

FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2025

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR® - rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save energy in your home office is to use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs.



Need Help with Heating Bills?

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



Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.
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Message to Legislators: Keep Power Affordable, Reliable

Farmers Electric staff and board members were among nearly 100 representatives from Iowa's electric cooperatives welcoming legislators back to the statehouse Jan. 14.

The annual reception is sponsored by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and FUEL Iowa.

Our top legislative priority this session is protecting the state's defined electric service territories (see article on pg. 2). In Iowa, your location determines which electric utility will serve your home, farm or business. For almost 50 years, these defined electric service areas have provided certainty to electric cooperatives as we work to maintain affordable rates, foster a resilient electric grid and invest in economic development throughout rural Iowa. We strongly oppose any efforts to change or amend the service territory law. Learn more about this issue at www.ProtectRuralIowa.com.



Pictured from left: Board members Janelle Peiffer, Kevin Stender, Kris Petter, and Kevin Tanner; Rep. Ray Sorensen; Board members Dan Westphal, RoxAnn Rhoads and Steve Chandler.

In the coming months, Iowa's 91st General Assembly will address a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters central to Iowa's rural economy. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, Farmers Electric will advocate for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues as we work to power lives and empower communities. We'll have another opportunity to advocate for our members and communities at our annual Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) Day on the Hill event on March 19.

Learn more about our advocacy efforts at www.IAruralpower.org.

Protecting Electric Service Territory is Top 2025 Legislative Priority

At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, the start of a new year also means the start of a new legislative session as we advocate for our member cooperatives and the member-consumers they serve.

By the time Iowa's 91st General Assembly began Jan. 13, our Policy & Advocacy team was already hard at work and focused on protecting electric service territories.

In Iowa, your location determines which electric utility will serve your home, farm or business under the defined electric service territory law. For almost 50 years, these electric service areas have benefited electric co-op member-consumers as the law provides certainty to electric cooperatives so we can safeguard affordable rates, support a resilient electric grid and invest in economic development.

Service territory changes jeopardize economic development

Weakening Iowa's electric service territory law jeopardizes electric cooperatives' investments in rural economic development, which would negatively impact the communities we serve.

For the five years ending in 2022, Iowa electric co-ops had an impressive \$4.7 billion impact in economic development projects. These investments supported more than 7,300 Iowa jobs (retained, attracted or expanded) during that same period.

In 2023 alone, Iowa electric co-ops secured more than \$41 million in federal

economic development funds, resulting in more than \$111 million of new capital investment in the state.

Decades of robust economic development efforts from electric cooperatives have improved quality of life throughout rural Iowa through local job creation, providing needed services and adding valuable tax revenue. Without electric service territory protections, these rural economic development efforts will be severely diminished.

Reduced electric service territory protections will increase rates

The realities of eroding electric service territory protections are sobering. In other states where service territories have been eliminated, consumers have experienced higher electric rates and decreased reliability.

According to a 2023 *New York Times* investigation, electric rates have increased in deregulated states. The report concludes, "Deregulation has resulted in increased rates/fees in every state where it has been introduced." And, "On average, residents living in a deregulated market pay \$40 more per month for electricity..."

Reduced electric service territory protections will decrease reliability

Our analysis of publicly available industry data shows that electric reliability is lower in deregulated Midwestern states compared to Iowa. From 2018-2023, electric outages in Iowa are 65% shorter in duration, on average, compared to deregulated Midwestern states. During that same period, Iowans experienced 20% fewer outages than deregulated Midwestern states. This analysis comes from EIA-861 SAIDI (System

Average Interruption Duration Index) and SAIFI (System Average Interruption Frequency Index) data from Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Ohio and includes major weather events.



ETHAN HOHENADEL

Protecting the interests of co-op member-consumers

Weakening service territory protections is unacceptable for Iowa's electric cooperatives and the members we serve. Your locally owned electric co-op supports Iowa's defined electric service territory law and opposes efforts to undermine it, which reduces consumer protections. Learn more about this important issue at www.ProtectRuralIowa.com.

Ethan Hohenadel is the director of Policy & Advocacy for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Scammers will try anything to deceive utility customers, including a tactic that claims customers have overpaid their bill. If you receive a call, text or email from someone claiming you overpaid a utility bill and need to provide your banking or credit card information to receive a credit, it's likely a scam. In most cases, your utility will apply a credit to your account to cover future charges or refund an overpayment with a mailed check.

Source: *Utilities United Against Scams*



Apply Now for 2025 Scholarships!

Deadline: Wednesday, April 2

Application and information available farmersrec.com or call (800) 397-4821.

Application must include:

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

No other attachments are allowed.

Eligibility:

Student must be enrolled full time at an accredited college, university or vocation or technical school for 2025-2026 school year.

Student must have 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.



The Ever-Changing, Fast-Growing Demand for Electricity

Did you know the demand for electricity increased by 2.5% in 2024 and is expected to grow by 3.2% this year? That was after co-ops saw a 4.8% increase in 2022. Through 2029, the nation's peak demand is projected to grow by 38 gigawatts. That would be like adding another California-sized state to our nation's power grid.

The rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI) is driving the development of massive data center facilities, which often seek rural electric co-op service territories. By 2022, these facilities accounted for 2.5% of the nation's consumption of electricity—and by 2030, they'll use 7.5% of all electric power.

Data centers and facilities like warehouses require a large, steady supply of electricity 24 hours a day. That means our power supplier, Central Iowa Power Cooperative, can't rely on intermittent sources of electricity such as solar or wind energy to handle the additional load. Instead, they need more of what's known as baseload or always-available power, much of which is currently generated by burning fossil fuels. The more we depend on technology, the more we'll need reliable baseload generation.

Yet that's a problem, because at the same time Americans are using more electricity, power providers are being forced to shut down reliable sources of baseload power such as coal and nuclear power plants.

Many large coal plants have been converted to use cleaner-burning natural gas, but others have been deemed too costly to convert and are prematurely being shut down. More than 110 gigawatts of always-available generation—enough to power about 35 million homes—is forecast to retire by 2033.

In other words, at the same time everyone is using more electricity than ever, the supply of the most reliable source is drying up. As renewables become more efficient and cheaper to produce, their share of the power mix will only continue to grow. Someday soon, battery technology may reach the point where large-scale storage of renewable generation becomes possible, but until then, we'll need more of those always-available power sources.



HOLI WESTON
CEO

SOARING DEMAND



65%

Data Centers

Driven by explosions in artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency and cloud computing, total U.S. data center load is projected to increase by 65% by 2050.

Total Demand

Analysts predicted in 2023 that U.S. peak demand will increase by at least 38 GW over the next five years, nearly double the growth rate predicted in 2022.

2027

Forecast
835
GW

Forecast
852
GW

2028

SAY IT WITH

Chocolate

Chocolate Crunch Brownies

- 1 c. butter or margarine softened
- 2 c. sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 c. baking cocoa
- 1 c. flour
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 jar (7 oz.) marshmallow cream
- 1 c. creamy peanut butter
- 2 c. (12 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips
- 3 c. crispy rice cereal



gatherforbread.com

In a mixing bowl, cream together butter, sugar; add eggs. Stir in cocoa, flour, salt, and vanilla. Spread into greased 9x13 baking pan. Bake at 350 for 25 minutes or until brownies test done. Cool. Spread marshmallow cream over chocolate brownies. In a medium saucepan, melt the peanut butter and chocolate chips over low heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, stir in cereal. Spread over marshmallow layer. Chill before cutting. Store in refrigerator.

Wendy Burkett, Winterset

Fudge Brownie Pie

- 1 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. butter or margarine melted
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 c. flour
- 1/3 c. unsweetened baking cocoa
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/3 c. chopped pecans (optional)



easysoutherndesserts.com

Beat together sugar, butter, and eggs, mixing well. Add flour, cocoa, salt, vanilla, and nuts. Pour into greased 9-inch pie plate. Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes. Serve with whipped cream and strawberries or ice cream. Makes 6 servings.

Wendy Burkett, Winterset

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

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

MARCH: Brunch APRIL: Pasta



Farmers Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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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.