is always the number one priority. The seven cooperative principles guide our focus for every aspect of setting the strategic direction of the co-op. I truly appreciate the diverse perspectives between males and females, which add value to discussions and decision-making processes."*

many electric cooperatives.

When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, farm magazines quickly published stories about the news. Maye Shaw of Quitman, Texas, was a former teacher and regular reader who knew life on the farm would be easier with electric power.

She wrote Rep. Morgan G. Sanders for information and persuaded her husband Virgil Shaw to look into

it. By 1937, they both were riding through the surrounding countryside recruiting members and collecting \$5 sign-up fees. Shaw eventually became the founding general manager of Wood County Electric Cooperative, which now serves nearly 36,000 meters and is still headquartered in Quitman.

"Though it was men who signed their names to charter Taylor EMC [in 1937], women have played a vital role in the cooperative's development and success," wrote authors of a 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary book on the history of Flint Energies. The Reynolds, Georgia-based co-op, originally founded as Taylor Electric Membership Corp., has enjoyed an active female membership since its early days.

Beulah Taylor and Ruby McKenzie became the cooperative's first female board members in 1938 and helped lead the co-op through some of its formative years. Similar stories took place across the county.

Fast forward to 2020, and female directors continue to be advocates for the cooperative business model, which is just as relevant today as it was in the 1930s. Embracing the dynamic and ever-changing industry, these leaders help to guide co-ops across Iowa. ⚡

Ann Thelen is the editor of *Living with Energy in Iowa*. Derrill Holly writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



**Rebecca DeTar**  
Albia  
Chariton Valley  
Electric Cooperative

Director, 15 years

*"I've been a member of an electric cooperative all of my life and understood the cooperative business model. I ran for election to see if I could put my experience to work. As a farm wife, I have always been involved in decision-making alongside my husband, and it's given me a lot of business understanding. As electric co-op members, it's important to remember that we all have a voice and that co-ops are different from for-profit utilities."*

# Give to RECare

Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., has always extended a helping hand to people in need. That's why we've established **RECare**, a program of members helping members. You can help people in need to weatherize their homes and pay their winter heating bills. If you're interested, please complete and return this form to our office. **Any amount you give will be greatly appreciated!**



**RECare CONSUMER AUTHORIZATION FORM**

**Yes, I want to contribute to RECare.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I will make a one-time contribution to RECare. My check is enclosed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I will contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month for \_\_\_\_\_ months to RECare. I understand this amount automatically will be added to my monthly electric bill.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail to:**  
 RECare  
 Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 486  
 Albia, IA 52531-0486

**ELECTION RESULTS**

## Director election results announced in next month's issue



**Randy Gottschalk – District 2**



**Doris Little – District 2**



**Michael Miller – District 4**



**Dennis Conley – District 5**



**Richard Welsh – District 5**

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, and in an effort to protect the health and safety of our members and employees, CVEC's board of directors decided not to hold an in-person meeting. Instead, the election of directors was completed by mail voting as permitted by the by-laws.

Three directors' terms expired this year, and a slate of five candidates were nominated by the nominating committee. The official ballot,

along with a biography of each director candidate, was mailed to all members in July. All ballots were required to be received at the cooperative by 12 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 3, 2020, for the votes to be counted.

The election results will be announced in next month's issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa*, however, results have already been published on our website, Facebook page and in local newspapers. ⚡

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY

⚡ TIPS FOR YOUR HOME

FOR MORE TIPS, VISIT [SAFELECTRICITY.ORG](http://SAFELECTRICITY.ORG)

Cell phones don't belong in bed

Do not sleep or lounge with a charging cell phone or other device. You could burn your skin or set bedding on fire.

Pay attention to flickering lights

Do not ignore odd electrical symptoms. Flickering lights, warm or discolored outlets, frequently tripped circuits or fuses, or smoky odors may mean you have a problem. Consult a qualified electrician.

Don't overload outlets

Plugging several cords on one circuit draws too much power and can damage electronics or your wiring and may start a fire.

**OFFICE CLOSING**



**Our office will be closed**  
**Monday, Sept. 7**  
**for Labor Day!**

# Sealing air leaks, step by step

BY PAT KEEGAN AND BRAD THIESSEN

In many homes, about half of the conditioned air leaks to the outside every hour. The good news, especially if you don't want to spend a lot of money, or if you're hesitant to invite contractors into your home right now, is that you can seal air leaks on your own with a little time and effort. It will also be beneficial in the colder weather months.

Here are three steps to get you started. Keep in mind, there's much more to learn about sealing your home than we can cover in this article, so consider researching trusted websites for additional tips and tutorials.

## Step 1: Find the leaks

The first step is a thorough visual search of the interior and exterior of the home. Look for gaps and holes in exterior walls, flooring and the ceiling. These will often occur where different building materials meet, such as the top of cement foundation walls or around windows and doors. Another common source of air leaks is where pipes or wiring penetrate a wall, floor or ceiling. Ductwork located in unheated crawl spaces or attics can also contain air leaks.

Exterior doors and windows that open deserve your attention. Open each door or window and place a dollar bill between the door or window sash and the frame. If you can pull the bill out easily when the door or window is closed again, the seal is not tight enough. Also, a window that rattles when it's closed or when it's windy probably isn't sealed sufficiently.

The best way to find all air leaks is to hire an energy auditor to do a blower door test. The blower door is a large fan that is mounted in a doorway to depressurize the house. The auditor can then find the leaks and may even be able to recommend ways to seal them.



Photo: Scott Van Osdol

Use caulk to seal gaps around non-moving parts of doors and windows.

Electrical outlets on outside walls are a common source of air leaks and are easily patched.



Photo: Marcela Gara, Resource Media

It's also possible to conduct your own whole-home pressure test. The Department of Energy provides detailed instructions at [www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize/air-sealing-your-home/detecting-air-leaks](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize/air-sealing-your-home/detecting-air-leaks).

## Step 2: Gather the materials you'll need

Here's a quick list of materials to get you started:

- **Caulk:** You'll need a caulk gun (\$4+) and caulk (\$4 to \$10). We recommend indoor/outdoor waterproof silicone or latex caulk that is water-soluble until it cures and is paintable when dry.
- **Expanding spray foam:** One can typically costs \$4 to \$6. While it's an effective way to plug leaks, it can be a messy job.
- **Weather stripping:** There's a wide variety of weather-stripping options made of vinyl, metal and felt, or open-cell foam that works for most situations. Prices vary depending on type and length of the materials.

- **Pre-cut foam socket sealers:** A pack of 24 sealers typically costs about \$3.
- **Chimney plug balloon:** Prices range from \$50 to \$90. You may need a chimney plug balloon if your chimney flu doesn't seal well. Buy a square or round one to match the shape of your chimney flu.
- **Adhesive plastic window insulation sheets:** Prices range from \$2 to \$14 depending on size. You may need insulation sheets later in the year for windows that can't be sealed and don't have storm windows.

## Step 3: Do it!

If you are unfamiliar with how to apply any of these materials, consider watching online tutorial videos. Sealing air leaks is one of the best ways to boost your home's energy efficiency. ⚡

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency.

# Utility bill assistance available for Iowa small businesses impacted by COVID-19

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) recently announced a new program to assist small businesses and nonprofits struggling to pay their electric and natural gas bills due to economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Small Business Utility Disruption Prevention Program will distribute \$14.5 million to provide short-term relief to eligible small businesses. Gov. Reynolds allocated funding for this program from Iowa's share of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump in March.

Applications will be accepted at [www.iowabusinessrecovery.com](http://www.iowabusinessrecovery.com) until Aug. 21, 2020, or until funding is depleted, whichever comes first. An eligible business can apply for a grant up to \$7,500 to cover utility bill debt incurred for electric or natural gas service provided between March 17, 2020, and June 30, 2020. The applicant's utility service provider(s) will receive a credit, which will be applied to the applicant's utility debt. ⚡



## Eligibility guidelines:

- For-profit and nonprofit businesses with 50 or fewer employees
  - Must have a physical location (non-residential location) in Iowa
  - Have not received any IEDA Small Business Relief Grant funding or any assistance from the State of Iowa Nonprofit Recovery Fund
  - Must be registered with the Iowa Secretary of State to do business in the state
  - Must have experienced a COVID-19 loss of revenue on or after March 17, 2020, that resulted in unpaid bills for electric or natural gas service provided between March 17, 2020, and June 30, 2020
  - A business's average monthly energy use must not exceed 25,000 kWh for electricity or 2,500 therms for natural gas
  - A business must not have incurred more than two late charges in 2019 for not paying their utility bills prior to March 17, 2020
  - Businesses must be open or planning to reopen
- For more information on this program, please go to [www.iowabusinessrecovery.com](http://www.iowabusinessrecovery.com). Contact your local electric co-op for details on your business's average monthly electric use and payment history. ⚡

# Memories of baling hay

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

It was late on a June afternoon, with the sun dropping just below the horizon in the West. A farmer with a couple of hired kids was picking up small, square bales from a field near our house. Silhouetted against the radiance of what was left of the sun, he pulled a hayrack, piled high with bales; perched on top, on her hands and knees, was his teenage daughter, holding everything together in a tenuous formation.

Because I never have my camera when I need it, I missed the photo. But I didn't need a picture to ricochet me back into the days when I baled hay.

From the time I was 5 and drove a little AC back and forth along the rows of "The 90" (which, in case you haven't figured out, was given that label because it was 90 acres), to the high school years when the work became more strenuous, baling hay was a part of the summer I actually looked forward to.

The summer of 1968 found me inching down the rows, barely creeping along, as my dad and a hired man picked up round straw bales and loaded them onto the hayrack. Covered by a huge gold umbrella, I knew how to pull back the brake when a snake slithered out from under its straw nest or when a burrow of baby bunnies was exposed. At the end of each row, Dad would hop on behind me and turn the whole contraption around. I doubt using a 5-year-old to drive tractor would fly these days, but I was proud of my contribution to the farming world.

At the end of each day, we'd head to Van Zee Implement in Pella, where they had a marvelous machine that allowed you to drop in your dime, and then thread the glass bottle through a maze before pulling it up and out. Icy cold grape pop was the best when the temperature and humidity were about the same.

As I got older, the baling work became more hands-on. My sister



Amber and I were in charge of unloading each hay bale into the elevator that chugged it up into the barn, where a hapless neighbor boy would stack them. His was a miserable job – a barn interior over 100 degrees. Dust and particles clogging the nose. Hay stuck to a sweat-soaked body. Every once in a while, an angry red head would stick itself out the barn hatch and bellow: "Slow down! You're going to kill me!" and for a little while, at least, we would space our bales a little farther apart, depending on our opinion of said neighbor boy.

I'll never forget the heft of the bale, holding it by its pair of twine bindings, having to rest the bale on one leg, where it thumped

against your thigh with each step. Part of the fabric of my childhood is remembering when the twine bindings were pulled off, how the bale would separate into what I started calling "paragraphs," and still do – my love of reading and writing evident at an early age.

Most bales these days have become the giant round ones that need hay forks to lift them. That's more efficient, I suppose. But there's something to be said for a little girl who was Queen of the Tractor ... for a couple of summers, anyway. ⚡

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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 and two incredibly adorable grandsons.



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the power of human connections.



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