

## Why do Co-Ops Advertise?

Proactive communication is essential in any industry or business, and it's especially important for Southwest Iowa REC to communicate often with our members who own the co-op. In fact, the core principles of our cooperative business model include concern for community and keeping our members informed and educated. We use a variety of communication methods such as our monthly newsletter, radio announcements, social media posts, and our website. All serve as effective ways for us to quickly communicate important information with you regarding safety, energy efficiency, cooperative business and regulatory notices.

Here are a few other reasons we advertise:

### 1. Safety Awareness

As your electric cooperative, we have a duty to keep you safe from the dangers of electricity. Preventative safety messages are a top priority in our public communications efforts. For example, we remind farmers to watch out for electric lines and poles during planting and harvest seasons. We encourage members to call 8-1-1 before digging so underground utilities can be properly located. Throughout the year, we tell members to "look up and live" as they use ladders and tall equipment around the house, garage or farm.

### 2. Energy Efficiency

At Southwest Iowa REC, we're committed to helping our members use energy wisely. We provide multiple resources to help you find ways to reduce that electricity bill and become more energy efficient, but we need to promote those resources so you know about them. We communicate through various methods to let you know about rebates and incentives for energy efficient products.

### 3. Cooperative Business

As an owner of the electric cooperative, you need to know important information about the financial condition of the business and when to elect directors of the board. We publish an annual report which includes important information about the cooperative.

### 4. Regulatory Notices

We are required to communicate with our cooperative members regarding specific state and federal regulations. Communicating frequently with our members is an important business function that helps Southwest Iowa REC achieve our mission of powering lives and empowering communities.

## Creamy Chicken Taco Soup

### Ingredients

- 2 boneless skinless chicken breasts (or rotisserie chicken shredded)
- 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can corn
- ½ onion chopped
- 1 can Rotel Diced Tomatoes with Green Chilies
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons taco seasoning
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 8 oz cream cheese
- Shredded cheese to top (any kind will do)

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Place all the ingredients except for the cream cheese in a 6 quart crock pot.
- Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours or on high for 3-4 hours.
- Shred the chicken and stir it into the crock pot.
- Stir in the cream cheese, cover and cook on low for 1 hour or on high for 30 minutes to melt the cream cheese.
- Top with your favorite taco toppings and enjoy! Also great with Fritos!



Enjoy!

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

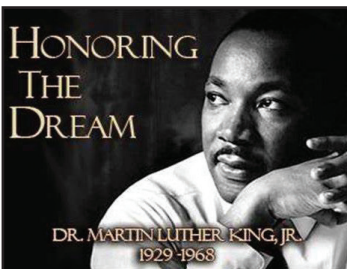
**Laundry Tip:** Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter clothing. You'll spend less time drying the lighter-weight items.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



### Did you know?

Electricity travels at the speed of light, more than 300,000km per second!



**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**  
January 15, 2024



**Corning**  
1801 Grove Ave., Corning, IA 50841

**Mount Ayr**  
1502 W. South St., Mount Ayr, IA 50854

**Stanton**  
415 Broad Ave., Stanton, IA 51573

**Phone Number: (888) 220-4869**

Southwest Iowa REC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Board of Directors**

Marilyn Werner, President  
Mark Herzberg, Vice President  
Kay Fast-Deyoe, Secretary  
Jason Smith, Treasurer

Alan Spencer  
Dana Morgan  
Bonnie Larson

Phil Kinser, CEO  
Deena Moore  
Terry Barnes  
Dale Walkup

# Southwest Lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

Corning | Mount Ayr | Stanton

January 2024

## EMPLOYEE UPDATES



### Congratulations Justin!



Congratulations to Justin Murphy for 20 years of service. Justin is the Director of Operations. Thank you for your years of service!

### Congratulations Phil!



Congratulations to Phil Kinser, Southwest Iowa REC General Manager/CEO, for 35 years of service. Thank you for your years of dedication.

### Scholarships Reminder

Southwest Iowa REC will once again be offering scholarships for the 2023-2024 school year to graduating high school seniors.



We will be awarding fourteen (14) \$500 scholarships. In addition, three (3) \$1,000 scholarships will be available for students planning to attend an Accredited Lineman School or electrical trade program.

Completed applications and a photo must be received at the REC Office by March 1, 2024 to be eligible.

Applications can be found on our website, [swiarec.coop/scholarships](http://swiarec.coop/scholarships)



## For Sale

2012 RAM 2500, 5.7 Hemi, 118,264 miles, 4X4, automatic, Cab Chassis, power windows & locks, integrated brake controller, receiver hitch, selling as is. Asking \$18,000 OBO. For more information or to schedule an appointment to look at the vehicle, please call 888-220-4869 and ask for Justin.



[WWW.SWIAREC.COOP](http://WWW.SWIAREC.COOP)



# Reliable Power for Today—and Tomorrow



Phil Kinser

**R**inging in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As the CEO & General Manager of Southwest Iowa REC, for me, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of the cooperative.

Our team at Southwest Iowa REC is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and utilize new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering—and empowering—our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

So how are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across our 11-county service area. You may not realize it, but Southwest Iowa REC doesn't generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our energy provider, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community.

**Our current energy resource mix is made up as follows: 39.2% wind, 26.9% coal, 18.9% interchange<sup>1</sup>, 7.0% solar, 3.0% hydro & landfill gas, 2.4% natural gas, and 2.6% other purchases.**

(<sup>1</sup>Interchange represents market purchases to meet additional supply needs not covered by existing contracts or CIPCO-produced generation).

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, Southwest Iowa REC is using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering technology, also known as

AMI, enables two-way communication between the co-op and consumers. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps Southwest Iowa REC save money with real-time data, and ultimately improves power reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall. Annual inspections of lines and vegetation have allowed us to pinpoint trouble areas and perform vegetation management which helps to reduce labor and equipment costs while bolstering reliability. As technology advancements become more accessible, we anticipate using our advanced mapping software to better maintain the environment while providing more reliable service.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric co-ops in Iowa and across the country. Learning from other co-ops is one of the many benefits of the cooperative business model because for us, it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, Southwest Iowa REC will continue working to provide the reliable, affordable electricity you expect and deserve—for today and tomorrow.



# Powerful Connections: Statewide association annual meeting celebrates 2023 achievements and prepares for new leadership

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), the trade association for Iowa's electric cooperatives, conducted its 2023 Annual Meeting at the Sheraton West Des Moines Conference Center on December 7 and 8 with more than 350 registered attendees. Board directors and employees from Iowa's locally owned electric co-ops received informative updates from statewide board and staff in addition to learning about industry trends and best practices from invited speakers. "Our theme of Powerful Connections explains one of the valuable services that a statewide association provides for its members," remarked Roger Solomonson of Heartland Power Cooperative, who completed his second and final year as IAEC board president. "For example, IAEC forms connections through lobbying efforts, our statewide magazine, social media, youth leaderships programs and training events for employees and directors of Iowa's electric cooperatives."

**Sarah Newton receiving the CLIP award. "Congratulations Sarah!"**



*Pictured left to right: Roger Solomonson, IAEC Board President; Sarah Newton, SWIAREC Director of Finance/ Administrative Services; Phil Kinser, SWIAREC General Manager/CEO; and Chuck Soderberg, IAEC Executive Vice President/ General Manager*

IAEC Executive Vice President and General Manager Chuck Soderberg covered several topics during his executive report including cybersecurity resources available to member co-ops and the importance of embracing an "all-of-the-above" power generation strategy to ensure reliability for member-consumers. This was Soderberg's final annual meeting report as he plans to retire from IAEC in July 2024.

During the business meeting portion of the annual meeting, two directors were elected to the IAEC Board: Jerry Keleher of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative was elected to serve a three-year term representing District 3 following Roger Solomonson's departure, and Gordon Greimann of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative was reelected to serve a three-year term representing District 6. The IAEC Board would like to thank outgoing director Roger Solomonson of Heartland Power Cooperative for his leadership and service to Iowa's electric cooperatives during his 8-year tenure. He was presented with a commemorative plaque during the business meeting in recognition of his exemplary service.

The IAEC Annual Meeting is also an opportunity for attendees to learn more about the electric industry and future trends that may impact rural Iowa's economy and quality of life. IAEC presented several educational sessions, including:

Author, podcaster and film producer Robert Bryce discussed the physical and barriers to a rapid transition from carbon-based energy sources. He provided a realistic forecast about how our electric grid will change in the coming decades.

**Following the annual meeting, the new slate of directors reorganized and announced the following officers:**

- IAEC Board President: Kenny VandenBerg, District 1 director from Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative
- IAEC Board Vice President: Jim Miller, District 5 director from Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association
- **IAEC Board Secretary/Treasurer: Deena Moore, District 4 director from Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative**
- IAEC Board Assistant Secretary/Treasurer: Tony Lem, District 2 director from Consumers Energy

Kavi Chalwa and Jeff Kappen from Bâton Global talked about disorder in geopolitics and how it will influence economic growth on various scales. They provided insights on how Iowa's electric cooperatives can best navigate these challenges for organizational success.

Dale Lambert, CEO of Randolph Electric Membership Corporation in North Carolina, presented a case study on how his co-op responded to a substation sabotage attack that left thousands of members without power.

Iowa's current Youth Leadership Council representative is Olivia Marti, sponsored by Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative. Olivia talked about the importance of the 7 Cooperative Principles.

National speaker Michelle Gielan talked about how effective, positive communication is the single biggest driver of success at work. With a background in psychology and TV broadcasting, she shared simple techniques for positive communication that deliver results.

Mark Tiemeier of the Midwest Reliability Organization informed attendees about how changes in electric generation mix and resources challenge grid operators. Mark is responsible for leading MRO's annual regional risk assessment.

Closing out the annual meeting, professional speaker and author Erick Rheam talked about how to rise above chaos and discover significance.

IAEC celebrated the first 15 graduates of its new Cooperative Leadership in Iowa Program (CLIP) for emerging leaders. Participants committed to a yearlong calendar of in-person, virtual and on-demand training sessions where they gained leadership skills and learned about various co-op roles. **Congratulations to Sarah Newton, Director of Finance & Administrative Services, from Southwest Iowa REC on completing this program.**

Co-op board directors who earned national education certifications during the year were also recognized at IAEC's 2023 Annual Meeting for their commitment to education and training. **Congratulations to Kay Fast-Deyoe, Board Secretary, from Southwest Iowa REC on earning her Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certification.**

As part of the Annual Meeting program, IAEC coordinated an auction of personally donated items which raised over \$16,000 for the Iowa Friends of Rural Electrification (Iowa FORE) political action committee. The funds will stay in Iowa to aid state legislators and candidates who support electric cooperatives.

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives is a trade association which represents the interests of locally owned electric cooperatives in the state, including 39 distribution co-ops and nine generation and transmission co-ops. Formed more than 80 years ago, IAEC provides many vital functions for its members including legislative representation, regulatory oversight, training and education services, safety programs, and communications support. View the 2023 annual report and learn more at [www.iowarec.org](http://www.iowarec.org).