



LIVE LINES

Woodbury County Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

January 2023

Protecting America's Abundant Supply of Reliable, Affordable Electric Power

By Congressman Randy Feenstra, representing Iowa's 4th congressional district, and Chuck Soderberg, executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

In today's world, electricity is essential. American families rely on electricity daily to heat and cool their homes, wash their clothes, cook their meals, charge their phones, turn on the lights and connect to the world. And while it might seem like magic, electricity is not generated out of thin air. We expect the lights to turn on when we flip a switch and our phones to charge when we plug them into an outlet. Our energy policies must reflect these expectations and ensure that our families, businesses and communities have access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Over the last few years, green-energy absolutists and federal policymakers have prioritized an untenable, unrealistic and costly energy agenda over commonsense policies to power our country and provide American families with reliable, affordable energy. This detrimental agenda for American-made energy at the highest levels of government has caused gas increases and volatile electricity costs. Even worse, these policies have the potential to be particularly catastrophic for our rural communities, farm families and main street businesses.

As opposed to states like California, whose one-size-fits-all energy policies impose production restrictions that lead to blackouts and high costs, Iowa is home to 48 locally owned, community focused electric cooperatives that prioritize reliability and affordability for the more than 650,000 Iowans and 210,000 businesses, homes, and farms that they serve. Thanks to local governance and diversified power generation sources, the average co-op member household in Iowa pays about \$5 a day for electricity and Iowa electric cooperatives have returned more than \$300 million to their member-owners in the form of retired capital credits. These low costs and attractive returns are only possible due to a commonsense management approach that empowers electric cooperatives to invest in the most productive and cost-effective power sources for their member-consumers. We urge national policymakers to do the same.

To support a robust cooperative ecosystem and expand abundant supplies of affordable electricity, lawmakers must prioritize economic and energy certainty for electric cooperatives by advancing an all-of-the-above American energy strategy that prioritizes permitting reform and provides low-interest capital for community development projects.

First, reliable and affordable electricity generation requires source flexibility and policy malleability. In other words, Congress should embrace an all-of-the-above energy agenda that ensures that Iowans can access affordable electricity when and where they need it, while simultaneously investing in renewable energy sources that are abundant in Iowa like wind power. To date, Iowa electric co-ops have invested in 33 wind farms, over a dozen utility-scale and community based solar projects, 4 landfill gas projects, 5 methane digesters and multiple hydroelectric stations to complement more traditional power sources like natural gas and coal. Some co-ops are also looking at small-scale nuclear technology as another dispatchable power generation option. Additionally, Iowa electric co-ops have interconnected roughly 2,200 member-owned generation installations as a demonstration of support for an all-inclusive generation mix, even from non-utility locations. By allowing local cooperatives to determine the best, most comprehensive energy strategy for their consumers, our families, farms and businesses benefit from lower costs, energy security and vital investments in our rural communities.

The Recipe Corner

Loaded Baked Potato Casserole

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon dry ranch seasoning
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 5 medium potatoes
- 2 chicken breasts
- 1 onion
- 2 cups shredded cheese
- 1 cup bacon

In a small mixing bowl combine olive oil, dry ranch seasoning, black pepper and paprika. Wisk and set aside. In a large mixing bowl combine potatoes cubed, chicken breast cut into bite size pieces, diced onion, and olive oil mixture. Mix together and pour into a greased 9x13 casserole dish. Bake uncovered at 400 degrees for 45minutes. When done sprinkle with 2 cups of shredded cheddar cheese and 1 cup of diced cooked bacon. Garnish with sliced scallions and sour cream.

2023 Energy Efficiency Rebates

Description	New Rebate	Replacement Rebates	Maximum Limits
Geothermal Heat Pump	\$1,400/Ton	\$750/Ton	≤30% Cost/Unit Installed No more than \$ 10k/Home
Air-to-Air Heat Pump			
If no back-up heat or propane or natural gas	\$500/Ton	\$500/Ton	<30% Cost/Unit Installed
If back-up heat is electric	\$700/Ton	\$700/Ton	≤30% Cost/Unit Installed No more than \$10k/Home
Ductless Mini-Split Heat Pump			
Any type of Ductless Mini Split Heat pump Must be Energy Star Certified			
If no back-up heat or propane or natural gas	\$600/Unit	\$300/Unit	≤50% Equip Cost
If back-up heat is electric	\$1000/Unit	\$500/Unit	≤50% Equip Cost
Central Air Conditioner			
Must be Energy Star Certified Load Control Switch Required	\$100/Unit	\$0/Unit	Must be connected to a load control switch
Controlled Water Heaters			
Energy Factor ≥90%			
50 Gallons	\$300/Unit	\$300/Unit	Lump Sum of 30% of cost, apply lessor of two
>50 Gallons ≤75 Gallons	\$350/Unit	\$350/Unit	Must be for hot water use only (not space heating).
>75 Gallons ≤85 Gallons	\$400/Unit	\$400/Unit	Storage-only units with no operating electric elements do not qualify for this rebate.
>85 Gallons=105+ Gallons Load Control Switch Required	\$500/Unit	\$500/Unit	
Building Insulation			
Primary Electric Heat Must be professionally installed: Blown-in, Spray Foam, Insulating Concrete Forms, Rigid Styrofoam Panels and /or Structural Panels	30% of Cost	\$0/kW	\$ 800/Bldg/Yr
Electric Appliances			
Energy Star Certified			
Clothes Washer	\$50/Unit	\$0/Unit	
Refrigerator	\$25/Unit	\$0/Unit	\$250/Yr/Customer
Freezer	\$25/Unit	\$0/Unit	
Dishwasher	\$25/Unit	\$0/Unit	
Dryer	\$25/Unit	\$0/Unit	

\$2,500 In College Scholarships To Be Awarded

Basin Electric Power Cooperative of Bismarck, North Dakota, and Woodbury County REC in Merville, jointly announce a Scholarship program for 2023. Basin Electric will award one - \$1,000 scholarship and Woodbury County REC will award three - \$500 scholarships.

Who Is Eligible To Receive The Scholarships?

1. The applicant must be a student who is enrolled, or planning to enroll, in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited college, university or vocational/technical school in the fall of 2023.
2. Either the applicant, or the applicant's parents or guardian, must be a member of Woodbury County REC, reside on REC lines and currently receiving electric service. Children of members of the REC Board of Directors or children of Woodbury County REC employees are not eligible.
3. The applicant must be a United States citizen.
4. Past Basin Electric and Woodbury County REC scholarship winners are not eligible.

How To Apply?

Call the REC office at (800)469-3125 or 873-3125 and request an application and complete rules to be mailed to you.

Application is also available at www.woodbuyrec.com. Scholarship applications may also be picked up at the Woodbury County REC office in Merville. The completed application, and all required information, must be returned to the Woodbury County REC office on or before February 8, 2023.



How Are The Scholarship Recipients Selected?

All applications will be reviewed by a panel of judges to determine the winner. Scholarships will be awarded based on academic excellence, community service and the applicant's educational and career goals.

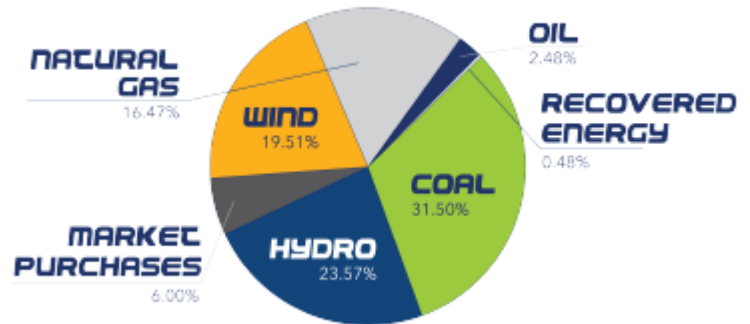
Continued Momentum Moving into 2023

By Kent Amundson

The new year brings a special opportunity to reflect on what “was” while setting our vision for what “can be” in the year ahead. For Woodbury County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), 2022 was a year committed to ensuring safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible power while living out our co-op values in the communities we serve.

While we’re proud of the positive strides we’ve made, we realize it would not be possible without the support and participation of you, our members. Here are a few of the major projects and initiatives Woodbury County REC moved forward last year.

2021 GENERATION PORTFOLIO



- **Positioned for reliability and growth.** Our operations team changed out about three times as many poles as usual to ensure our infrastructure is up-to-date and poised for reliability. We also added an industrial circuit to the Southbridge substation, which will serve a new commercial load brought on by the new Cold-Link Logistics storage facility.
- **Margin Refund.** In early January 2022, our board of directors approved a current-year margin refund or credit of \$766,000 back to our member-consumers. This resulted from lower-than-expected wholesale power costs from our power provider, Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO), mid-year budgeting and rate setting, as well as the strong financial position of the cooperative. Unlike other utilities, not-for-profit electric cooperatives return excess margins to their members – not stockholders. We’re proud these funds stay in the communities we serve, contributing to the quality of life of our members now and into the future.
- **Growth in renewable generation.** We also saw increased interest in renewable energy sources. Our power supplier, NIPCO, grew its share of renewable power generation to 43.56% in 2021 – with the majority generated from hydropower and wind turbines. The share of coal in our energy mix continues to decline as alternative sources become more available and affordable.
- **Investing in our communities.** Woodbury County REC was awarded United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant (REDLG) program funds for two projects in 2022. One included a \$1.5million loan and \$300,000 grant to help fund the construction of the new Merville Area Medical Clinic, and the second included a \$300,000 grant to replenish an existing revolving loan fund to help support the construction of a new city hall building in Lawton. These two community and economic development projects are examples of how our co-op is committed to the development of Woodbury County and empowering the people who live here.

Envisioning a bright 2023

Our co-op staff and board of directors are excited to continue this momentum to deliver for our members in the year ahead. Even with the ongoing economic pressures of rising costs and supply chain disruptions, I am pleased to share that Woodbury County REC is one of the few utilities that will not be increasing rates in 2023. Do note, our new “Industrial Rate” will follow our wholesale rates, which change annually.

You can depend on your co-op to continue operating in your best interest and the best interests of the communities we serve. We are steadfast in our purpose and look forward to providing you with safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible power in 2023.

Kent Amundson is the general manager/CEO of Woodbury County REC.

Second, Congress needs to prioritize federal regulatory and permitting reform. While a great deal of buzz was generated during the end of September over this issue, we are confident that a serious debate is needed over how the federal government can facilitate the development of critical energy and transmission projects. As firm believers in local control, we believe the value of energy infrastructure is best determined by those who will benefit from a particular project. Allowing utilities and the people they serve to have a voice in where a transmission line might be located and who might pay for it is important. The federal government isn't always in the best position to tell the American people what is in their best interests locally.

Finally, we need to protect and strengthen the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program, which powers economic and community development and keeps families and good-paying jobs in rural Iowa. This program provides zero-interest loans of up to one million dollars to local utilities and cooperatives, which are then tasked with passing this funding along to small businesses and community organizations to support initiatives that create jobs, enhance economic opportunity, revitalize main streets and aid small businesses in rural America. Ensuring that our rural communities have access to the capital and credit they need to strengthen long-term economic vitality and attract new residents and businesses to populate small, vibrant towns must be a top priority of the 118th Congress and the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization.

Electric cooperatives play a crucial role in delivering safe, affordable and reliable electricity to hundreds of thousands of Iowans and tens of millions of Americans. In both the long and short term, the largest threat to our nation's energy producers and electricity distributors remains federal overreach and unrealistic mandates. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Congress to eliminate red tape that hinders their ability to power our businesses, homes, hospitals and farms and to instead provide them with the flexibility to streamline baseload power generation and diversify their power sources. Our laws must allow electric cooperatives to do what they do best: power our local economies and provide our thriving communities with reliable, affordable electric power that we all rely on every day.

Use a Space Heater With Care

- Purchase only space heaters that have been safety tested and UL approved. Make sure the unit has an emergency tip-over shut-off feature and heating element guards. Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care.
- Before using a space heater, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working condition.
- Make sure the heater is clean and in good condition.
- Space heaters have one purpose to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food, or dry clothing or towels.
- Never allow pets or children near an electric heater. Accidental contact could cause serious shock or burns.
- Do not overload circuits. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater and make sure not to plug the unit into the same circuit as other electric appliances.
- If your space heater is plugged into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and it trips, don't assume there is something wrong with the GFCI. Immediately stop using the heater until a professional can check it if not, a serious shock could occur.
- Never leave space heaters unattended. Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Replace older space heaters with newer, safer models.



Many people also use electric blankets to keep warm during cold winter nights. Before plugging in electric blankets, check for any damage and inspect cord for frays, cracks, or cuts. Do not tuck electric blankets under the mattress and place nothing on top of the blanket while it's in use, including comforters and bedspreads. Don't allow pets to sleep on the electric blanket.