



FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2020

We'll Miss Seeing You at the Adair County Fair

The Adair County Fair Board announced that the 2020 county fair will occur July 16-19 with changes due to COVID-19 restrictions. The restrictions include not allowing vendors in the Varied Industries Building.

Farmers Electric is proud to sponsor and support the Adair County Fair and hope to be part of it again next year. Visit adaircountyfair.org for the updated fair schedule and safety precautions that will be in place.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Spending more time at home? Try an online energy audit to assess the overall efficiency of your home. Visit www.energystar.gov, then enter "home energy yardstick" in the search box to get started.



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ANNUAL MEETING:

Co-op Plans Virtual Annual Meeting

The Farmers Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 17 will be held virtually due to ongoing concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting and abbreviated reports will be recorded on video, then posted to our Web site, www.farmersrec.com for members to view. The Board of Directors made the difficult decision to change the format out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of our members, employees and the communities we serve.

Cooperative members will be able to vote by mail or drop off their ballots in the dropbox at the cooperative headquarters as in the past years. Reports and director candidate information will be published in the September issue of this newsletter as well as the official notice sent to all cooperative members in September.

We apologize that our friends and members will not get the opportunity to gather and share time together this year. We sincerely thank you for your understanding and hope we will be able to meet in person for the 2021 annual meeting. Please understand that we are committed to keep everyone safe!

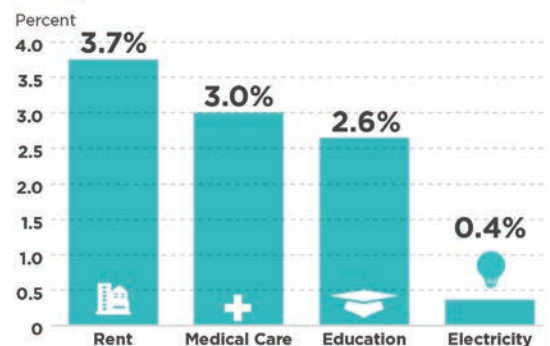
The Value of Electricity Continues to Shine

When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner, and Farmers Electric is always looking for ways to work with you to make it even better. That's why we urge energy efficiency, encourage you to look for ENERGY STAR® appliances, and promote technology, designed to give you more control over your electricity use.

That's good for families, couples and individuals trying to live within their budgets. And it's going to become even more important as digital devices and internet-connected technologies become even more important in our lives.

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

Look Up & Live

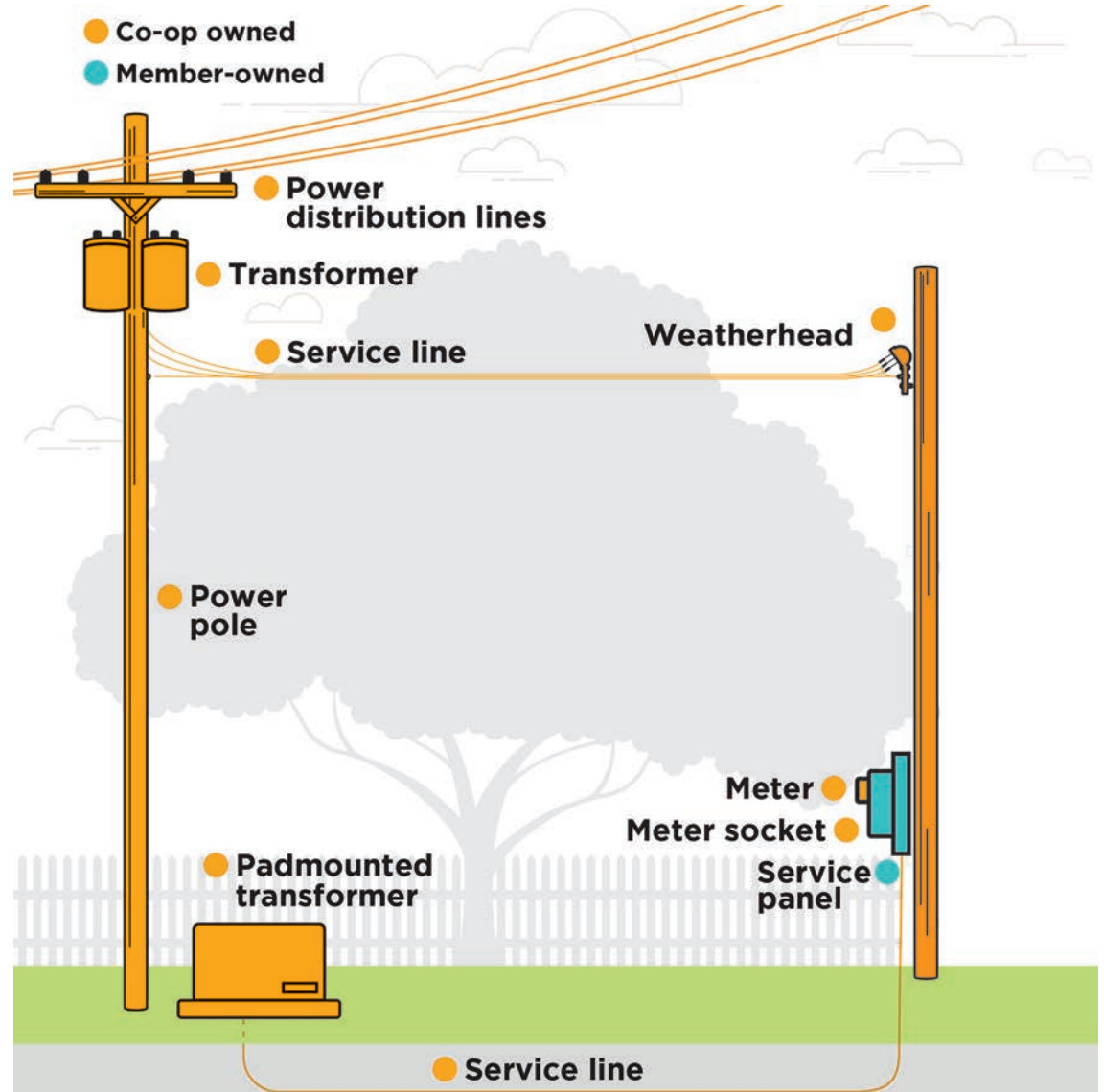
Accidental contact with live overhead power lines kills people and causes many serious injuries every year. People are also harmed when a person or object gets too close to a line and a flashover occurs. Work involving high vehicles or long equipment is particularly high risk, such as combines, sprayer booms, materials handlers, tipper vehicles, ladders, irrigation pipes, and polytunnels.

The safest option is to avoid working near overhead power lines if you can. If you can't, remember:

- Always assume that a power line is live unless and until the owner of the line has confirmed it is dead;
- Note the location of live power lines and make a plan to avoid them or modify the equipment being used to ensure clearance;
- If someone or something comes in contact with a live line, call 9-1-1 immediately and move away as quickly as possible. If a vehicle has made contact, either stay in the vehicle or jump out as far as you can, without touching the ground and the vehicle at the same time.

Who Owns What?

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in gold) and the member (in blue). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



Note: This graphic depicts overhead and underground service. Please be aware of which type of service you receive at your home or business.

You Have the Power to

- Pay your bill
- Manage your account
- Report an outage
- Get account updates and reminders



Top 5 Energy Hogs

If you're looking for ways to save money during this pandemic, you're not alone. Reducing your expenses can be as easy as looking at how you use electricity when you're spending more time at home. Here are five "energy hogs" that may be increasing your electric bill:

- 1. Old fridge or freezer in the garage.** If it's a model produced before 1990, it's likely using twice as much energy than a newer ENERGY STAR® model.
- 2. Cooling an uninsulated area** like a garage or workshop can be expensive. If you use them often enough, they should be well insulated and cooled efficiently, perhaps with a ductless mini-split system.
- 3. Hot tub.** The average operating cost of a hot tub is \$250 per year, but that may be higher if your hot tub is an older, less efficient model. A smaller hot tub with better insulation, a cover and a pump that runs on lower voltage will use less energy than other models.
- 4. Swimming pool.** If you have a swimming pool, consider installing a smaller, more efficient pump and reducing how often it runs. You can also look at installing a larger filter and maximizing the flow of water through the pipes by making them larger and reducing how sharply the corners turn.
- 5. Pumps.** If you live on an acreage or farm, you probably have

continued on pg. 4

Let's Talk

The energy industry is undergoing rapid change, and technology is paving the way for innovation in the way energy is used, produced, stored and shared. Consumers are interested in more green energy alternatives while smart homes and apps make managing energy use and paying your electric bill more convenient than ever.

While the changing energy market has created more options for consumers, it has also resulted in more utility scams and misleading information, particularly during a time when people's anxiety is heightened due to the pandemic. There are two main reasons for this.

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist, and consumers are understandably anxious with the threat of disruption to their electric, heating or water service. Second, new products and services in the energy industry provide an opening for scammers and pop-up companies to provide misleading information or shoddy products and services.

Watch Out for Phone Scams

Although phone scam attempts have not been reported to our cooperative by any of our members, that doesn't mean they aren't out there. We've heard about electric cooperative members receiving these types of calls across the U.S., including right here in Iowa. A common phone scam typically begins with a phone number that appears to be from a valid utility company. The scammer will claim you have a past due account and threaten to disconnect service or take legal action. The scammer may demand that you use a prepaid debit card or money order, often within a very short, urgent time frame to pay the "past due" amount.

You might remember my story from May of last year about my parents who were scammed out of \$300. In this case, it wasn't a utility scam, but one that, like many others, preyed on the fears of the elderly to gain access to their banking account information. During the COVID-19 global health



CHARLIE DUNN
CEO

crisis, the most vulnerable populations are targeted because they are fearful of contracting the virus and scammers know they can use that fear to their advantage and extort money with false promises.

Remember that if it is someone contacting you, you have every right to question their claims, no matter what they are. **NEVER** give out your banking or other

personal information over the phone or online to someone you did not call or contact. In the case of utility scams, it's helpful to be aware of the status of your account, which can be easily monitored by using the online tool SmartHub. Visit www.farmersrec.com to learn more. And, if you have a question or concern about your energy bill, call us directly. **DO NOT** use the phone number given by the scammer.

Use Trusted Sources

In this ever-changing environment, it's important to remember that Farmers Electric is your local, trusted energy advisor. We are a community-focused organization that works to efficiently deliver affordable, reliable and safe energy to our members.

Remember, we're just one call or click away, so please reach out with any questions about your electric service or bills – Farmers Electric has your back.





Gathering around the grill with friends or family is one of the reasons to love summer. Cooking over open flames gives simply seasoned foods a unique flavor, and saves heating up the kitchen from the oven or stove. July is National Grilling Month for good reason. It's the perfect time to be outdoors enjoying a meal and the warm summer temperatures. Here are a few recipes to help you celebrate National Grilling Month in the tastiest way possible!

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.

AUGUST RECIPES: NO COOK RECIPES

Energy Hogs...from pg. 3

several pumps, including irrigation, well, septic and sump. Consider replacing the oldest and most-used pumps over time with new, more efficient ones that are sized correctly for their task. Also, make sure you're eliminating leaks in the water lines, which make your pumps work harder and longer.

Bacon Ranch Chicken Foil Packets

INGREDIENTS

- 6 T. butter, melted
- 2 T. ranch seasoning powder
- 4 medium sized chicken breasts (about 4 oz. each)
- 1 lb. small red potatoes, halved or quartered
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 4 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 2 T. chopped, fresh parsley
- Salt and pepper



Photo: dinneratthezoo.com

Preheat grill to medium high heat. In a small bowl, whisk together butter, ranch seasoning, and add salt and pepper to taste. Coat 4 large squares of foil with cooking spray. Place potatoes in a bowl and drizzle with 4 T. of the ranch butter mixture over the top; toss to coat. Place a chicken breast onto each foil square and season with salt and pepper to taste. Divide potatoes evenly among the foil squares and arrange around the chicken. Drizzle the remaining butter over the chicken breasts. Fold the edges of the foil over the chicken and potatoes to make a packet. Grill for 30 minutes. Open the packets and sprinkle the cheese over the chicken and potatoes. Leave the packets open and return to the grill until cheese melts. Sprinkle with bacon and parsley.

Grilled Kansas City Pork Chops

INGREDIENTS

- 6 thin center-cut pork chops
- 6 T. packed brown sugar
- 3 T. paprika
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 2 tsp. onion powder
- 1-1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. black pepper
- 1/3 c. BBQ sauce



Photo: plainchicken.com

Mix together brown sugar, paprika, garlic powder, chili powder, onion powder, salt and pepper. Place pork chops in a zip-top bag. Add brown sugar mixture. Seal bag and shake to coat pork chops. Refrigerate 2 hours to overnight. Remove pork chops from bag and grill until done, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Brush pork chops with BBQ sauce on each side before removing from grill.



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.