





# LIVE LINES

## Woodbury County Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

### April 2023



## Energy Trail Tour 2023

Woodbury County REC and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative invite you to join us for one of three Energy Trail Tours being offered this summer. This 3-day adventure will allow you to view, first-hand, how your power providers convert energy from water, wind, and coal into electricity. View coal being mined and see how those mines are, then, returned to productive farm and native grass lands. Learn how the energy industry is evolving to become more dependent on renewable power generation and glimpse into the future of carbon capture technology. Enjoy the fellowship of other cooperative member-owners on a comfortable motor coach journey to North Dakota's Energy Loop. \$100 per couple covers your lodging, meals and entry fees. The remainder of your tour costs are covered by Woodbury County REC.

Four lucky couples from WCREC will be selected at random from those who sign up.



YES, please enter our names in the drawing for the trip. We understand that if our names are drawn, we will be billed \$100.

Our first and second choice of dates:

|            |     |     |     |                 |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|
| June 28-30 | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | (please circle) |
| July 12-14 | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |                 |
| July 26-28 | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |                 |

I/we  have  have not participated in this tour in the past.

First Person \_\_\_\_\_  
 Second Person \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Clip this coupon and return to cooperative by May 15, 2023.*

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



This planting season, include energy efficiency in your landscaping plans. Adding shade trees around your home can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 6 degrees. To block heat from the sun, plant deciduous trees around the south side of your home. Deciduous trees provide excellent shade during the summer and lose their leaves in the fall and winter months, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

*Source: energy.gov*



## Burning Ditches - Take Care Around Woodbury County REC'S Property

It's that time of year when many of you may be burning off the weeds, grass, etc. in your ditches. The burning helps clean things up but it can also cause problems if a fire is allowed to burn around Woodbury County REC's poles, anchors, guy wires, underground cabinets, etc.

Burning close to Woodbury REC's Property cannot only cause a lot of damage but it can also be dangerous and cause electric service problems. Any member involved may be invoiced for damage they cause to Woodbury REC's property. To avoid damage to Woodbury County REC's property, electric service problems, and danger to yourself and others PLEASE be careful where you burn and do not leave fires unattended!



# The Recipe Corner

## Black Bottom Banana Bars

½ cup butter, softened  
1 egg  
1-1/2 cups mashed ripe bananas  
(about 3 medium)  
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
¼ cup baking cocoa  
1 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Stir in the bananas. Combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; add to creamed mixture and mix well. Divide batter in half. Add cocoa to half; spread into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. baking pan. Spoon remaining batter on top and swirl with a knife. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until the toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Yield: 2 ½ to 3 dozen.

# Plan Ahead for a Safe Planting Season

Farming is perennially near the top of the list of the most dangerous jobs in the United States according to Bureau of Labor Statistics. One hazard faced by farm workers, while they are also feeling the pressure to get the crops in the ground, is electricity and the equipment that carries it to homes and businesses. However, with proper planning and education, risks of and accidents involving electricity can be greatly reduced.



- Keep a 10-foot minimum distance around power lines. That means 10 feet above, below, and to the side of power lines.
- Use a spotter when moving machinery around the farm. It can be difficult to judge how close a piece of machinery is from the driver's seat.
- Use caution when handling long items such as irrigation pipe, ladders, and rods. Coming too close to a power line can cause electricity to arc, or jump to conducting material or objects.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines.
- Avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators, or truck beds near power lines.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Remember, even non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust, and dirt contamination.

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## Nominating Members For Election To The Board of Directors

The following is the process involved in the nomination of R.E.C. members for election to the Board of Directors. Three Directors will be elected at the 85th Annual Meeting of Woodbury County Rural Electric Cooperative which will be held on August 23, 2023.

### Bylaws Article III, Section 3. Nominations

It shall be the duty of the Directors to appoint, not less than sixty (60) days nor more than one hundred fifty (150) days before the date of a meeting of the members at which directors are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of not less than five (5) nor more than eleven (11) members who shall be selected so as to give equitable representation on the committee to the geographical areas served or to be served by the Cooperative. No officer or member of the board of directors shall be appointed as a member of such committee. The committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least forty-five (45) days before the meeting a list of nominations for directors, but any fifteen (15) or more members may make other nominations in writing over their signatures not less than thirty (30) days prior to the meeting and the Secretary shall post the same at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted. A ballot marked "Ballot for Directors" containing the names of all the nominees posted, alphabetically arranged and stating the residence of each, shall be mailed with the notice of the meeting. The Secretary shall also mail with the notice of the meeting a statement of the number of directors to be elected and showing separately the nominations made by the committee on nominations and the nominations made by petition. Such statement of the Secretary shall also inform the members of the manner in which they may vote by mail for directors as provided in this Section. Any member may vote by mail for directors by marking the ballot opposite the names of the number of candidates equal to the number of directors to be elected and enclosing the ballot in a sealed envelope bearing the member's name and addressed to the Secretary. When such ballot so enclosed is received by mail from any member, it shall be accepted and counted as a vote for directors by ballot of such member at such meeting. A member may only vote once on each item to be voted upon, regardless of voting method selected. The provisions of this section shall not be mandatory in the case of recall of one or more directors as provided in section 8 of Article I of these bylaws. Individuals who hold a joint membership may vote by mail for directors by jointly marking and enclosing the ballot hereinabove provided for.

# Electric Coops Will Never Gamble on the Reliability of Affordability Of Your Power

By **Chuck Soderberg**, executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

In late February, the Des Moines Register's Editorial Board published a reckless column calling for MidAmerican Energy and other Iowa electric utilities to abandon coal, "even if doing so also means taking some gambles on brownouts and blackouts, price volatility and newer technology."

I'm here to tell you that Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives will never gamble on our responsibility to provide reliable and affordable service to member-consumers. Our mission to power lives and empower communities guides the decision-making of our elected co-op boards, not a newspaper's editorial board.

Electricity has become an essential service in our lives. Your electric cooperative is committed to providing power around the clock for your elderly neighbor on a fixed income to the local ethanol plant and every other member in between. Your community relies on electricity to power critical services and the local economy and we don't take that responsibility lightly.



We've talked before in the pages of this magazine about how the transition to a renewable energy economy will take decades. Last summer's generation shortfall warning from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) underscored the need for a diversified energy mix to ensure reliable electricity. And we all heard about the devastation that resulted from emergency blackouts during the February 2021 polar vortex crisis in Texas as demand for electricity greatly exceeded supply.

Your electric cooperative uses an "all of the above" generation strategy to ensure availability of power when you flip the light switch or turn the thermostat dial. Here are two realities we must work with in the electric industry today:

1. Many renewable energy sources like wind and solar are intermittent; they don't generate electricity when the sun doesn't shine or the wind doesn't blow. Other generation sources like coal, natural gas and nuclear are dispatchable which means we can turn them on and ramp up production when needed.
2. Generally speaking, electricity must be simultaneously generated as it is consumed. This requires supply to be in constant balance with electric demand and we must be able to dispatch more electric generation quickly when needed, usually on very hot or very cold days as people increase the use of air conditioners or electric heat. Battery technology has yet to be developed which can adequately store electricity from intermittent sources on a utility scale for a long range of time.

While we invest in battery technology advancements to make renewable sources more dispatchable for utility scale, Iowa's electric cooperatives continue to maintain a variety of generation sources to protect the reliability and affordability of your power. Electric co-ops are transitioning to more renewable sources of generation when it is feasible to do so.

And we will continue to advocate for an "all of the above" energy strategy with state and federal policymakers because we refuse to gamble reliability, affordability or the trust you place in us.

# Easy Behavior Changes to Save Energy

Q: I want to lower my energy use, but I don't know where to start. How can I find out how much energy I use? What are some ways I can save energy without spending a lot of money?

A: You can change your energy use by changing your behavior. When looking at electric bills, many people focus on the total dollar amount of the bill. When trying to manage your energy costs, I suggest changing your focus to energy use.

While you don't have control over the cost of the energy, you can control how much energy you use.

## Set Goals.

Instead of thinking about your bills in terms of dollars, think about them in terms of kilowatt-hours. A kilowatt-hour is the unit of energy used for most electric bills. Review your monthly kWh use to get an idea of how much you use every month.

Once you've reviewed your energy use, set goals for the next month. Try to use less energy than the month before, and check your results on your next bill.

## Know When to Use Less Energy.

Peak hours are typically in the morning as we prepare for work and in the evening when we get home and start preparing food and turning on entertainment devices. Doing laundry and running the dishwasher are easy activities to delay until after peak hours.

## Power "Off" for Energy Savings.

When looking for energy savings, remember that "off" is the most efficient setting. Turning off lights is a classic strategy, especially if your lighting is incandescent. Consider switching to energy-saving LED lightbulbs.

Computers and gaming systems can waste energy even when in sleep mode. The higher the wattage and the more hours the device is on, the more energy used. Laptops use the least energy, followed by personal computers at about 200 watts. Gaming consoles typically use less energy than gaming PCs. Don't forget to turn off the monitor as well.

You can lower your energy use even more with smart power strips, which cut power to devices that are not in use. Many electronics continue to draw power even when they are turned off. This could add 5% to 10% to your monthly bill, according to the Department of Energy. Installing smart power strips is an easy way to ensure devices are completely turned off and not drawing power.

## Adjust the Temp.

When it comes to lowering your energy use, the settings on your thermostat are another great place to check. Keep in mind, the weather affects your electric bill for heating and air conditioning.

The closer you can keep the indoor temperature to the outdoor temperature, the more you will save. You want to protect your home from damage in extreme heat and cold, but if you can turn the temperature down a few degrees in winter and up in summer, you will save on energy costs.

Ensuring your filters in your heating and cooling system are clean is an easy way to keep your system maintained and operating efficiently. Adding annual servicing by a professional maximizes the efficiency and can lengthen the life of your system.

Understanding your energy use and making small adjustments to your routine will help you reach your energy use goals.

