

# FARMERS Open Lines

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

## Need Help with Heating Bills?

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help.

Visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/assistance-programs/housing-rent-assistance/low-income-home-energy-assistance> for details. Applications are accepted through April 30.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Mid-winter is a great time to ensure you're making the most of your home heating system.

Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently.



Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating – these signs indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy.

A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through the winter.

## CO-OP LEADERS WELCOME BACK LEGISLATORS

More than 150 senior staff and directors from Iowa's electric cooperatives, including Farmers Electric Cooperative, welcomed legislators Jan. 13 in downtown Des Moines.



Pictured, from left: Janelle Peiffer, Kevin Stender, Roxann Rhoads, Kevin Tanner, Rep. Ray Sorensen, Cary Gilman, Mark Earhart and Kris Petter.

The annual event draws co-op advocates to discuss upcoming priorities during the 91st Iowa General Assembly. The annual event is sponsored by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and FUELIowa.

### Priorities

1. Protect Iowa's defined electric service territories to ensure every corner of the state receives consistent, cost-effective electric service.

2. Strengthen penalties to further protect utility workers who encounter threats, harassment and assaults while on the job.

3. Third party solar (community solar) programs undermine defined electric service territory by allowing a non-utility to provide retail electric service within a public utility's territory.

For a complete picture of our 2026 legislative priorities, visit [www.IARuralPower.org](http://IARuralPower.org).

## NEW FACE: JESS THORNTON

The co-op accounting department has a new face! Jess Thornton joined the co-op in December as the accounts payable representative.

A native of Greenfield, Jess graduated from Nodaway Valley High School in 2011. From there she attended the University of Northern Iowa, majoring in Biology. During her time in college, Jess took the opportunity to work as an intern for the Walt Disney Company based in Orlando, Fla., and ended up working there for the next five years.

In that position, Jess said she became interested in working toward her master's in management and leadership. She moved back to Iowa in 2018 and began working for Hy-Vee in Des Moines.

"In 2024, my husband and I decided to buy a house here in Greenfield," Jess said. "We are so excited to be able to live and work locally."

She lives with her husband, Stuart, and two children, Piper, 2, and Paxton, 6 months.



Having never worked for an electric cooperative, her experience so far has been a bit of a learning curve, in a good way.

"So far, I really appreciate how much co-op's care and support their employees and members," she said. "In my position, I work with many vendors to bring our co-op members the services they need. As an accounts payable representative, I am responsible for making sure we as a business pay our invoices on time to our vendors."

Next time you stop into the co-op office be sure to welcome Jess!

## WISSE BECOMES JOURNEYMAN

Congratulations to Mason Wisse for successfully completing his four-year apprenticeship program to earn his Journeyman Lineman certification!

Apprenticeships combine roughly 8,000 hours of paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction. To complete his certification, Mason successfully passed the state exam.

Mason is from Oskaloosa and attended William Penn University. He joined Farmers Electric as an apprentice linemen in July, 2021.

Mason and his wife, Martha, live in Greenfield.



Director of Operations Dave Shike presents Mason with his Journeyman certificate.

## CEO: TALENT IS A STRATEGIC LEVER

Farmers Electric Cooperative CEO Holi Weston joined a panel of industry CEOs to discuss cultivating talent to drive sustainable business growth. The panel took place during the National Rural Electric Cooperative's CEO Close-Up conference Jan. 10.

Led by Fred Harburg, clinical professor, Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management, the panel included Scott Peters, CEO, Columbia Rural Electric Association (Walla Walla, Wash.); Shane Laws,

CEO, Victory Electric Cooperative (Dodge City, Kan.); and Jim Matheson, CEO, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Panel members discussed concepts around viewing people as resources to drive growth, innovation and goals.



Pictured from left: Scott Peters, Shane Laws, Holi Weston, Jim Matheson and Fred Harburg.

# LOOKOUT FOR LINE PATROL

Co-op members are asked to be on the lookout for Farmers Electric Cooperative representatives who are out conducting line patrols across our service territory.

If you come across a crew working to inspect lines, please give them space to carry out their important tasks efficiently and effectively. These crews play an important role in ensuring the reliability and safety of our distribution lines that serve our homes and businesses.

Inspections assist the cooperative in identifying potential maintenance or safety hazards, or other issues that may impact your electric service.

Your cooperation and vigilance can help facilitate their work, ensuring minimal disruptions and enhancing the overall safety and efficiency of our power supply.

Remember to Move Over and Slow Down if you come upon our crews conducting line patrol. Thank you!



## 2026 STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Every year, Farmers Electric supports the youth in our community who have goals to continue their education beyond high school.

Do you know a student who could benefit from financial support as they embark on their future? The co-op will award \$10,000 in scholarships for seniors whose parents are members and reside in our service territory. The scholarships can be used for college or vocational technical schools.

### REQUIREMENTS

Deadline: Wednesday, April 1.

Application must include:

- Copy of student's transcript;
- A typed essay on "What are 5 major differences between being a member of an electric cooperative rather than a customer of an investor-owned utility?; and
- A senior photo.

No other attachments are allowed.

Student must be enrolled full time at an accredited college, university or vocation or technical school for 2026-2027 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 issued after 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.



## YOUTH TOUR OPPORTUNITY

REMINDER! Don't miss out on a chance to earn an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., courtesy of Farmers Electric Cooperative!

Each year, the co-op sponsors one local high school student to attend the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in our nation's capital. The selected individual will join a group of more than 30 students representing co-ops from across Iowa, and more than 1,800 students from across the country June 14-20.

The selected student will be asked to speak about their experience at the Farmers Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting in September. Details can be found at [www.farmersrec.com](http://www.farmersrec.com). If you have any questions, please contact Mindy Comstock at [mcomstock@farmersrec.com](mailto:mcomstock@farmersrec.com) or (800) 397-4821.

### IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, March 2: Youth Tour application deadline

June 14-20: Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, Sept. 15: Farmers Electric Annual Meeting



[backforseconds.com](http://backforseconds.com)



[lundsandbyerlys.com](http://lundsandbyerlys.com)

## 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 ½ c. sugar  
6 T. milk  
1/2 c. chocolate chips

With electric mixer, beat together margarine, sugar and eggs until fluffy. Alternating, add Hershey syrup and flour, beating until smooth between each addition. Spread in 11" x 15" pan. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes.

Frosting: Combine margarine, sugar and milk in saucepan until mixture comes to a boil. Boil 30 seconds. Remove from heat and add chocolate chips. Stir until smooth and let it cool a bit before frosting brownies.

*Luke Meisenheimer, Bridgewater*

## CHOCOLATE REVEL BARS

1 c. margarine	2 1/2 c. flour
2 c. brown sugar	1 tsp. baking soda
2 eggs	1 tsp. salt
2 tsp. vanilla	2 1/2 c. quick oats

### Filling:

1 12 oz. pkg chocolate chips
1 15 oz. sweetened condensed milk
2 T. margarine
1/2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. vanilla
1 c. chopped nuts (optional)

Cream together margarine, brown sugar and eggs until fluffy. Add flour, baking soda, and salt; then stir in oats. Pour 2/3 of mixture into greased jellyroll pan.

To make filling, melt chocolate chips, margarine, milk, and salt in saucepan. Stir in vanilla and nuts. Spread over batter. Dot the remaining 1/3 batter over the filling. Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown.

*Janette Case, Creston*

## CALL FOR RECIPES

Each month, Farmers Electric invites readers and members to submit their favorite recipe for publication in this newsletter and a chance to get \$5 off their next electric bill.

To enter, mail your recipe 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).

**MARCH: All About Brunch**

**APRIL: Pasta**

## ABOUT US



Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc., is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative, governed by an elected Board of Directors. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President  
Dan Westphal

Secretary  
Kevin Tanner

Vice President  
Mark Earhart

Treasurer  
RoxAnn Rhoads

Cary Gilman	Janelle Peiffer
Kris Petter	Kevin Stender
Joe Taylor	

CEO: Holi Weston