

# FARMERS Open Lines

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Winter weather can cause your home heating system to work overtime. Check for air leaks and drafts around doors and windows, then seal them with weatherstripping or caulk.



Close fireplace dampers when not in use, and consider installing insulating curtains to help keep warm air inside. You can also save energy by lowering your thermostat a few degrees. Even small adjustments like these can reduce heating costs and improve comfort during the coldest months.

## COMSTOCK GRADUATES FROM STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Please join us in congratulating Billing Clerk/ Member Service Mindy Comstock on her graduation from the Cooperative Leadership in Iowa Program (CLIP) in December!

CLIP is a year-long program of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) that provides leadership knowledge and skills for electric cooperative leaders and emerging leaders in all roles. Mindy was recognized for her achievement during the IAEC Annual Meeting Dec. 4 in West Des Moines.

"Completing CLIP is a true reflection of Mindy's dedication to growing, learning and leading in everything she does for our cooperative," said CEO Holi Weston. "We're grateful for her hard work, positive spirit, and the care she brings to her role every day. We look forward to all the great things she'll continue to accomplish!"



Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) President Jim Miller, left, and IAEC Executive Vice President & General Manager Leslie Kaufman, right, present Mindy Comstock with her CLIP graduation award during the IAEC Annual Meeting.

"CLIP transformed how I see myself and my impact on co-op operations," Mindy said. "It has helped me understand the value of approaching situations by being open, creating positive change and demonstrating a vision and focus that others appreciate."



ATTENTION HS JUNIORS!  
See pg. 2 for information on  
applying for the 2026 Electric  
Cooperative Youth Tour!

# 2026 YOUTH TOUR OPPORTUNITY

Area high school juniors are invited to apply for an opportunity 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. This isn't just a trip; it's a chance for students to step into history, discover their voice and begin shaping the legacy they'll leave behind.

The selected student 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. Together, they'll explore historic monuments and museums, meet with elected officials, and, most importantly, develop leadership skills, strengthen their resumes and form lasting connections with other young leaders from across America.

The selected student will be asked to speak about their experience at the Farmers Electric Annual Meeting in September. Application dates and details can be found at [www.farmersrec.com](http://www.farmersrec.com). If you have any questions, please contact Holi Weston at [\(hweston@farmersrec.com\)](mailto:hweston@farmersrec.com) or (800) 397-4821.



## IMPORTANT DATES

Friday, Feb. 27: Youth Tour application deadline

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

Tuesday, Sept. 15: Farmers Electric Annual Meeting

## ANNUAL REQUIRED STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff, offices, 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.

Program information may be made available in language other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form, AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at <https://www.usda.gov/forms/electronic-forms>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The

letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of the alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



## AVOID FALLING ON ICE BY WALKING LIKE A PENGUIN

Sidewalks and driveways can be particularly prone to melting and re-freezing snow and ice, and that can cause you to slip and fall if you're not careful. There are several things you can do to reduce the risk of falling when slippery conditions exist:

- Wear boots with grip soles. Traction cleats that fit over your shoes are an easy way to walk with confidence on slippery surfaces.
- When getting out of your vehicle, look down at the surface. If it's coated with ice you might want to park in a different place.
- Step, don't jump, from vehicles and equipment.
- Take short shuffling steps in very icy areas.
- Don't carry or swing heavy loads, such as large boxes, cases or purses that may cause you to lose your balance when you are walking.
- When walking, curl your toes under and walk as flat-footed as possible. Take short, shuffling steps, also known as the "penguin" walk.
- Place your full attention on walking. Digging in your pocketbook or backpack while walking on ice is dangerous.

## WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN LOWER OUR ENERGY DEMAND

Brrr...!! That's what most of us say when the temperatures drop and we seek a warm refuge inside our homes this time of year. Shorter, colder days drive us inside where we rely on our heating systems, lights and everyday appliances to run our homes. Often, many of us are using power around the same time – early mornings and early evenings – putting a strain on our aging electric grid.

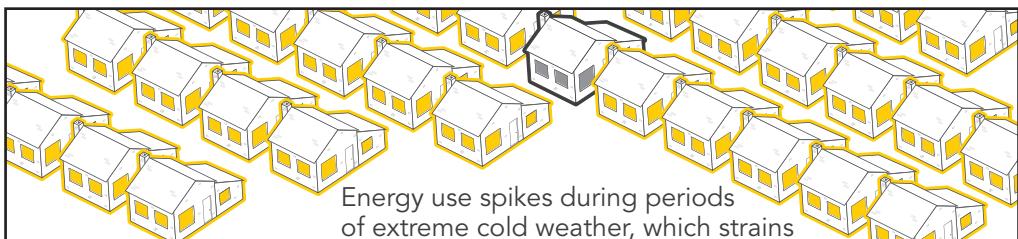
Farmers Electric Cooperative works closely with Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), our wholesale power provider, to plan ahead for these seasonal changes. Together, we take a thoughtful, long-range approach to make sure your power is reliable. These efforts include resource planning, power supply forecasting, and system maintenance that help keep energy flowing even during Iowa's toughest weather. But it's also important to remember that we're part of a much larger regional and national grid.

When homes and businesses everywhere are using electricity at

once, total demand can sometimes push close to—or on rare occasions beyond—available supply. In the uncommon event that demand threatens to exceed supply, the regional grid operator may call for temporary, controlled outages (often called rolling blackouts) to protect the stability of the system. When this happens, we call upon our largest load members to curtail power consumption.

To help prevent these situations, our co-op and CIPCO work year-round to safeguard grid reliability. We conduct routine maintenance, invest in modern equipment, and plan and prepare for emergencies to help strengthen our local system. But reliability is a shared responsibility, and our members play an important part, too.

When our entire community works together, small changes can truly make a difference. Thank you for helping our co-op keep our system reliable!



## POWER UNDER PRESSURE

Four Ways to Ease Grid Strain This Winter

Energy use spikes during periods of extreme cold weather, which strains the electric grid. When we work together to reduce energy use, we can make a big impact in supporting reliability. Here are four simple ways to help:

1. Lower your thermostat, even just a few degrees.
2. Run large appliances in the evenings or midday when demand is lower.
3. Lower your water heater to 120 degrees and avoid back-to-back showers.
4. Unplug unused devices and lighting.



HOLI WESTON  
CEO



[eatingwell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com)



[downshiftology.com](https://www.downshiftology.com)

## FRUIT & YOGURT SMOOTHIE

3/4 c. nonfat plain yogurt

1/2 c. 100% pure fruit juice

1 1/2 c. frozen fruit such as blueberries, raspberries, pineapple or peaches

Puree yogurt with juice in blender until smooth. With motor running, add fruit through the hole in the lid and continue to puree until smooth.

Calories: 279; Fat: 2g; Carbs: 56g;

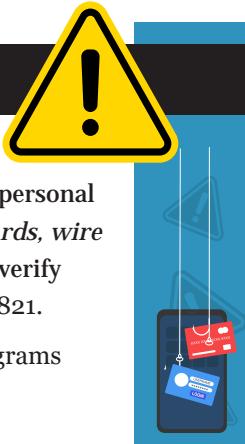
Protein\*: 12g.

\*For a bigger protein boost, use Greek-style yogurt. Protein from the yogurt added to the fiber from the fruit will help keep you full and satisfied. To keep your smoothie perfectly chilled, be sure to chill your fruit juice, too. Freeze some in ice cube trays so you can just pop it out when you're ready to make your smoothie.

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Scammers often exploit high winter bills by offering fake discounts to unsuspecting consumers. They may ask for upfront payments or personal details to lower your rate. *Legitimate utilities never demand gift cards, wire transfers or payment through apps like PayPal or Venmo.* Always verify offers by calling Farmers Electric Cooperative directly, (800) 397-4821.

Remember to take time to confirm before you pay; real savings programs won't pressure you for immediate action.



## 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).

**FEBRUARY: In Love with Chocolate**

**MARCH: All About Brunch**

## 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