

# FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023



### THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE:

## Advocating for You in Washington

**D**irector Mark Earhart attended this year's Fall Legislative Fly-in to Washington D.C., joining 25 representatives from Iowa co-ops to advocate for their co-op members.

While there, the group attended high-level briefings on key issues impacting the electric industry and met with all six members of Iowa's Congressional Delegation to discuss priorities and concerns.

Advocates shared concerns that could impact electric cooperatives' ability to provide reliable and affordable power, including federal EPA mandates that may force electric generation plants to shut down prematurely. Additionally, the co-op representatives talked about continued supply chain challenges and how they impact day-to-day operations.



Farmers Electric Board Member Mark Earhart is pictured, back row center, with the Iowa group as they visit with U.S. Rep. Zach Nunn at the U.S. Capitol in September.

"I'm glad I was able to attend the event this year because it is so important to meet face-to-face when talking about the effects our leaders' decisions have on our co-op members," Earhart said. "And I think both sides walked away with a greater understanding of our positions."

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The holiday season is upon us, and that means we'll be using more energy in the kitchen.



When possible, cook with smaller countertop appliances instead of the stovetop or oven. Smaller appliances like slow cookers, air fryers and Instant Pots consume less energy. When using the oven or stovetop, match the size of the pot to the heating element and place a lid over the pot while cooking. The food will cook faster, and you'll use less energy.



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

### Need help with heating bills?

The LIHEAP application period is now open for all households in Farmers Electric's service territory.

Visit <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/liheap> for details.



# Restoring Your Power Safely and Efficiently

**W**e do our best to avoid them, but there's no way around it: power outages occasionally happen. For most members of Farmers Electric, outages are rare and only last a few hours. But when major storms impact our area, extended outages are unavoidable.

So when the power goes out, how do Farmers Electric crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? We've got answers to these questions and more, and it all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

## Starting Big

When the lights go out and it's safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible.

This means targeting large main distribution lines and substations that service numerous homes and large businesses.

## Tapping Into Smaller Feeds

After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service).

## Turning Your Lights Back On

Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and the home are repaired.

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. Our cooperative keeps a supply of extra utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations. We also coordinate with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

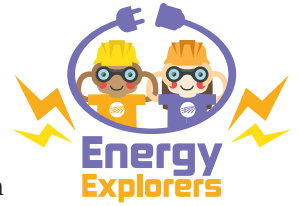
If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. *It's best to report the outage yourself*, and we make it easy to do. The quickest way to report an outage is calling (800) 397-4821. Please do not contact us through our Facebook page as it may not be monitored.

As we settle in for winter weather, Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of Farmers Electric, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

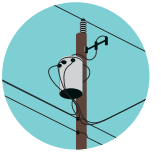
## THE STEPS TO RESTORING POWER

When the power goes out, line crews work hard to restore electricity as quickly and safely as possible. To ensure the process is done efficiently, line crews follow specific steps to restore power. Can you order the steps below to match how power is restored?

Hint: Check your work in the answer key.



**STEP #** Tap lines are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers that are either mounted on utility poles or placed on pads for underground electric service.



**STEP #** Distribution power lines are inspected. These are the lines you typically see on the side of the road that deliver power to communities.



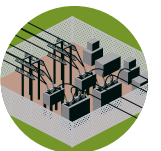
**STEP #** Large, high-voltage transmission lines are inspected for damage. These power lines deliver large amounts of electricity over great distances.



**STEP #** Service lines are inspected. These are the power lines that run between the transformer and your home.



**STEP #** Distribution substations are inspected. These facilities lower the voltage of power, then send power to distribution lines.



Answer Key: 4, 3, 1, 5, 2



## Gobble Up Thanksgiving Energy Savings

While there's not much you can do about inflation that has driven prices up at the grocery store, you can work on saving a few dollars at home as you prep your Thanksgiving meal. Here are a few ways to tighten the belt on your holiday feast:

- 1. Size matters.** Don't buy a huge bird if you don't need it. A smaller turkey will require less cooking time.
- 2. Don't peek.** Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside drops by as much as 25 degrees. Instead, check on food through the window using the oven light.
- 3. Plan carefully.** Select side dishes that can cook in the oven alongside the turkey. Use glass or ceramic dishes over metal; they hold the heat better and can cook food just as thoroughly at a lower temperature.
- 4. Use small appliances in a big way.** Find dishes you can make in the crock pot, microwave or toaster oven instead. These small appliances draw less than half the power of your regular oven, and cook for a much shorter period of time which translates into significant savings.
- 5. Spread the warmth.** Lower your thermostat when the house is full of people and let body heat and warmth from the kitchen spread to other rooms. Each degree you lower the thermostat can save you up to 3% on your heating bill.

# Electric Reliability is in Jeopardy

**S**upply chain delays. Disorderly retirements of dispatchable electric generation. Complex regulations on power plant emissions. Regional warnings about a lack of generation capacity to cover electric demand. Permitting delays for needed electric transmission infrastructure.

Individually, any one of these issues is enough to seriously impact reliability of electric service. But all these scenarios are playing out simultaneously across the nation and a perfect storm may be on the horizon.

Electric reliability across America is in serious jeopardy, and frankly, it's unacceptable. Here are the facts:

Dispatchable sources of electric generation like coal and nuclear are being retired far too early. And their generation capacity is being replaced by intermittent sources of generation like wind and solar. The downside: These intermittent sources only work when the wind blows and the sun shines.

Battery storage is not yet feasible for longer durations on a utility-scale level. For all practical purposes, electricity must be generated as it is being consumed. This becomes a problem when the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining and energy consumption is high.

Demand for electricity continues to grow as our society becomes increasingly reliant on electricity.

Locally owned electric cooperatives work hard to provide reliable and affordable electricity for the member-consumers they serve. Co-ops are mission driven to power lives and empower communities and they make long-term decisions to ensure power is available when it's needed.

That's why we believe in a power generation strategy that prioritizes energy diversity. The same adage used for sound financial investing also applies to power generation: don't put all

your eggs in one basket. Iowa's electric cooperatives use dispatchable sources of power like coal and natural gas because they can control the output and ramp up generation when needed to match sudden increases in electric demand. But our ability to provide reliable electricity is in jeopardy.

In May, the Environmental Protection Agency released its proposed rule to limit greenhouse gas emissions from new and existing fossil-fuel-fired electric generating units. The proposal is part of the current administration's misguided regulatory agenda to create a carbon-free power sector by 2035 and net zero emissions economy-wide by no later than 2050. We believe this proposal will further strain America's electric grid and undermine decades of work to reliably keep the lights on across the nation.

But that's not the only threat we face. The 2023 NERC summer reliability assessment is just the latest in a series of alarming reminders about the new electric reliability challenges facing the nation. Nine states experienced power interruptions last December as the demand for electricity exceeded available supply.

It's imperative that policymakers work to prioritize reliability in every energy policy discussion. Federal policies must recognize the compromised reliability reality facing the nation before it's too late.

The families, farms and businesses served by electric cooperatives deserve affordable AND reliable electricity to power their lives.

*Chuck Soderberg is executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. Congressman Randy Feenstra represents Iowa's 4th District.*



**CHUCK SODERBERG**



**REP. RANDY FEENSTRA**





*From Our Table To Yours*

# HAPPY THANKSGIVING

## Cranberry Red JELL-O Salad

1 pkg. raspberry Jell-O®  
 1 pkg. cherry Jell-O®  
 1 can cranberry jellied sauce  
 1 can crushed pineapple, drained  
 In a 2-qt. container, combine Jell-O packages with two cups boiling water and stir to dissolve. Stir in cranberry sauce. Add pineapple and one cup water to make 2 quarts. Pour into 9x13 pan and refrigerate until set.

*Wendy Burkett*



*eatingonadime.com*

## Cranberry Salad

1 c. ground fresh cranberries  
 1 c. peeled and finely chopped red apples  
 1/2 c. sugar  
 1 pkg. orange Jell-O®  
 1 c. hot water  
 1 small can mandarin oranges\*  
 1/2 c. sliced white or red grapes

Dissolve Jell-O in hot water. Using a half cup of the juice and all the fruit, add fruit to JELL-O and chill until set. In separate bowl, combine cranberries, apples and sugar. Add cranberry mixture and grapes to Jell-O. Set and serve. \*Can substitute chopped pineapple

*Sheryl Arment*



*thedeliciousspoon.com*

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

Mail your entry with your bill to: P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849; or e-mail it to: HWeston@farmersrec.com.

**DECEMBER: Christmas treats; JANUARY: Healthy recipes.**



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.