

FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020



Office Closed

The Farmers Electric Cooperative office will be closed Friday, April 10 for Good Friday. We wish all our members a safe and happy Easter holiday.

NOTE: The Farmers Electric office is closed to the public until further notice. Please call or email us if you have questions about your electric service.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This spring, consider using a rain barrel to save energy. Rain barrels capture rainwater from a roof that can be used later for watering your lawn, garden or indoor plants. Using them helps reduce the energy and chemicals needed to treat tap water.



P.O. Box 330
Greenfield, IA 50849
FarmersREC.com | (800) 397-4821

LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY:

WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE DARK, WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK.
Lineworker Appreciation Day April 13



Farmers Electric linemen are the first responders of our cooperative's electric distribution system. They regularly face the dangers of working on high-voltage lines so our members can have the electricity they need to power their lives.

These brave men sometimes work all hours of the day, spending time away from their families to keep our lights on. While Farmers Electric appreciates these linemen every day, we commemorate the second Monday of April each year to give our electric linemen the recognition they deserve.

Join us Monday, April 13, to salute and thank our linemen for the work they do. We encourage you to use #ThankALineman to show your support for the men who put their lives on the line for our cooperative.

"Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on;

Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure;

Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and

Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

Therefore be it resolved that the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association recognizes the Second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day and make available to electric cooperatives, materials and support to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's Electric Cooperatives."

Work Zone Awareness Week April 20-24

Iowa's electric cooperatives are committed to the safety of our employees and members. We fully support Iowa's Move Over or Slow Down law and we encourage motorists to move over or slow down (preferably both) when approaching utility vehicles on the side of the road with flashing lights activated.

Please give our employees the room they need to work safely; their jobs are dangerous enough already.

In accordance with Iowa state law, motorists must move over or slow down when approaching ANY vehicle stopped on the side of the road with its flashing lights activated, including passenger cars with hazard lights. Those who fail to obey the law could receive a traffic ticket or even lose their driver's license.



**MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN**

Members Can Help Members with RECare

The coronavirus pandemic has left many of our members wondering how they're going to pay their winter heating bills. Now more than ever, Farmers encourages members to help their neighbors and community by participating in RECare.

A one-time or monthly contribution through the RECare program can help offset high bills for those who need it most. RECare funds can also be used to weatherize the recipient's home and help make electricity usage more efficient. Your donation is directed to local community action agencies for distribution to low-income families near you.

It's an easy way to show you care!

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 to fill out an online form.

Keeping Our Lines Clear for Reliability

The growing season has begun and that means Farmers Electric line crews are busy planning their attack on vegetation that threatens the reliability of your electric service.

Most outages, both momentary and sustained, occur when the wind blows hard enough to bring a nearby swinging tree branch, or an entire tree, in contact with a powerline. With over 1,800 miles of line to care for, Farmers Electric follows a cycle of planned maintenance each year to assess and address the vulnerable areas of our service territory, and budget for the expenses associated with keeping the right-of-way clear. Each year is a multi-faceted approach that includes smart pruning, total tree removal and application of U.S. EPA-registered herbicides.

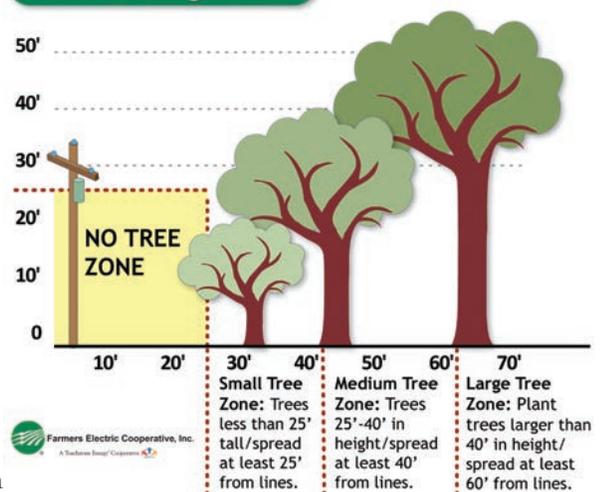
Farmers Electric uses trimming standards set by the American National Standards Institute with recommended best practices to protect the tree health while directing future growth away from power lines. Closer to the ground, lineworkers need access to power poles so even

tall grasses, bushes and brush that block access need to be mowed or sprayed.

Yes, You Can Help!

If you're planning to plant a tree for Arbor Day April 24 or sometime this spring, remember to plant the right tree in the right place. Doing so can help your cooperative avoid line clearance efforts and help you protect your investment. If you have questions, feel free to call our office or visit www.farmersrec.com to view right-of-way guidelines.

Tree Planting Guide





Co-op to Begin Replacing Yard Lights with LED

Farmers Electric's plan to replace mercury vapor and high-pressure sodium lights with LED yard lights is a priority in 2020.

We had planned on doing this as yard lights needed repairing, but that changed with the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure the health and safety of our line crews, we are beginning the process early. By doing so, we can isolate both crews and more easily contain an infection, should one occur.

The main change, besides a much better light, is there will be a \$3 LED light monthly charge for these lights. The reason for the charge? Currently the MV and HPS lights cost between \$7-\$9 each month which is the kWh usage you use. The LED lights will use significantly less. This monthly charge allows Farmers to maintain the light at cost and at the same time save you, our members, roughly \$1.00/month compared to the current yard light. We feel this will benefit our membership and the Cooperative as a whole.

You can expect to see the \$3 per month fee later in 2020. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!

We're All in This Together

As the news about COVID-19 continues to evolve, I want to reassure our members that Farmers Electric remains diligent in providing you the power you need when you need it. We're just doing things a little bit differently these days.

Our cooperative believes in the importance of being prepared and having plans in place to guide us through uncertain times. Those ideals are serving us well these past few months as we navigate our way through the uncharted waters of this pandemic. We understand that it's times like these when your electric service is more than a convenience; it's necessary to survive. You can count on us.

Like most businesses, the cooperative is limiting its interaction with the public during this time. After careful consideration, we closed our lobby to the public in mid-March. All employees who are able to work remotely are doing so, and we have implemented a calendar for staff who must work in the office on a revolving basis.

Our line crew are also limiting their exposure to the public and each other, practicing social distancing and personal sanitation while on the job. They are working in two-men crews with the same partner and truck each day and rotating when they come into the building to help limit their exposure to each other. Our March board meeting was held on Zoom with board members connecting in through their home computers. And our staff meetings have been done as conference calls. Doing things differently has become our new normal.

Because of the far-reaching implications of this situation, we understand that our members may be facing fluctuating life situations. For that reason, we have temporarily suspended late fees and service disconnections for non-payment through May 31, 2020. We encourage you to contact us as soon as possible if you may have trouble paying your bill so that we can discuss your options before the moratorium

ends. Additionally, the Iowa Department of Human Rights has extended the program application period for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program to May 31. We will continue to monitor the news from state, local and federal sources and keep our members updated as it pertains to their electric service. Please check in on our Facebook page or web site for those announcements.



CHARLIE DUNN
CEO

The good news is Farmers is here to serve you even during challenging times such as these. After all, this cooperative was born from the challenge of providing electricity to rural Iowans more than 80 years ago. We certainly aren't going to let anything stop us now. Keeping the lights on with the same standards our members have come to expect while keeping them and our employees and board members safe and healthy is, and always will be, our focus.



Late fees and service disconnections for non-payment are suspended through May 31.

LIHEAP program application period extended to May 31



Chicken Enchiladas

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can Rotel
- 1.5 c. sour cream
- 1 lb. Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 pkg. flour tortillas
- 1 lb. chicken breasts, cubed
- 1 onion, diced
- Salt and pepper to taste



If you're making more dinners at home lately but are struggling to find new ways to make chicken more exciting, here are a few recipes to spice up your family meal. Chicken is a versatile protein that pairs well with just about anything. Add leftover chicken and a few staples from your pantry for a quick and tasty weeknight meal.

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: HWeston@farmersrec.com.

MAY RECIPES: Brunch

50th Anniversary of Earth Day
 April 22, 2020 marks the Golden Anniversary of Earth Day. Here are a few environmental milestones we've achieved over the years.

- Cleaner Air and Water**
 In 1970, the Clean Air Act was greatly expanded and the Clean Water Act passed in 1972.
- Getting the Lead Out**
 Lead was phased out as a gasoline additive by 1988.
- Restoring the Ozone Layer**
 Ozone-depleting chemicals were banned in 1989.
- Better Bulbs**
 Today, light bulbs use 80% less energy and last 25 times longer.
- Rising Renewables**
 Today, renewable energy sources account for 11% of U.S. energy consumption.

Cook chicken breasts and onion in sauté pan over medium high heat until chicken is fully cooked – about five minutes. Remove from heat and stir in 3/4 of the shredded cheese. In 9x13 pan, place one layer of tortillas; cutting tortillas to fit as needed. Spoon 1/3 of chicken mix onto tortillas. Repeat for two more layers. In sauté pan, add Rotel and cream of chicken soup, simmering for five minutes. Remove from heat and mix in sour cream. Pour over layered chicken and tortillas. Top with remaining cheese. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees or until cheese is bubbly and golden.

Stephanie Peterson, Massena

Chicken Pot Pie

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans reduced-fat crescent rolls
- 2 15 oz. cans Veg-All
- 2 cans reduced fat cream of chicken soup
- 2 c. shredded, cooked chicken



Unroll and press one tube of crescent rolls into the bottom of a greased 9x13 baking dish. Combine Veg-All, cream of chicken soup and shredded chicken and place on top of crescent roll layer. Unroll the other can of crescent rolls and press and spread on top of mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until crescent rolls are golden brown.

Linda Barber, Winterset



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

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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. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.