

# FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2017

### Office Closed

The Farmers Electric Cooperative office will be closed Friday, April 14 for Good Friday. We wish all our members a safe and happy holiday!



### Energy Efficiency Tip

Now that we have “sprung forward” and set our clocks ahead one hour, take this opportunity to look around your home at your lighting. After all, Daylight Saving Time was designed with the goal of saving energy on illumination, so it’s a good reminder to see if there are ways your lights can be more energy efficient. Are you still using traditional incandescent bulbs around your home? Lighten up! ENERGY STAR® CFL and LED bulbs use 70-90% less energy and will save you \$30-\$80 in energy costs over the life of the bulb. Learn more about energy efficient lighting and determine what kind of lighting is best for your home by visiting [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).



P.O. Box 330  
Greenfield, IA 50849  
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NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

## #ThankALineman on April 10

This month, Farmers Electric Cooperative is proud to

honor the lineworkers who serve on the frontlines of our nation’s energy needs. On April 10, we encourage our members to join us in recognizing the men and women who work in challenging and often dangerous conditions to keep our lights on.

“Our linemen are the first responders for Farmers Electric,” said General Manager Charlie Dunn. “Whether they’re restoring power after a major storm or maintaining critical



infrastructure, our lineworkers are at the heart of everything we do.”

If you see a Farmers utility truck in your area, be sure to stop and say thanks for the work they’re doing or use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support for the linemen who light our lives.

## Touchstone Energy Conducting Survey of Cooperative Members

Attention! Touchstone Energy® is sponsoring a member engagement survey for Farmers Electric Cooperative this spring. As a cooperative member, you will receive a call beginning the week of April 17 from a 336 area code asking you to participate in the optional survey.

Your responses will be included with those from other electric cooperative members across the U.S. The Cooperative Difference Survey helps your cooperative better understand the actions and messages that define the “cooperative difference.” The research will be used to provide Farmers Electric with actionable strategic insight to connect more effectively with our members.

If you have any questions, please contact our office (800) 397-4821. Thank you!

# REC Day on the Hill 2017

## DID YOU KNOW?

*Because the electric industry faces challenges in today's political environment, Farmers Electric's employees and board of directors, as well as other cooperatives, work to make sure the voices of our electric cooperative members are heard.*

*We do this through groups such as the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative's Grassroots Advocacy Program which helps us establish positive relationships with influential people in local, state and federal government as well as the media.*

Iowa's electric cooperatives gathered at the State Capitol March 22 for the annual REC Day on the Hill sponsored by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC).

Pictured at left, from left to right are: Directors **Dan Westphal, Robert Newton and Mark**

**Earhart;** Manager of Member Services and Communications **Holi Weston;** Directors **Bill Adams** and **Kevin Stender;** Rep. **Ciel Baudler;** Director **Leon Schwartz;** and CEO **Charlie Dunn.**

REC Day on the Hill is an opportunity for Farmers Electric representatives to meet face-to-face with elected officials. These meetings helps lawmakers understand important issues facing Iowa's electric cooperatives and also gives Farmers a chance to thank them for their efforts on behalf of our members.

While there, Farmers Electric representatives discussed the following with legislators:



- Utility owned solar: We are supportive of environmentally responsible power and are focused on incentives rather than mandates.
- Solar energy must be deployed in a way that works for all member-owners, not just some.
- Line personnel safety: We support any and all legislation that is focused on the safety of our line personnel.
- Skilled workforce policies: We support policies that will attract and retain skilled workers in the state of Iowa.

## Members Helping Members with RECare

**F**armers Electric Cooperative's RECare program makes it easy to help Cooperative neighbors in need. With rising heating fuel prices this season, more and more Iowans are seeking assistance with energy, heating and weatherization costs. While some federal and state dollars exist to help those in need, there are still shortfalls.

Consider a monthly contribution to Farmers' RECare program. Your contribution – whether it is \$1 or \$10 a month – when combined with those of other generous members, can go a long way toward helping those who can't afford winter's heating bills.

You care. We care. RECare.

### Member Authorization Form

*Yes, I want to be a part of members helping members through the RECare program.*

Enclosed is a check with a one-time donation.

I would like to make a monthly donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_. I understand this amount will be added to my electric bill each month.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Cut out this form and mail to: RECare, c/o Farmers Electric Cooperative, 2389 Hwy. 92, Greenfield, IA 50849; or visit [www.farmersrec.com](http://www.farmersrec.com) to fill out an online form.

# April is National Safe Digging Month

National Safe Digging Month is a reminder to anyone who plans to excavate or dig to call 811, at least 72 hours before digging, so that the approximate location of utility lines marked. This process helps prevent injuries, property damage, and inconvenient utility outages.

An underground utility line is damaged once every six minutes nationwide because someone decided to dig without first calling 811, according to data collected by Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the national organization dedicated to protecting underground utility lines and the safety of people who dig near them. Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in damage to gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines, which can lead to service disruptions, serious injuries and costly repairs.

Everyone who calls 811 a few days before digging is connected to a local one call notification center that will take the caller's information and communicate it to local utility companies. Professional locators will then visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with spray paint, flags or both. Once a site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.

**Know what's below.  
Call 811 before you dig!**

THE BOTTOM LINE:

## Lives on the Line

Every year, Farmers Electric joins electric cooperatives across the nation to thank our extraordinary lineworkers who dedicate their lives to keeping the lights on in our local communities. At Farmers, 11 lineworkers maintain 1,807 miles of line in our service territory, and without them, our world would be dark.

While it takes our entire staff to keep things running smoothly, on April 10, we honor all lineworkers for keeping our lives a little bit brighter and safer every day. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op wouldn't thrive.

Maybe you've seen them raising their bucket trucks in howling winds and torrential rains, or

freezing, icy conditions. They work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member in our co-op community.

Also, our lineworkers are always willing and eager to volunteer when a neighboring community, county or state is in need after a

major outage occurs. They are brave, committed and critical to our success.

We hope you will join us in thanking the many lineworkers – both locally

and around the world – that light our lives. Remember, your power works because they do!



**Charlie Dunn**  
General Manager



## The Right Tree in the Right Place

by Pat Armstrong, Line Superintendent

Earth Day is April 22 and Arbor Day is April 28, so we thought now would be a good month to remind our members about the environmental benefits of planting trees while maintaining proper clearance of Farmers Electric lines.

Trees provide us with many benefits: shade, beauty, windbreak, privacy, cleaner air, less

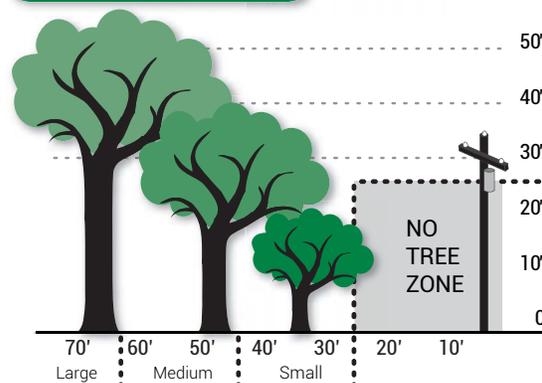
noise...the list goes on and on. But the key to these benefits is to select the right tree and plant it in the right place to assure a lifetime of satisfaction and keep your cooperative's maintenance costs low.

Farmers is committed to maintaining the utility right-of-way to fulfill our promise of delivering safe, reliable and affordable power. During storms, it's easy for weak branches to break and fall across power lines and cause interruptions in service. These aren't just mild annoyances, interruptions can damage computers and other sensitive electronic equipment and leave digital clocks flashing.

It's rare that our line crews will remove trees. Instead, errant limbs and branches too close to power lines are trimmed away. We respect your



### Give Trees a Chance



*continued on pg. 4*



**D**ress it up or dress it down, chicken is the most versatile type of meat when it comes to food. Whether you like simple or sophisticated, chicken can be featured in all types of cuisine, at all levels of skill. This month's recipes from Sharon Wood in Wiota and Terri Raasch in Fontanelle are both easy and tasty!

Each month, Farmers Electric Cooperative places a call for recipes in various categories. Winners receive a \$5 credit on their account, with their recipes appearing in the next month's issue. Mail entries with your bill to: P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849; or e-mail them to: [Holi@farmersrec.com](mailto:Holi@farmersrec.com).

**MAY RECIPES: Brunch**

*Stove Top Barbecued Chicken*

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp. oil (may not need)
- 1 medium size onion, chopped
- 1/2 c. ketchup
- 1/2 c. water
- 2 T. vinegar
- 2 T. brown sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 tsp. chili powder
- 3 lbs. fryer pieces (skin off- I usually use thighs and legs)

Heat oil in large skillet, add onion and cook it, stirring, until softened. Add rest of ingredients and bring to a boil. Add the chicken, spoon sauce over pieces. Cover skillet and simmer for 30 minutes. Uncover skillet, turn pieces, and cook for another 15 minutes or until tender. 6 servings.

*Sharon Wood, Wiota*

*Crock Pot Chicken Pot Pie*

INGREDIENTS

- 3 chicken breasts, cut into small pieces
- 1 1/2 c. mixed frozen vegetables
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup

Combine all and cook in crockpot on low for 4-6 hours. Stir occasionally, and serve over biscuits.

*Terri Raasch, Fontanelle*

**Right Tree, Right Place...continued from pg. 3**

property, and make a concerted effort to trim trees based on the amount of clearance needed around wires, voltage coursing through lines, the tree's growth rate, and our right-of-way maintenance cycle.

You can do your part by keeping utility poles in mind when planting trees. In general, tall-growing trees or varieties boasting wide canopies shouldn't be placed near utility poles. A local nursery can provide information outlining how tall and quickly a tree will grow or visit the Arbor Day Foundation web site at [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org). See the graphic at right for guidelines on planting trees around utility poles.

Trees are a valued part of every yard's landscaping, and with property planning, your trees can grow to their full potential without causing power lines woes. And don't worry – if high winds or heavy layers of ice bring down trees and power lines near your home, Farmers Electric line crews are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond.



Open Lines is a monthly publication of Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Charles Dunn

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The mission of Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc., is to deliver safe, reliable, affordable electricity and other services to improve the quality of life within our communities.