

FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2022



Attention Electric Heat Users

The heat plus rate is now in effect

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month:

Is your home heating system ready for the winter chill? One of the easiest ways to keep your system running efficiently is to regularly replace filters.



If your central air system has a furnace filter, it should be replaced about every 90 days. If your home is heated through warm-air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean them regularly to boost efficiency. *Source: Dept. of Energy*



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DEMOCRATIC CONTROL:

Co-op Holds 83rd Annual Meeting

Thank you to all our members who turned out for our 83rd Annual Meeting Sept. 13. We had 175 people attend to hear reports on 2021 co-op finances and operations and to take part in the democratic process of their electric cooperative.

Ballots to elect directors were counted with the results as follows:

East District: Dan Westphal, incumbent

West District: Steve Chandler, incumbent

Central District: Cary Gilman, incumbent

Journeyman Lineman Josh Oder was recognized for his 10 years of service to Farmers Electric Cooperative and was presented with a certificate from Board President Dan Westphal. Ethan Blomme provided a report on his trip to Washington, D.C., in June.

Although it may sound like a business meeting, it isn't just that. It's also an event to celebrate our members! Each year we offer a free meal, fellowship, attendance gifts and prize drawings.

Most of all, we enjoy seeing our members in person and sharing in the celebration of our accomplishments.

Plan to join us for our next annual meeting in 2023! Just watch this newsletter for the date and more details.



Members who attend the Farmers Electric Annual Meeting are given a free meal prior to the business meeting. In addition to voting for member representatives on the co-op board of directors, members are able to hear reports on the finances and operations of the cooperative in 2021.



Ethan Blomme was the co-op's representative on the 2022 Youth Tour and earned a free trip to Washington, D.C. He spoke of his experiences and the impact the trip had on him.



Board President Dan Westphal, left, presents Lineman Josh Oder with recognition for 10 years of service to the co-op

Assistance for Winter Heating Bills Now Available

The 2022-2023 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season.

The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel and type of housing.

When to apply

Elderly (60+) and/or disabled: Oct. 1, 2022-April 30, 2023. All other households: Nov. 1, 2022-April 30, 2023.

What to take

- Proof of income for all household members 19+. Depending upon your household income type, income documentation from the past 30 days, the last 12 months, or last calendar year, whichever is easier or more beneficial for you.

- Social Security numbers for all household members (documentation required).
- Most recent heat bill
- Most recent electric bill
- If you receive alimony or child support, it will need to be verified.

Proof of Income

Wage earners: Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your federal income tax return.

Fixed income: This may include Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

Self-employed/farmers: Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

FIP recipients: Please bring your current DHS Notice of Decision or contact your local office for acceptable document information.

If you are not sure where to apply, dial 2-1-1 or visit <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply>, or write to LIHEAP, Iowa Dept. of Human Rights, 321 E. 12th St., Des Moines, IA 50319.

INCOME MAXIMUMS

| Household Size | Annual Gross Income |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | \$27,180 |
| 2 | \$36,620 |
| 3 | \$46,060 |
| 4 | \$55,500 |
| 5 | \$64,940 |
| 6 | \$74,380 |
| 7 | \$83,820 |
| 8 | \$93,260 |

For households with more than 8 members, add \$9,440 for each additional member.

Safety Training for Linemen Could Save a Life

Every year, Farmers Electric linemen refresh their skills and are tested on their ability to perform a pole top rescue in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

One of the emergency situations unique to the electric utility industry is injury or other medical emergency while working high off the ground. Our linemen are trained to act quickly, calmly and, most importantly, not become a second victim.

The exercise simulates a lineman who has made contact with electricity and has been rendered unconscious. The lineman must climb the pole, secure a rope around

a 150-lb. dummy, and return safely to the ground for appropriate medical attention.

All of this must be done as quickly as possible, as an injured lineman's life may hang in the balance.

Our linemen take pride in their profession and the essential work they do to keep the power flowing to our members. Their dedication also requires extreme diligence to perform the work safely.

Farmers Electric is proud of our linemen and the important work they do each day to keep our members supplied with safe, reliable and affordable electricity.



Lineman Mike Auten is evaluated for pole top rescue techniques as fellow linemen look on. In the bucket is Lineman Chad Berrey. The training is provided by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Cybersecurity Awareness Month reminds individuals how to protect themselves online as threats to confidential data become more common.

Did you know that in 2021...

...there were **1,864 data breaches** worldwide, an increase of 68% from the previous year?

...there were **5.7 million reports of identity theft and fraud**, up from 4.7 million in 2020? Experts believe these cases occur so often that there is a new victim every 22 seconds.

...**93% of financial institutions, energy companies, government offices, IT firms and other organizations have cyber vulnerabilities?**

Here are some common but effective ways to protect yourself:

Use strong passwords. Managers like Dashlane or LastPass help.

Stay informed about data breach alerts.

Install anti-malware software. The best free Windows antivirus is Microsoft Defender. Others offer subscription services with a free trial period.

Use two-factor authentication when possible. Typically this allows the site you're attempting to access to send you a code to another device (like your phone) to verify it is you.

Invest in a credit monitoring service. By law, you may receive your complete credit report for free from the federal government. In the meantime, check out free online services like CreditKarma.com.

Celebrating Membership

There are so many reasons to love this time of year in Iowa, but I can think of none greater than bringing recognition to the role electric cooperatives play in our communities every day. Although National Co-op Month may highlight the cooperative business model, we are really celebrating you! After all, our co-op wouldn't exist without our members.

And while we proudly provide the electricity you need to power your life, the larger mission of our co-op is to help make our corner of the world a little better place. We adhere to a set of seven cooperative principles that guide us in what sets us apart from for-profit utilities. One of those principles, "Concern for Community," flows through all of our decisions because being a co-op means being a responsible partner and good neighbor.

The word "cooperative" is close to "cooperation," meaning people working together towards a common goal—mutually benefitting one another and the larger community. That's the essence of the

cooperative spirit. Our employees and member-elected board members are invested in the community in which live and serve.

Above all, as a co-op we put our members' priorities first. As your trusted energy partner, we know that saving energy and money is important to you. That's why we have numerous programs in place to help, including rebates, scholarship opportunities for youth, Operation Round-Up funds and economic development assistance.

Farmers Electric continuously examines ways to operate more efficiently while continuing to provide the highest level of friendly, reliable service you expect and deserve. After all, we're your local co-op. We were built by the members we served then, and we'll still be here serving members years from now. Our commitment, like our lines, run deep through our communities and we are proud to be your electric cooperative.



HOLI WESTON
INTERIM CEO

Focused on YOU.

Farmers Electric Cooperative was created by and for our members. Because we're a co-op, we're able to adapt to our community's unique needs. That's the power of co-op membership.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

 **Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.**
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Autumn leaves and Pumpkin please

Pumpkin Magic Bars

- 25 gingersnaps
- 2 T. granulated sugar
- 5 T. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 c. white chocolate chips
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 1/4 c. sweetened shredded coconut
- 1/4 c. toffee bits, with or without chocolate*
- 1/2 c. sweetened condensed milk (not low-fat)
- 1/4 c. pumpkin puree
- 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice



crazyforcrust.com

Preheat oven to 350. Line a 9x9" pan with foil and spray with cooking spray. Grind gingersnaps to a fine crumb using a food processor or place them in a Ziploc bag and crush well with a rolling pin. Place crumbs in small bowl and combine with sugar and melted butter. Press into prepared pan. Sprinkle white chocolate chips, pecans, coconut and toffee* over the top of the crust. In separate small bowl, whisk together pumpkin, sweetened condensed milk, and pumpkin pie spice and pour mixture over the top of the bars. Bake for 30 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Cool completely before cutting.

*May also use chopped Heath bars

Pumpkin Pie Overnight Oats

- 1 c. old-fashioned oats
- 3/4 c. milk
- 1/2 c. pumpkin puree
- 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 T. honey (optional, if you like your oats slightly sweetened)
- Crushed graham crackers for topping if desired



pumpkinspice.com

In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients except graham crackers and mix well. Pour mixture into two mason jars or other airtight storage container. Refrigerate for at least four hours or preferably overnight, so that the oats will soften and absorb the liquid. When ready, remove from refrigerator, stir and top with crushed graham crackers if desired.

Want a chance to get \$5 off your next electric bill? Enter a recipe in our recipe contest each month!



Winners receive a \$5 credit on their account, with their recipes appearing in the next month's issue. Plan now to participate by mailing your entry with your bill to: P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849; or e-mailing it to: HWeston@farmersrec.com. **NOVEMBER: Thanksgiving recipes**



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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.