

# FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024

## NOTICE: Pull the Plug Program

The Pull the Plug program offered by Farmers Electric has been discontinued effective Jan. 1. The cooperative recommends discussing appliance recycling with your vendor installer (if installing a new appliance) for options, or calling your county landfill for disposal or recycling instructions.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Area rugs are an easy, cost-effective solution to cold floors. Adding area rugs to hard-surface flooring can add warmth to any room and keep your feet cozy on cold winter days. Choose rugs made from wool or other natural fibers and plush or high-pile textures for the most insulation. Place rugs in areas where you need additional warmth, like the foot of a bed or under a coffee table. And, area rugs can enhance the aesthetic of your home!



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

### ADVOCATING FOR YOU:

## Message to Legislators: Do No Harm

Representatives from electric cooperatives across Iowa ushered in the 2024 Legislative Session with a Welcome Back reception Jan. 9. They came with a clear message: Do no harm.

In the coming months, the Iowa General Assembly will address a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to Iowa's rural economy.

"Iowa lawmakers have gotten it right over the past several years as it pertains to setting the state's energy strategy," wrote Kevin Condon, director of Government Relations for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, in a recent column. "Iowa electric co-ops can provide reliable power to our member-consumers without unnecessary interference from the state government. In Iowa, we have established a positive balance between central regulatory compliance and local flexibility."

However, Iowa's electric cooperatives are

concerned about the potential establishment of Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs) in Iowa Code. IRPs would essentially force the early retirement of carbon-based electric generation facilities, resulting in stranded costs and reliability concerns for the member-consumers we serve.

"IRPs are simply a 'wolf in sheep's clothing' effort from special interest groups to take decision-making authority away from your local utility and shutter reliable power generation assets well before their useful life is up," Condon wrote. "The Iowa Legislature shouldn't require IRPs but instead could expand our energy strategy to incorporate even more of an 'all the above' approach to include nuclear generation and energy storage technologies."

Iowa's electric cooperatives will participate in the next advocacy event March 12 for REC Day on the Hill. Learn more about our advocacy efforts at [www.iaruralpower.org](http://www.iaruralpower.org).

## One Co-op, Two Youth Opportunities!

### Youth Tour

What: Free trip to Washington, D.C.  
When: June 15-21  
Who: High school juniors  
Application Deadline: March 1

### Scholarships

What: Up to \$1,000 for continuing education  
Who: High school seniors  
Application Deadline: April 3  
See details on page 2



# Apply Today for 2024 Scholarship

**D**o you know a graduating high school student who could use a few extra bucks for the next step in their educational career? Make sure they know about the Farmers Electric 2024 Scholarship!

Our cooperative is proud to support area students who seek to continue their education beyond high school. To be eligible, students must be enrolled full-time at an accredited



college, university or vocational or technical school for the 2024-2025 school year. The student must also have a parent or legal guardian who is a member of Farmers Electric and resides within the cooperative's service territory. Children or grandchildren of directors are not eligible. The scholarship award will be distributed after the completion of the first semester and sent directly to the college.

The cooperative has set aside a total of \$10,000 to be awarded to students based on their application and number of submissions. Applications must be submitted by the close of business

on Wednesday, April 3, to Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849.

In addition to the application, the following must be included:

- A copy of the student's transcript;
- A short essay on why electric cooperatives are important to the student; and
- A senior photo.

No other attachments are allowed. For more information, and to download an application, visit [www.farmersrec.com](http://www.farmersrec.com) and click on the "Community" tab or call (800) 397-4821.

# Don't Let Electrical Safety Get Buried in the Snow

**S**nowy winters like this one in Iowa can present challenges to the members and lineworkers of Farmers Electric Cooperative. A daily, or even hourly question, is: Where do we put all this snow?

Keep safety in mind when clearing snow from your driveway and other areas around your home or business. Electric cooperative members need to be mindful of the location of power equipment and make sure it is clear and accessible for Farmers Electric's crews. Please take note of the locations of pad-mounted transformers, meters, regulators, cabinets, poles and overhead wires before moving snow.

Snow piled on electrical equipment not only impacts your safety, but also has the potential to affect electric service to hundreds of homes and businesses in your neighborhood. The National Electric

Code states to allow at least 10 feet in front of power equipment and 3 feet on the sides and back for line workers to be able to access the area in the event of an emergency.

In addition to paying attention to ground-level equipment, be sure to look up and be aware of overhead power lines – especially if removing snow from your roof. Also, make plans to pile snow away from power lines where children might play.

In the event of an outage, clearing snow around utility equipment will make it easier for line workers to get power restored. Farmers Electric recommends using a shovel to prevent damage. This allows members to be aware of the utility infrastructure below. If members notice damaged equipment, please contact Farmers Electric so it can be inspected.



*Information and photo courtesy of Nodak Electric Cooperative, Grand Forks, ND.*

## Is Your Contact Information Up to Date?

In certain situations, Farmers Electric may need to get in touch with you for various reasons related to outages, bill payments or delivery of capital credits checks.

It's important that, as your electric provider, your contact information is up to date.

If any of your contact information has changed recently, please let us know by calling us at (800) 397-4821. You can also update your information on SmartHub by clicking on "My Profile."

All your personal information is kept private.

If your contact information has not changed, you do not need to do anything and can disregard this notice.

Call our office with any questions.

## Need Help With Heating Bills?

The 2023-2024 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 season.

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



# Helping to Keep You Safe From Scams

It seems with each passing day the tricks used by scammers to get your money is becoming more sophisticated.

Thankfully, many organizations and utilities like Farmers Electric continue to educate their members on ways to protect themselves, even as these attempts ramp up.

This time of year, our focus is on keeping warm. Heat is essential for our health and livelihood. And the scammers know this, which is why they will pose as a Farmers Electric representative to threaten to turn off your heat if immediate payment isn't made. Farmers Electric will *never* threaten to disconnect your electricity without first working with you to remedy the past due payments and provide sufficient notice of disconnection.

If you receive one of these calls, it can be intimidating, and you may feel pressure to give out your credit card or bank information. It's

important to remember that the scammer called *you*, and that *you* have the power to end the call. Your next call should be to the cooperative to confirm whether your account is in good standing.

We will be able to review your account with you, and also let our other members know that scammers are targeting our area so they can be extra vigilant.

Remember, trust your gut. If something makes you feel uncomfortable or pressured to provide immediate payment, that's a red flag. You don't have to be nice to scammers, either. You can simply hang up and then contact us to verify your information.

Farmers Electric is committed to keeping our members safe in more ways than just around electricity!



**HOLI WESTON**  
CEO

### BEST BETS FOR Winter Savings

Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

#### UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE

Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.

#### ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.

#### USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER

Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.

#### MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT

Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.

#### LOWER THE THERMOSTAT

Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).

IS  *Chocolate* YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE?

**H**ave you heard that eating chocolate can mimic the feelings of true love? It's been medically proven that eating chocolate triggers the release of endorphins which are attributed to feelings of being happy and relaxed. Show your sweetheart some love by trying this month's recipes. They'll love you for it!

Every month, Farmers Electric makes a call for recipes to appear in this newsletter. Submissions are entered to win \$5 off their next electric bill. Just mail your entry with your bill to Farmers Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849; or email it to [HWeston@farmersrec.com](mailto:HWeston@farmersrec.com). Here are the recipes we're looking for in 2024:

**March: Brunch**

**April: Pasta**

**May: Beef**

**June: Summer Salads**

**July: Grilling**

**August: Vegetables**

**September (none, annual meeting issue)**

**October: Pumpkin**

**November: Thanksgiving**

**December: Holiday Treats**



## Cappuccino Balls

- 9 oz. crushed chocolate wafer cookies
- 6 oz. ground almonds
- 1/3 c. baking cocoa
- 1/4 c. sugar
- 2 T. + 1 tsp. instant dry coffee
- 3/4 c. white syrup
- Cinnamon sugar



*tasteofhome.com*

Mix all ingredients together and form into 1-inch balls. Roll in cinnamon sugar. Makes about 5 dozen. These improve with age.

*Retta Ripperger, Afton*

## Grandma D's Brownies

- 1 stick margarine
- 1 c. sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 16 oz. can Hershey syrup
- 1 c. + 1 T. flour
- Frosting:
- 6 T. margarine
- 1 1/2 c. sugar
- 6 T. milk
- 1/2 c. chocolate chips



*backforseconds.com*

With electric mixer, cream together margarine and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs and mix. Alternate adding Hershey syrup and flour, combining well after each addition and mixing until smooth. Spread in an 11x15 pan and bake at 350 for 30 minutes.

Frosting: In saucepan over medium heat, combine margarine, sugar and milk and stir constantly until mixture comes to a boil. Boil 30 seconds. Add chocolate chips and stir until smooth. Spread on top of baked brownies.

*Luke Meisenheimer, Bridgewater*



**Farmers Electric Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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.