

# FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills. Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is required. Source: energystar.gov



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

### YOUTH LEADERSHIP:

## Apply Now for 2024 Youth Tour

Farmers Electric is proud to invest in the next generation of rural Iowa leaders by participating in the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour each year. We're looking for high school juniors with a passion for government and public service to apply for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to our nation's capital in June.

One high school junior who has a parent or guardian who is a member of Farmers Electric will be selected from eligible candidates to attend the 2024 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., June 15-21 along with 40 other student leaders from Iowa. All trip expenses will be paid by Farmers Electric. The Iowa Youth Tour group will join with hundreds of students from across the country as they learn more about electric cooperatives and American history and come home with a greater understanding of their role as an American citizen. Students will also learn about U.S. government and meet with their members of Congress. On the

trip, students take in the sights of D.C. as they visit monuments, museums and historical landmarks. It's a great addition to a college application!

### Process and Deadlines

**March 1:** Application due to the cooperative. The application can be downloaded on our web site, farmersrec.com. Once the application is received, the candidate will be sent a packet of materials to study and be asked to complete a 50-question open book test.

**March 15:** Deadline to return test to the cooperative. Four applicants who receive the top scores will be notified and interviewed by a panel of judges about the material covered in the test. A winner will be selected following the interviews. Three semi-finalists will receive a gift. Parents are invited to attend the interview.

For more information, visit [www.farmersrec.com/youth-tour](http://www.farmersrec.com/youth-tour).



**Students can apply now for an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., courtesy of Farmers Electric!**



Area students who are interested in government and public service are encouraged to apply. Learn more at [farmersrec.com/youth-tour](http://farmersrec.com/youth-tour)

# Statement of Nondiscrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Dept. of Ag (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

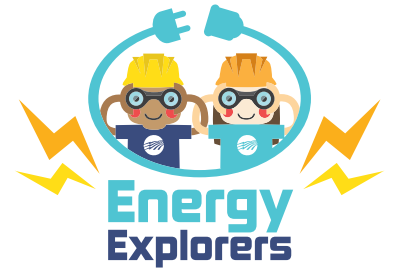
Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

## WINTER SAFETY WORD SEARCH

Did you know most home fires happen during colder months? Play it safe this winter season. Read the safety tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.



A	P	I	R	P	A	J	G	F	W	D	C	Q	T	W
U	L	B	S	G	W	N	N	P	T	S	A	T	A	T
R	L	A	Y	P	J	I	U	Q	P	Q	N	G	E	O
C	T	W	R	Y	J	D	X	A	R	X	D	B	L	Z
J	F	T	P	M	K	G	C	I	B	T	L	T	C	F
X	B	K	Y	Z	S	E	M	B	Q	G	E	B	D	B
G	B	W	B	Z	H	K	T	Z	H	J	H	R	M	X
C	V	X	J	E	B	X	S	X	B	Q	C	K	V	A
V	I	M	A	B	O	K	A	T	C	S	I	K	F	E
X	Y	T	Q	Y	K	J	S	F	N	Q	V	T	J	W
L	E	V	J	A	N	V	U	W	C	B	A	P	A	W
R	T	R	E	L	E	C	T	R	O	N	I	C	S	O
W	Z	B	K	R	Y	X	S	B	V	A	Q	O	U	E
S	D	R	O	C	N	O	I	S	N	E	T	X	E	P
I	F	J	R	W	K	J	B	Q	P	U	B	D	T	Z

Never overload electrical outlets with too many **electronics**.

Test smoke and carbon monoxide **alarms** every month.

Never leave a **candle** burning in an empty room.

Keep flammable items at least three feet away from a **space heater**.

**Extension cords** should only be used temporarily. Damaged or frayed cords should be thrown away.

Submit your completed form or letter by:  
 (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;  
 (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or  
 (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)  
 USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

**Need help with heating bills?**

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help. Visit <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/liheap> for details.

## Angle for Safety When Ice Fishing

Ice fishing is a fun, inexpensive activity for anglers of all ages to get outdoors and avoid cabin fever. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources offers these safety tips for ice fishing:

- 1. Know your ice.** Check the DNR web site, [iowadnr.gov](http://iowadnr.gov), for ice conditions across Iowa. A minimum of 4" of clear blue ice is recommended for ice fishing. Drill test holes near shore and periodically as you walk out to gauge thickness. If it doesn't look right, appears dark or slushy, don't go out.
- 2. Keep warm and dry.** Dress in many thin layers of loose clothing and make sure your outermost layer is windproof and waterproof. Add warm socks, waterproof boots and always cover your head and hands, especially if you're not in a shelter.
- 3. Bring a buddy.** Never go ice fishing alone. Always let someone else know where you will be and when you expect to return home.
- 4. Stay safe.** Pack these basic items: hand warmers, ice cleats, ice picks to help you crawl out of the water if you fall in; a life jacket, floating safety rope, a whistle to call for help, a basic first aid kit and a spare set of dry clothing.



# The Power of Operation Round-UP

**H**appy New Year and welcome to 2024, another opportunity to start fresh! If you adhere to the tradition of setting your New Year's resolutions, they might look something like lose weight, be more patient, or volunteer more for worthy causes you believe in.

I have another idea to add, and it's really very simple. Farmers Electric offers the Operation Round-UP program that allows you to round up your monthly electric bill to the next full dollar. For you, it means no more than an additional \$11.88 over the course of the year. But for those in the communities we serve, it can mean so much more.

The contributions accrue in a separate account that is overseen by a board of community members who review the funding applications we receive and determine who will receive money, and how much. Both individuals and organizations are eligible to apply for these funds. Contributions will generally be made to a non-profit, civic or community-based organization that demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the quality of life in our region.

Successful applications typically seek funding for projects with a focus on community service, economic development, education and/or youth, the environment or disaster relief. Funds for individuals are typically only given to those seeking disaster relief, like from a house fire, tornado damage or other sudden event.



**HOLI WESTON**  
CEO

Although your participation in this program is voluntary, and you may opt-out at any time, I encourage you to consider joining the millions of rural electric cooperative members across the country who have stepped UP to better their communities, just by giving a little more each month.

To some, it may be small change, but to others, it can change lives. Consider signing up for Operation Round-UP this year; it's one resolution you can cross off your list as complete. To find out more, or to apply for Operation Round-UP funds, visit [farmersrec.com/operation-round](http://farmersrec.com/operation-round).

## Co-op Earns Kudos for Dedication to Safety

**A**t its annual meeting in December, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives recognized Farmers Electric Cooperative for completing the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) in 2023.

"This designation shows our commitment to keeping our workers and the public safe by making sure we are in compliance with the many rules required by OSHA and other regulatory bodies," said Farmers CEO Holi Weston. "It also provides a premium reduction from our insurance carrier, which helps hold down our operating costs."



*Pictured, from left: Director of Operations Dave Shike; Board President Dan Westphal; CEO Holi Weston; Director of Finance and Accounting Lori Kinyon; and Board Members RoxAnn Rhoads, Kevin Stender, Janelle Peiffer, Kris Petter, Cary Gilman, Kevin Tanner, Mark Earhart and Steve Chandler.*



# Get Off to a Healthy Start in 2024!

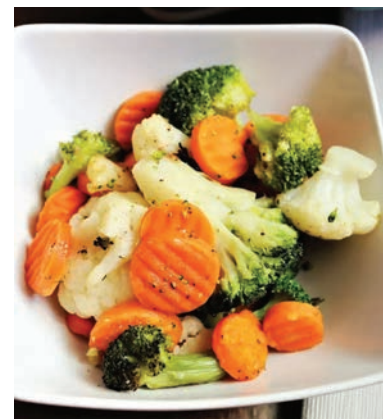
**Y**ou're not alone if one of your New Years resolutions is to eat healthier this year. The trick is to find food that tastes good and is good for you. This month's recipes are a great way to start the new year off right and start feeling better about your health.

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 each month in 2024:

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>February: Chocolate</b> | <b>August: Vegetables</b>                     |
| <b>March: Brunch</b>       | <b>September (none, annual meeting issue)</b> |
| <b>April: Pasta</b>        | <b>October: Pumpkin</b>                       |
| <b>May: Beef</b>           | <b>November: Thanksgiving</b>                 |
| <b>June: Summer Salads</b> | <b>December: Holiday Treats</b>               |
| <b>July: Grilling</b>      |   |

## Coconut Steamed Veggies

- ½ c. water
- ½ c. chopped fresh broccoli or green beans
- ½ c. sliced fresh carrot
- ½ c. chopped fresh cauliflower
- ½ tsp. coconut oil (or extra virgin olive oil if coconut oil is not available)
- ¼ tsp. sea salt



bitesofflavor.com

Add water to medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Add broccoli, carrots and cauliflower to saucepan; cover and cook 4-5 minutes or until tender-crisp. To serve, place vegetables in serving bowl. Add coconut oil and salt; toss gently to coat.

*Megan Rhoads, Winterset*

## Banana Oatmeal Pancakes

- 2 c. complete whole grain or multigrain pancake mix
- 1 large firm banana, finely chopped
- 1/2 c. old-fashioned oats
- 1/4 c. chopped walnuts



tasteofhome.com

Prepare pancake batter according to package directions. Stir in the banana, oats and walnuts. Pour batter by 1/4 cupfuls onto a hot griddle coated with cooking spray; turn when bubbles form on top. Cook until second side is golden brown. Serve with desired toppings like sliced banana, mixed fresh berries, chopped walnuts or sugar free syrup.

*2 pancakes: 155 cal, 4g fat (0 saturated fat, 0 cholesterol), 293mg sodium, 28g carbohydrate (4g sugar, 4g fiber), 7g protein*



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

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Holi Weston

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Kevin Stender	

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.