

FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025

Scholarship Application Deadline April 3



Visit www.farmersrec.com for complete details and application.

Please contact the cooperative with any questions.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace.

Use ENERGY STAR®-related

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.



 **Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.**
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

SPECIAL STORM PREPAREDNESS ISSUE

Severe Weather Awareness Week in Iowa March 24-28

Your best defense against severe weather is to be both prepared and informed. That's why every year, the National Weather Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) promote Severe Weather Awareness week in Iowa.

Each day of the week focuses on one topic. Monday's subject covers lightning. Lightning is the most common thunderstorm hazard, striking the United States 25 million times each year. Annually, lightning kills about 20 people in the United States, with hundreds more severely injured. Remember, when thunder roars go indoors or when you see a flash, dash inside!

Tornadoes are the focus on Tuesday. On average, 50 tornadoes are recorded in Iowa each year. The least likely thunderstorm hazard also carries the greatest potential impact. This is why every Tornado Warning

should be taken seriously!

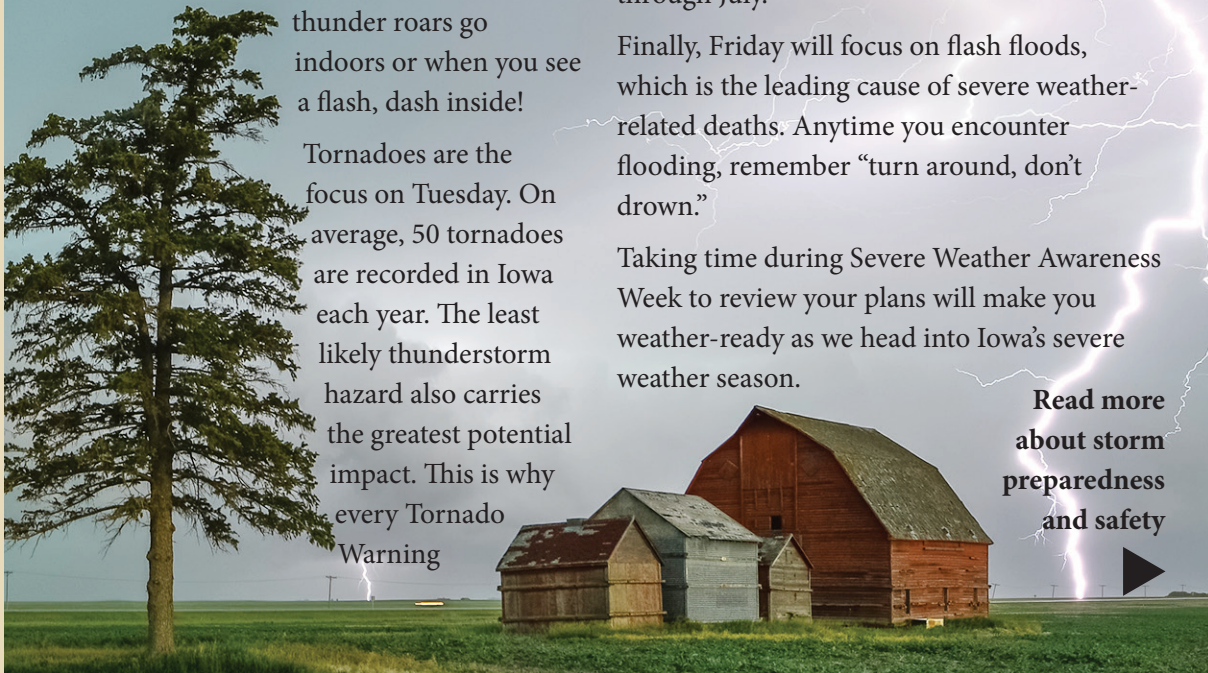
Wednesday's topic will be preparedness. The statewide tornado drill at 10 a.m. will be started with a special weekly test of NOAA Weather Radio and this is a great time for Iowans to practice their severe weather plans whether at home, work, or school.

Hail and wind safety will be covered on Thursday. Severe thunderstorms are defined as containing wind gusts of 58 mph or higher and/or hail of 1 inch diameter or greater. Although occurrences can be any month of the year, they most typically occur April through July.

Finally, Friday will focus on flash floods, which is the leading cause of severe weather-related deaths. Anytime you encounter flooding, remember "turn around, don't drown."

Taking time during Severe Weather Awareness Week to review your plans will make you weather-ready as we head into Iowa's severe weather season.

Read more about storm preparedness and safety



Storm Safety on the Farm

If you live on a farm, springtime can be a flurry of activity getting ready to plant crops. Along with ensuring tractors and other equipment are ready for the job, ag workers should also review their severe weather plans for staying safe.

When a solid home, tornado shelter or basement may be miles away, and you're caught in a severe storm, keep in mind these on-farm severe weather safety tips:

- Download a trusted weather app and use it to monitor the timing of an oncoming storm.
- Identify a safe place before you need it. If severe weather catches you while in the field, where will you take cover? A pole barn is not really a safe place at all; look for a reinforced structure made of brick if possible. Your vehicle or tractor is not a good place to seek safety.
- If you can't escape a tornado fast enough, look for lower elevations in ditches or culverts and lay as flat as possible. Staying below the ground surface will allow debris to blow over you. Shield your body and head with your arms or hands as much as possible.
- Beware the risks. The greatest risk often presented to farmers is getting just one more thing done before the storm blows in. Make sure you allow enough time to reach safety as conditions may be change quickly.
- Make sure machinery and vital equipment is secure from wind or floods.
- Check generators regularly throughout the year to ensure they are in working order.
- Draw up an emergency plan in case of specific events like tornado, flood, fire, etc., and make sure all family members and farm employees know what to do in each case. Develop a safe gathering location for everyone to go to in case of emergency.
- Keep an active and updated inventory of feed, livestock, grain, equipment and other key farm assets.

Know Your Terms

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM: Produces hail the size of quarters or larger; wind gusts that reach 58+ mph; or a tornado.

TORNADO: Tornadoes form when warm, humid air collides with cold, dry air, causing a violently rotating column of air that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground.

WATCH (Be Prepared): Conditions are favorable for dangerous thunderstorms or tornadoes to develop over the next couple of hours. They are issued well in advance to give people as much time as possible to seek safety. Keep an eye out for urgent weather updates until the storm passes.

WARNING (Take Action): Large hail, heavy rain, and/or damaging winds are imminent. A tornado warning means that meteorologists detect rotation in a thunderstorm or that someone has spotted a tornado on the ground. Most severe warnings are issued 15-30 minutes before the storm arrives, but sometimes there's little or no warning ahead of time. If you're ever placed under a warning, you have to act quickly to save your life.

TORNADOES STRENGTH RATE

ENHANCED FUJITA SCALE

The Enhanced Fujita (EF) Scale is a way of rating a tornado's intensity. The intensity is based primarily on the wind speed and the structural and vegetation damage the storm creates. No matter the category, prepare to act quickly when a tornado watch or warning is issued. Knowing what to do can save lives and help prepare for storm damage.

EF0

MINOR OR NO DAMAGE

65 to 85 mph


EF1

MODERATE DAMAGE

86 to 110 mph


EF2

CONSIDERABLE

111 to 135 mph


EF3

SEVERE DAMAGE

136 to 165 mph


EF4

EXTREME DAMAGE

166 to 200 mph


EF5

TOTAL DESTRUCTION

200+ mph



Winter Moratorium Ends April 1

Members of Farmers Electric Cooperative are reminded that the winter moratorium will end April 1, 2025.

If your account(s) is past due and you have not made a payment arrangement by this date, your service may be disconnected.

Under Iowa's winter moratorium law, qualified customers for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or Weatherization Assistance Program are protected from the annual shutoff of natural gas or electric service from Nov. 1 to April 1.

Iowa customers seeking LIHEAP financial assistance for utility bills should contact their local Community Action Agency before April 30 to discuss eligibility guidelines. The LIHEAP program pays only a portion of utility bills to qualified low-income members.

To avoid disconnection, you must pay your electric bill in full by April 1 or request a reasonable payment agreement for your past due account(s). Iowa Utilities Commission (IUC) rules regarding natural gas or electric service disconnections and payment agreements can be found in chapters 19 and 20, Utilities Division (199) of the Iowa Administrative Code.

If you have questions, please call our office at (800) 397-4821.

We Are Ready for Storm Season

Just under a year ago, our little corner of the world was forever changed by a devastating tornado that tore through our town and across our service territory. As we once again enter the spring storm season, I want to assure you that Farmers Electric is prepared for whatever severe weather may come our way over the next few months.

Unfortunately, there is only so much we can do in advance of a storm to prevent outages, downed lines, or other damage. But you can be certain that our line crews are on high alert with any approaching storm and have our trucks and gear ready to go out as soon as it is safe to do so. Once boots hit the ground, our linemen work as quickly and safely as possible to restore the power you depend on.

There are a few things you can do, as well, to make sure you and your family have what they need while the power is out:

- Stock your pantry with at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food, water, and other essentials like diapers and toiletries including hand sanitizer.
- Stock your First Aid kit with pain relievers, bandages or other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Check that flashlights have fresh batteries.
- In the event of a prolonged power

outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from potential power surges and will also help prevent overloading circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.

- Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check Farmers Electric's Facebook page for restoration updates.

Severe storms can occasionally bring down power lines. If you see a downed line, always assume it's energized and never approach it. If flooding occurs, never walk through areas where power lines could be submerged.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and lessen the impact of the storm's effects.

I hope we don't experience damaging storms over the spring and summer months, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Farmers Electric, we recommend that you make a plan today—because storm preparedness is always our best defense.



HOLI WESTON
CEO

Staying Safe Until Power is Restored

- Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines. Just because they are damaged does not mean they are dead!
- Never enter a flooded room if electrical outlets are submerged. The water could be energized.
- If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay away and keep others away. Call 911 or Farmers Electric to address the downed power line.
- If your vehicle comes in contact with a downed power line, do not leave the car! Wait for utility professionals to make sure the power line is de-energized before exiting the car.



French Toast Casserole

- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. butter
- 1 (8oz.) loaf crusty French bread or sourdough, cut into bite size pieces
- 2 c. milk
- 6 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla



- Topping:
- 1 T. brown sugar (or to taste)
 - 1/4 tsp. cinnamon (or to taste)

In a saucepan, stir brown sugar and butter together over medium heat, until butter is melted and sugar has dissolved (approx. 2-4 min). Pour into 9x13 pan. Scatter bread pieces on top in a 1 1/2" to 2" layer. In medium bowl, whisk together milk, eggs and vanilla until well combined. Pour over bread pieces and press down so the bread absorbs the liquid. Cover pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Before baking, combine brown sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over the top. Bake 50-60 minutes at 350.

Cindy Baudler, Fontanelle

Pumpkin Bars

- 2 c. flour
- 2 c. sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 T. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. each: ginger, nutmeg, and cloves
- 4 eggs beaten
- 1 can pumpkin
- 1 c. oil



allrecipes.com

- Frosting:
- 3 oz. cream cheese
 - 1/4 stick butter
 - 1 T. milk
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
 - 1 1/4 c. powdered sugar

Combine all ingredients except frosting. Spread in a lightly greased 9x13 pan. Bake at 350 for 25 minutes. Combine frosting ingredients and spread on cooled bars.

Helen McNaught, Afton



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.

APRIL: Pasta recipes **MAY: Beef/Hamburger recipes**



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

CEO:
Holi Weston

2389 Highway 92 | P.O. Box 330
Greenfield, Iowa 50849-0330
Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.- 4 p.m.
24 hour outside depository
Ph: (800) 397-4821
Fax: (641) 343-7187
www.farmersrec.com

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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.