



LIVE LINES

Woodbury County Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

September 2026

Iowa Coop Members Experience Energy Trail Tour

More than 120 electric cooperative member-owners from western and north-central Iowa participated in this year's Energy Trail Tour, a three-day educational experience exploring how electricity is generated and delivered. The 2026 tours, departing from NIPCO's headquarters in Le Mars in late June and July, took participants through the Dakotas to visit key facilities operated by Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). 2026 marks the 37th anniversary of the Energy Trail Tour as a three-day experience offered to members of the NIPCO and Corn Belt Power Cooperative systems.

Along the route, members explored a diverse energy mix, from hydroelectric generation at Big Bend Dam in Fort Thompson, South Dakota, to coal-based generation at Antelope Valley Station and lignite coal production at the Freedom Mine near Beulah, North Dakota. They also learned about wind energy and the production of synthetic natural gas and valuable byproducts at the Great Plains Synfuels Plant in Beulah.

Beyond the technical learning, the tour reinforced the cooperative difference highlighting the history, principles, and community focus that set electric cooperatives apart from other utilities.

Participants also enjoyed educational and entertaining stops that showcased non-energy points of interest throughout the Dakotas.



Dani Sue and David Peterson

Sponsored by Iowa generation and transmission power cooperatives Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative, the Energy Trail Tour connects members with the people, resources, and partnerships that power their homes, farms, businesses, and communities, offering a firsthand look at what it takes to keep the lights on.

NIPCO (Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative) purchases approximately 80% of its power supply from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and 20% from Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), which markets power generated from the Missouri River Dam System.



Leslie and Terry Riediger



Connie and Dave Aasen



Bruce Thompson

The Recipe Corner

The Recipe Corner

Chicken Enchiladas

- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ cup chopped green onions
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 4-oz. can diced green chilies, drained
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 ½ cups cooked chicken, Cubed
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 6 12-inch flour tortillas
- ¼ cup milk

Melt butter and sauté onions. Add garlic powder, chilies, soup and sour cream. Mix well. Reserve ¾ of this sauce. Add chicken and ½ cup of cheese to remaining ¼ of the sauce and stir well. Fill each tortilla with 2 tablespoons of the chicken mixture. Roll up. Place seam-side-down in baking dish. Combine reserved ¾ of the sauce with the milk, and spoon over the tortillas. Top with remaining ½ cup of cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes (until bubbly).

Before Your Water Heater Fails Do Research

Most people don't think much about water heaters. It's easy to take hot showers, clean dishes and freshly laundered linens for granted. The lonely water heater tucked away in the basement, or a utility closet is out of sight and out of mind. But it's equally important to be confident that your water heater will keep the water hot until you need it.

The life expectancy of an average water heater is 10-15 years for electric and 8-12 years for gas. Prepare now so you know your options. The coop sells 50, 85 and 105 gallon electric Marathon water heaters.

Whether you need a water heater for a new construction or to replace an electric or gas model, call Woodbury County REC for details on the coops water heaters and Switch Makes Cents program (712-873-3125).



Help Prevent Copper Theft

Thieves sometimes think of it as a crime that won't hurt anybody. The truth is that tampering with electrical equipment or attempting to steal copper can harm many people. Those who steal copper (or power) are not only risking their own lives but also the safety and well-being of others. Common targets for copper theft include farm equipment, air conditioners, vacant buildings, construction sites and electric utility properties, including substations and power poles.

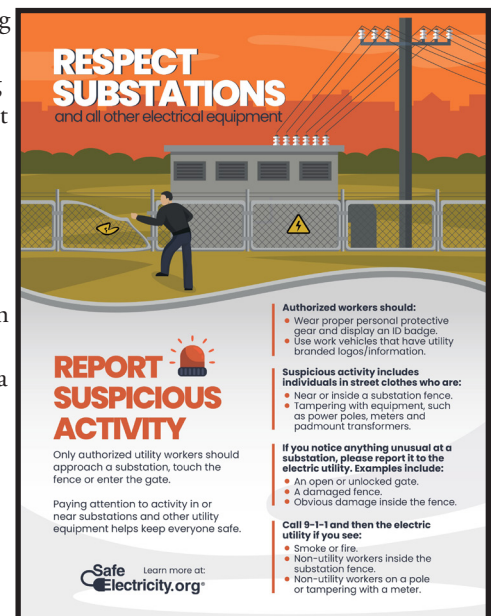
How homeowners can help

- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, hanging wire and so on, contact your electric utility immediately.
- For empty homes, install lighting systems that operate using a timer to make the property a less likely target. For all homes, install motion-sensor lights on the outside of the house to deter possible thieves.
- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while away.

How businesses can help

- Report suspicious activity.
- Eliminate or secure all external access to buildings and roofs.
- Remove items that allow for easy access to buildings, such as ladders, scaffolds, trees, dumpsters and accumulated materials, such as pallet piles.
- Install security cameras and alarm systems. The location and the type of object will determine what kind of surveillance is needed. For example, for heating and cooling units, there are alarms that are triggered if the unit stops working.
- In areas that contain valuable objects such as air conditioners, install fences and lighting fixtures around them. The amount of copper in most commercial air conditioners is never worth a great amount, but the real cost is paid by the owner of the unit.
- Most copper theft takes place during nights or weekends. Hiring staff or security personnel to monitor your facility during these periods can greatly reduce the chances of a serious loss.

Copper theft can affect more than the person stealing; in fact, it can cost a life. Detecting and reporting illegal activity could help save a life.



Storm Safety Tips: Prepare and Stay Safe

It is easy to become complacent about the weather, but severe weather claims hundreds of lives each year.

From tornadoes and floods to lightning, high winds, extreme heat and cold, severe weather can cause destruction and power outages. Many people end up in dangerous situations because they think they can outrun or outsmart a storm, extreme temperatures or other hazardous conditions. Being prepared with supplies, a plan and safety knowledge can help protect you and your family.

Watch vs. warning

When severe weather is approaching, many people turn on the TV, check a weather app or go online for updates. It is important to know the difference between a watch and a warning.

A watch means conditions are favorable for severe weather, such as a severe thunderstorm or tornado. Stay alert, monitor conditions and take precautionary steps, such as unplugging electronics and checking your emergency kit.

A warning means severe weather is occurring, is imminent or is indicated by radar. Take shelter immediately in the safest part of the building, such as a basement or an interior room on the lowest floor, away from windows.

Follow these tips to stay safe

- Install a weather app and enable severe weather alerts.
- Remember that a warning means it is time to act.
- Have an evacuation plan for hazards such as floods or wildfires.
- Establish a family communication plan, including each person's responsibilities and a meeting place in case you are separated.
- Keep emergency kits stocked and up to date. Include a first-aid kit, portable phone charger, flashlights, batteries, food, water and enough supplies to last at least three days.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when using a generator.
- Use a generator only outdoors in an open area, never in a garage, carport or other enclosed space.
- Keep portable generators at least 20 feet from doors, windows and vents.

Know how to keep others safe

Storms can be unpredictable and can damage the power grid. Severe weather may also make utility equipment harder to access. During and after major weather events, line crews may be out restoring power and making repairs.

Everyone should do their part to help keep lineworkers and utility crews safe:

- Slow down and move over in work zones.
- Do not distract crews while they work.
- Direct service questions to your utility.
- Check your utility's social media channels or text alerts for outage updates, if available.
- Never plug a generator into a wall outlet. Doing so can cause backfeed, which sends electricity from your home back onto power lines.

Stay alert during cleanup

- If the power is out, stay indoors unless you must leave to remain safe.
- Be alert for downed power lines that may be hidden by ice, snow, standing water or storm debris.
- Never approach a downed power line. Call 911, then keep others away.
- Do not trim trees or branches within 10 feet of an overhead power line.

Power outages, downed lines and generator misuse can create serious risks during and after severe weather.

Webinar series offers local students opportunity to win college scholarship

Local Students could win college scholarships for attending webinar series on leadership and advocacy!

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Woodbury County REC has a long history of supporting students in the communities we serve through scholarships and leadership opportunities.

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, leadership and electric cooperatives with a two-part webinar series in October. The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is open to any high school student in our service area and they are invited to register at IowaYouthTour.com.

"This program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, advocacy or leadership," remarked Kent Amundson, Woodbury County REC CEO. "We want to raise students' awareness of how local electric co-ops power people's lives and empower communities. We also want to talk about exciting career paths that are available in smaller communities and help them advocate for issues they care about."

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their own computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- **Sunday, October 4, 7:00 p.m. - Why Cooperatives Matter and How to Effectively Advocate**
- **Sunday, October 18, 7:00 p.m. - Being a Leader**

At the end of each live session, one attendee will be selected at random to **win a \$500 scholarship**; students who attend both sessions will be entered into a bonus drawing for **a \$1,000 college scholarship**. All students who register online at IowaYouthTour.com receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our lineup of speakers and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a dynamic speaker.

Learn more at www.IowaYouthTour.com or contact helpdesk@woodburyrec.com or call 1.800.469.3125 for more information.

Make time for safety this harvest season

Safety starts with preparation.

- Be prepared for potential emergencies before the rush of harvest season begins.
- Have a safety plan, and make sure that farm workers and family members are aware of the procedures in it.
- Be sure that you can see well in the areas where you are working. Consider adding extra lighting around grain bins and augers.

Additional electrical safety tips include:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.



STUDENTS:
Are you interested in service, advocacy or leadership?

Attend our webinar series in October for a chance to win a college scholarship!

Learn more at IowaYouthTour.com



INCREASE YOUR SAFETY YIELD DURING HARVEST

Especially during the busy harvest season, help decrease the chances of an electrical-related incident:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never try to move or raise a power line for clearance; instead call us.

If your equipment does come in contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

For more information about electrical safety, including farming-related safety tips, visit:

Safe Electricity.org