

# FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026



**THE FARMERS ELECTRIC OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FRIDAY, APRIL 3**

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring.



## CAREER FAIR

Farmers Electric Cooperative CEO Holi Weston and Lineman Mason Wisse attended the Winterset High School Career, College and Job Fair Feb. 11.

They talked to students about job and on-the-job training opportunities as well as the scholarship and Youth Tour programs Farmers Electric offers to students.

To get a "virtual" feel for what it's like to be a lineman, students could try on a pair of virtual reality goggles and step into the boots of a lineman climbing a pole or clearing vegetation around power lines.

To help build awareness of career opportunities in the energy industry, Farmers Electric participates in local job fairs to inspire students to pursue skilled trades or technical careers as well as attract local talent.



## NEW JOURNEYMEN

Michael Auten and Sam Dolan are the newest journeymen linemen on the co-op staff after finishing their apprenticeship programs.

The lineman apprenticeship program requires roughly 8,000 hours of paid on-the-job training and classroom instruction. Michael and Sam then passed a state exam to achieve the journeyman certification.

Both Michael and Sam are 2022 graduates of the Northwest Iowa Community College Powerline program, and began working for the cooperative as apprentices in the summer of 2022.

Congratulations, Sam and Michael on your accomplishment!

*Pictured above are Michael Auten, left, and Sam Dolan, right, being presented their Journeyman certificates by Director of Operations Dave Shike.*

# YOUTH TOUR PARTICIPANT RECOUNTS EXPERIENCE

In June 2025, Winterset High School senior Brooke Davis was among the hundreds of students represented by their local REC to attend the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Brooke, whose parents are members of Farmers Electric Cooperative, was selected from a pool of applicants to attend the weeklong all-expenses-paid trip.

In her own words, Brooke recounted her experience, saying:

“Visiting Washington, D.C., was an absolutely amazing experience and one I will never forget. Getting to see so many different sites was something really special, and it made the trip feel even more meaningful. Every day brought something new, and it was exciting to experience places I had never visited or knew much about before.

“At first, I was nervous about being around people I had never met, but that feeling didn’t last long. By the end

of the trip, I had made a few lifelong friends from different schools, and I still talk to them to this day. It’s crazy how quickly we all connected, and those friendships ended up being one of the best parts of the trip.

“Some of my favorite moments were visiting

the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,

where I was one of four people chosen to lay the wreath, and attending the sunset parade. Even though the week was packed with activities, it never felt overwhelming. The coordinators gave us a lot of freedom with our schedules as long as a few of us stayed together, which made everything feel more enjoyable.

“Throughout the trip, we also got to trade state pins and corn necklaces with

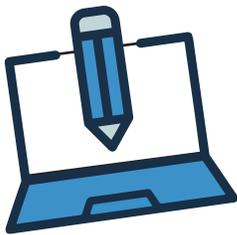


*Brooke Davis, left, is pictured with fellow YT participant Miah Burgher who represented Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative.*

students from other states. I ended up collecting around 40 of them, which gave me even more chances to socialize and meet new people beyond just those from cooperatives in Iowa. I took so many pictures during the trip, and I still look back at them wishing I could experience it all over again.”

Farmers Electric accepts Youth Tour applications every spring. Watch for the next opportunity in 2027!

## QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS?



The Iowa Utilities Commission requires all non-rate regulated utilities to post the following notice to its membership. If a member has a problem with his/her service, please call (800) 397-4821 or write:

Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
P.O. Box 330  
Greenfield, IA 50849

If your complaint is related to service disconnection, safety or engineering standards, or renewable energy and Farmers Electric does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Commission by calling (515) 725-7321, or toll-free (877) 565-4450; sending an email to [customer@iuc.iowa.gov](mailto:customer@iuc.iowa.gov) or by writing to:

1375 E. Court, Room 69  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0069



**Scholarship deadline  
April 1!**

**Apply today at  
[farmersrec.com](http://farmersrec.com)**

# OSMOSE BEGINS POLE INSPECTIONS MARCH 1

Farmers Electric Cooperative has contracted with Osmose Utilities Services to conduct pole inspections across our service territory. Please keep an eye out and give them plenty of room as they work along roadways.

Each year your cooperative performs this critical function in order to identify poles in need of replacement sooner rather than later.

Specifically, Osmose will use equipment to determine the degree of wood decay and damage to each pole. If a pole has been affected by wood-destroying fungi or insects, Osmose will treat the wood to provide an effective defense against any further pest damage to get the longest life possible out of the pole.

We appreciate our members' patience as we continue this work again this year. Our goal with this program is to provide you with the best and most reliable service possible.

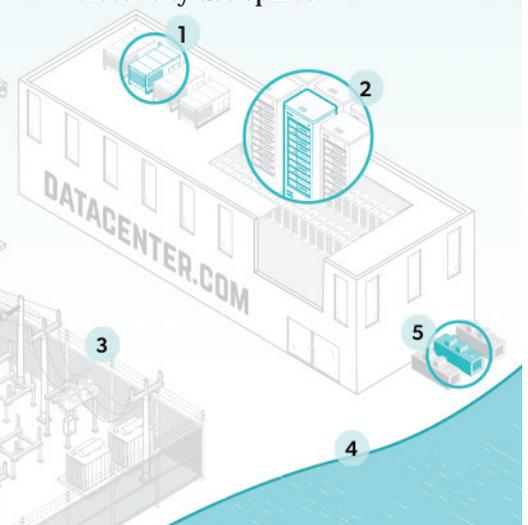


Photo: Osmose Utilities Services, Inc.

## BIG DATA, BIGGER DEMANDS

Many companies are choosing rural areas for their data centers because of cheaper land, available power and potential tax breaks. Data centers require huge amounts of electricity to operate, which presents new opportunities and challenges for electric co-ops.

- 1 HVAC: Constant cooling is needed to ensure the servers function properly.
- 2 Servers: Servers run applications and process data 24/7. One server rack can consume enough electricity to power a small home. A large data center can house thousands of server racks.
- 3 Infrastructure: Data centers often require new electrical infrastructure to meet their power needs.
- 4 Water Source: Many large data centers are deploying evaporative cooling, which is more efficient than compressor-based systems.
- 5 Backup Power: On-site generators keep data centers running during power outages and can also be used to help lower demand when electricity use spikes.



## 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.



simplyscratch.com

## TATER TOT BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

- 10 oz. cooked sausage crumbles
- 1 lb. bacon, fried and crumbled
- 1 (32 oz.) package frozen tater tots
- 12 large eggs
- 1/2 c. milk
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1 c. shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 2 c. shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- Green onions, optional

Preheat oven to 350. Arrange frozen tater tots in a single layer in a greased 9x13 dish. In a mixing bowl, whisk eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Stir in sausage and half the cooked bacon crumbles. Stir in 1 cup of the Monterey Jack Cheese and 1 cup of cheddar cheese and mix well. Pour over tater tots. Sprinkle with additional tots and bake for 40-45 minutes. Take out of oven and top with remaining cheese and bake an additional 5-7 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before cutting and top with remaining bacon and green onions, if desired. Serve warm.

*Tonia McCoid, Winterset*



slurrp.com

## PANCAKE PIZZA

- 3 c. pancake batter
- 6 c. sausage gravy
- 12 eggs scrambled
- 1 c. cheese
- 1 lb. bacon (fried and crumbled)

Mix pancake batter, put into greased 9x13 pan and bake at 350 for 15 minutes or until done. Layer with scrambled eggs, cheese, and sausage gravy. Put bacon on top. Serve warm with syrup.

*Kerry Packnett, Afton*

### TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Scammers and cyber criminals look for weak points to exploit before software companies can fix them. Update software programs on your computer, tablet and mobile phone as soon as possible when a newer version becomes available. Software updates often contain critical patches and protections against security threats.



## 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).

**APRIL: Pasta**

**MAY: Beef Month**

## 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  
Kris Petter  
Joe Taylor

Janelle Peiffer  
Kevin Stender

CEO: Holi Weston

Win a chance to have \$5 taken off your next utility bill!  
Submit a pasta recipe by March 15 for the April issue.