

# FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2023



The Farmers Electric office will be closed Monday, Sept. 4 in honor of Labor Day

## FIND US AT THE FAIR!



Visit our booth in the 4-H Exhibits Building. We'll hand out plastic hard hats and suckers for kids (while supplies last). Try on lineman gear and take a selfie in our safety station!



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction. Reverse the direction in winter months and put on a low speed so warm air can circulate. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Turn them off when you leave the room.



Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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### SENSIBLE SOLAR:

# 8 Questions to Ask Before Installing Solar



**I**nvesting in solar for your home is a major decision. *If you're considering rooftop solar, Farmers Electric can help.* Consider these questions, and contact us before signing any contracts. We can help you understand how a solar interconnection with our system can impact your current account and billing rate.

**1. What are my goals?** If your main goal is to help the environment, consider signing up for Farmers Electric's Green Pricing Program to support renewable energy projects with voluntary contributions to a fund. If it's to save money on electric bills, try energy efficiency tactics to see how much you can save; just call the co-op for advice on best areas to save.

**2. Is my roof suitable for solar?** Does it receive enough sun and is it in good condition to support the installation of solar panels?

**3. How long will I own the home?** Not all future potential buyers will want to maintain a rooftop solar system. If you lease, carefully review the terms if you sell the property.

**4. Lease or purchase?** Research your options and get several quotes from qualified contractors. Farmers Electric can recommend a few local contractors we work with and trust.

**5. Can the contractor provide documentation?** Credentials like licenses and permits should be easy to provide; also review contractor's status and reviews with the Better Business Bureau.

**6. Does the contract seem reasonable and fair?** Do the system performance calculations and installation timeline seem reasonable?

**7. Who will maintain the solar panels?** Solar panels need to periodically be cleaned and maintained with replacement parts. If you lease, the solar installer may be responsible for this work. Be clear on who agrees to do what.

**8. How will I work with Farmers Electric?** You'll need to sign an interconnection agreement to connect to the grid. We can walk you through the steps, including how our solar rates and fees work. Visit [www.farmersrec.com/wind-solar](http://www.farmersrec.com/wind-solar) for more information.



## Life Jackets Save Lives

Deaths from drowning are preventable tragedies that can affect anyone in, on or around the water. Wearing a life jacket can mean the difference between life and death. Here are some important reminders about life jackets:

- Make sure life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Read the label to ensure life jacket is appropriate for planned water activities.
- Take the time to ensure a proper fit with right size and right weight rating.
- Check that your life jacket is in good serviceable condition, with no tears or holes.
- Life jackets are not swim lesson aids; but exposure to life jackets can teach a child how it should fit, and how it feels and performs in water.
- The main thing to remember is that a life jacket is just one of the layers of drowning protection. Children who have learned to swim or are comfortable in the water or in a life jacket still need supervision, fencing barriers or lifeguards/water watchers.

# 7 CAMPUS SAFETY TIPS



## Every College Student Should Know

Relay these safety tips to your young adults who are about to hit campus for the first time or return for another year.

1. Do not overload electrical outlets, power strips or extension cords. Use power strips with an overcurrent protector.
2. Be aware of your surroundings, especially when listening to music or texting.
3. Unplug small appliances when not in use and all appliances when away for extended periods.
4. This tip still holds true: never walk alone at night.
5. Avoid using generic cubes or cords. They could overheat, shock or burn you.
6. Locate the emergency call buttons or phones across campus in case of an emergency.
7. Do not put your cell phone on or under your pillow or bedding. It could overheat or catch fire.





## August is Back to School Month

Back to school means more kids are back on the streets. From personal safety to being aware of others in crowded or busy surroundings, here are a few ways to help keep your child safe when school starts.

- 1. Don't Tempt Thieves.** Keep the rule simple: only bring technology you can keep on your pockets at all times.
- 2. Change Combination Padlocks.** Starting the new year with a brand-new combination padlock for bikes or lockers will create a sense of awareness for safety, particularly in schools where children must lock up their books and other belongings.

- 3. Stay on School Grounds.** Safety measures are sometimes most effective on the school campus. Teach children to avoid wandering off campus with friends. Show them ways to deflect any invitations to go off campus and if you see any illegal activity, let the principal or school resource officer know.

**BONUS: Parental Safety.** When dropping off children, be sure to drive slowly through the school campus. Children may not be fully prepared for the overwhelming experience (and frenzy) of the back to school process and be distracted from watching out for vehicles in the road. If at all possible, lower your windows and turn your car stereo system off. This will ensure that you can hear anyone saying "stop" if a child is approaching your car—especially tall vehicles like pickup trucks or SUVs.

# Factors That Impact Electricity Prices

I was recently asked about what impacts electricity prices in these times when the daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board.

Just as inflation has impacted everything from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen.

There are three primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a fixed service charge, an energy consumption/kWh charge and a Power Cost Adjustment (PCA). To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly charge which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Farmers Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. In order to ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain delays and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note that the service charge is the same for everyone and the costs are shared equally across the membership.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar, your

cooling equipment runs longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. You can start by keeping your thermostat close to 78 degrees during summer months.

The last component of your bill is the PCA, which is the same amount for all co-op members. The PCA recently increased because of higher fuel prices, which means the power that Farmers Electric purchases from our wholesale provider, Central Iowa Power Cooperative, is more expensive. The PCA covers fuel cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know your co-op is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

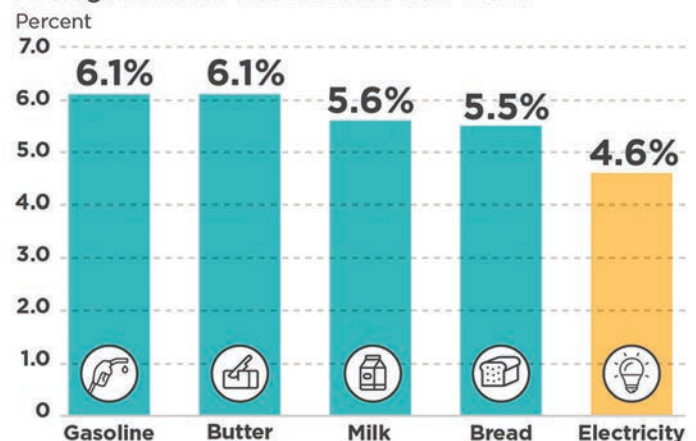
We're here to help you, too. Feel free to call us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home.



**HOLI WESTON**  
CEO

### ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2022



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



## Creamy Cucumber & Onion Salad

- 10 c. cucumbers, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 c. Miracle Whip salad dressing
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 3 T. apple cider vinegar



myfarmhousetable.com

Put the cucumbers in a large container and cover with salt water (about 1 tsp. salt to 1 c. cold water). Refrigerate for about 2 hours. Drain soaked cucumbers, rinse thoroughly, and place into a large container with sliced onion. In a separate bowl, stir together Miracle Whip, sugar, and apple cider vinegar. Pour dressing over cucumbers and onion. Stir to combine. Refrigerate salad for several hours to overnight.

## Summer Vegetable Pasta Salad

- 16 oz. rotini pasta, uncooked
  - 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
  - 1 small zucchini, cubed
  - 1 small summer squash, cubed
  - 1 bell pepper, chopped
  - 1 small red onion, diced
  - 1 c. corn
- Vinaigrette dressing:
- 3/4 c. extra virgin olive oil
  - 1/4 c. red wine vinegar
  - 1 T. Italian seasoning
  - 1 tsp. garlic powder
  - 3/4 tsp. salt



zucchinizone.com

- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes

In a large pot of boiling, salted water, cook rotini according to package directions for al dente pasta. Drain and rinse with cold water until pasta is room temperature. Place pasta in a large bowl with cherry tomatoes, zucchini, squash, bell pepper, onion, and corn. Set aside. In a bowl, add olive oil, vinegar, Italian seasoning, salt, garlic powder, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Whisk to combine. Pour over pasta salad ingredients and toss until evenly coated. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving.

Notes: Prepared pasta salad will keep 3-4 days in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator, but will have best flavor and appearance if served within the first day. Pasta salad will continue to soak up dressing as it sits. If it begins to look dry, toss in additional oil and vinegar. Optional additions/substitutions: sliced olives, cubed cucumber, shredded carrot, shredded/cubed mozzarella or cheddar cheese, crumbled feta cheese.

Mail your recipe with your bill to: P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849; or e-mail to: [HWeston@farmersrec.com](mailto:HWeston@farmersrec.com). Send recipes by the 15th of each month to be included in the newsletter. **OCTOBER: PUMPKIN RECIPES**



**SAVE THE DATE**

**ANNUAL MEETING**  
Sept. 19

Adair County Fairgrounds 4-H Building

5-6 PM: Registration & Meal

6 PM: Business Session

7 PM: Prize Drawing

Every guest receives a free gift and is entered into the prize drawing! Watch for more information in next month's newsletter.



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

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Holi Weston

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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.