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DECEMBER 2021

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Iowa companies
honored with
Venture Awards

Selecting a stove top
for your kitchen

Recipes for
Christmas morning

Win a Philips Soup Maker ▶ See Page 3

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Robyn Byl, a North West REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could win \$100!

COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIPS ARE ESSENTIAL TO OUR PROGRESS

BY STEVE SEIDL



This time of year, we're inclined to look back and reflect on highlights and achievements. This December holds special significance for me as I retire from the board of the Iowa

Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) after 15 years of service.

Commitment to collaboration

IAEC just held its annual meeting of members in early December and our theme was "Partners in Progress." I think it's a fitting theme for what Iowa's electric cooperatives aim to achieve on behalf of the member-consumers we serve every day. As the statewide association works hard to serve, support and advocate for its member cooperatives, much of our success is due to collaboration and working with key partners. Only through teamwork can we identify opportunities and provide the best strategic solutions for the members we serve.

For example, we joined forces with the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and the Iowa Credit Union League to develop an awareness campaign to celebrate National Co-op Month in October. By partnering together on this initiative, we developed communication resources to educate Iowans on the many benefits of cooperative membership and to share how cooperatives contribute to our state's economy. We look forward to building on this effort by sharing information at www.IowaCooperatives.com.

Supporting youth and recognizing volunteers

When the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour canceled its student trip to Washington, D.C., in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID

restrictions, we needed to rebuild momentum for the program when it returns in 2022. IAEC worked with our members to develop the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, which consisted of three virtual sessions in October for rural Iowa high school students. More than 130 students registered for the opportunity to learn more about the co-op business model, electric co-op careers and advocacy. We hope these students will apply for the 2022 Youth Tour trip to D.C.

And as you read in our summer issues of the magazine, the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa worked together to celebrate local community volunteers through our new Shine the Light contest. This statewide contest will return in June 2022; learn more at www.IowaShineTheLight.com.

As I step away from the IAEC board, I would like to recognize two other statewide directors who have retired recently. Don Shonka of East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative and

Darrell Jensen of Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc. have devoted many years of valuable guidance and direction to Iowa's electric cooperatives through their service on the IAEC board.

I also wish to extend my appreciation and thanks to current and past statewide directors who helped me with their input and guidance. Lastly, and most importantly, I need to recognize the IAEC staff for their dedication to Iowa's electric cooperatives. Without them, we would not be as successful as we are today, and I am gratefully indebted to them.

I encourage you to serve as a board director of your local electric cooperative if you have the opportunity; it's a great way to learn about the electric industry and to support your community. I wish you and your family a blessed Christmas season.

Steve Seidl is the retiring board president of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a Philips Soup Maker!

Take away winter's chill with whatever soup you crave! The Philips Soup Maker cooks to perfection in as fast as 18 minutes. Just add your ingredients and select one of five automatic programs, including smoothies and cream-based soups.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than Dec. 31, 2021. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the Instant Pot from the October issue was Kim Gansemer from Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"This bipartisan [infrastructure] bill provides a significant down payment toward meeting critical needs of electric cooperatives and the communities we serve, including funding for priorities such as broadband deployment and electric vehicle charging. This bill recognizes the need to expand these two technologies in rural communities. As policymakers plan for a future that depends on electricity to drive the economy, more work will be needed to build on the groundwork laid by this legislation.

- Jim Matheson, CEO, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, referring to federal legislation passed in November by the U.S. House and Senate. The bill was signed by President Biden on Nov. 15.

"SUNNY" HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

Although winter brings cold weather and often dreary days, add some sunshine to gift giving this holiday season with three solar-inspired presents. These gifts are sure to please all year long!



Solar-powered watch

A gadget to help you keep track of time is the solar-powered watch. A small solar cell underneath the dial converts solar energy into electrical energy, with excess energy stored in the rechargeable battery. As long as the watch receives a moderate amount of sunlight, the battery doesn't need to be replaced for up to 10 years, which is much more convenient than replacing the battery roughly every year for conventional watches. Solar-powered watches can cost anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000 depending on their design.



Solar-powered Bluetooth speakers

Many Bluetooth speakers can be recharged with a USB port and electrical outlet, but solar-powered speakers are easily recharged by sunlight. As long as the sun is shining, the speaker will never run out of power. Most solar-powered speakers include a backup battery that allows the speaker to run long after the sun goes down.

Solar learning kits for kids

DIY kits are available for kids to learn more about solar energy. These kits typically include a small solar panel, connecting wires and the end-use device which varies depending on the kit. From powering a small fan, to lighting a light bulb, these interactive kits provide an educational opportunity for kids to learn more about solar.



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PARTICIPATE IN YOUR CO-OP'S NEXT ANNUAL MEETING

Your co-op's annual meeting is a great time for you – and all members of your co-op community – to catch up and enjoy some good food and fellowship. This is also an occasion to discuss and learn more about the issues affecting your local communities.

Attendees can find out about programs offered by your co-op and get to know your co-op's staff members a little better. Annual meetings provide a forum for staff members to gather feedback and learn how they can better serve you and your family.



It's also an opportunity to exercise one of the greatest benefits of being a member of an electric co-op: voting for the upcoming year's board of directors. Your co-op's directors are members of your community and are

concerned with the issues you face every day because they face them too. Remember, all members of your co-op are eligible to run for the board – including you.

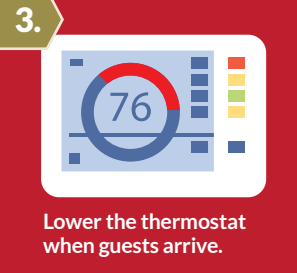
Your local electric cooperative remains dedicated to providing you with safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible electric service, and you can help your co-op deliver on that mission. Make it a point to participate in your co-op's next annual meeting. Contact your local electric cooperative for details.

12 DAYS OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY


This holiday season, add energy efficiency practices to your routine. Doing so will earn you a spot on Santa's "Nice List!"

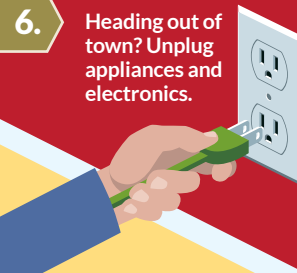
1.  Deck the halls with LED holiday lights.

2.  Use a timer to turn off holiday lights at night when you're sleeping.

3.  Lower the thermostat when guests arrive.

4.  Close the fireplace damper when a fire is not burning.

5.  Ask Santa for a smart or programmable thermostat to save energy.

6.  Heading out of town? Unplug appliances and electronics.

7.  Gifting new electronics, gadgets or appliances? Look for the ENERGY STAR® logo.

8.  Keep the winter chill outdoors by sealing air leaks around your home.

9.  Open blinds and curtains during the day to let natural sunlight warm your home.

10.  Consider rechargeable batteries and chargers. They make great stocking stuffers!

11.  Cooking a holiday feast? Use the oven light to check the progress of your dish.

12.  When your holiday tree is lit, turn off lamps and enjoy the cozy ambiance.

ARE ALL STOVE TOPS CREATED EQUAL?

BY MARIA KANEVSKY

Stove top options come in a variety of prices, sizes and additional features that depend on specific models. Be sure to research the appropriate stove top options for your culinary needs.

The kitchen is the center of any home, especially during the holiday season, and the stove is a crucial component of a successful kitchen. Determining which type of stove to purchase can be a big decision. There are several stove cooktop options available, each with its own unique benefits. Learning the basics of each stove type can help you determine what works best for your needs.

Electric stove tops

One of the most common stove tops available to consumers is the electric stove top. It uses electricity to heat the element on the stove top, composed of either radiant heat coils or a glass surface. That heat is then transferred to the pan, pot or other cookware.

Electric stove tops with heat coils are relatively durable and can be scrubbed without worrying too much about causing damage. Cleanup is easy for electric stove tops with a glass surface; however, users should be careful not to scratch the glass. Electric stove tops have a moderate energy efficiency rating, where roughly 74% of the heat reaches the food; however, electric-coil stove tops are slightly less efficient than glass.

Gas-powered stove tops

Another common stove top option is the gas-powered stove top, where the flames can be produced using either natural gas or liquid propane. Among the benefits, the most popular aspect of gas-powered stove tops is the ability to heat food more quickly than electric stove tops. Many cooking enthusiasts prefer gas because of the instant heat and ability to control temperatures more easily.

In the rare case of power outages, gas stove tops will still function while electric stove tops will not. However, gas stove tops are the least energy efficient, with about 40% of the heat generated reaching the food. Much of the energy from gas is lost in the air and wasted as lost heat.

It is also important to be careful of the potential safety risks associated with gas stove tops, such as burns, impacts to indoor air quality and gas leaks. Homes with small children or pets should be especially aware of these potential risks. With any gas stove top, an exhaust hood will be important to reduce potential air quality concerns from nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and carbon monoxide (CO).

Induction stove tops

Although less common, the induction stove top is quickly gaining popularity. An induction stove top uses electromagnetic heating technology to heat the cookware. Only specific cookware can be used on an induction stove top. The cookware needs iron to react properly with the stove top, making stainless steel, cast iron or carbon steel excellent cookware options for induction stove tops.

Underneath an induction stove top is a metal coil that creates a magnetic field, which reacts with the cookware through an electrical current, generating heat. The induction technology works quickly to heat food and is even faster than gas stove tops. Through the induction process,

only the part of the stove top directly touching the cookware becomes heated, while the rest of the stove top stays cool.

One of the best benefits of an induction stove top is safety. There are no open flames and the stove top itself is cool to the touch, making burns much less likely. Induction stove tops are also the most energy-efficient form of stove top cooking, with an energy efficiency rating of about 90%, so most of the

energy goes to heating the cookware and not the surrounding air. Induction stove tops, like glass electric stove tops, are also easy to clean because of the smooth surface.

Despite all these benefits, induction stove tops can be quite expensive – more so than gas or electric stove tops. Since special cookware is also required for the stove top to work properly, the total price tag becomes even higher.

Stove top options come in various prices, sizes and additional features that depend on specific models. Be sure to research the appropriate stove top options for your culinary needs before making any final decisions. Assessing potential safety concerns in a home can also be the deciding factor between different stove top options. Whether you choose electricity, gas or induction, stove tops are an essential piece for any home.

Maria Kanevsky writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



One of the most common stove tops available to consumers is the electric stove top.



Photo Credit: Whirlpool

← The most popular aspect of gas-powered stove tops is the ability to heat food more quickly than electric stove tops.



Photo Credit: KitchenAid

← The induction stove top is quickly gaining popularity. An induction stove top uses electromagnetic heating technology to heat the cookware. Only specific cookware can be used on an induction stove top.

Christmas morning

RECIPES

MINI CARAMEL ROLLS

- ⅓ cup packed brown sugar
- ⅓ cup butter, cubed
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1½ teaspoons milk
- 1 8-ounce tube crescent rolls
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

In a small saucepan, combine the brown sugar, butter, corn syrup and milk. Cook and stir over medium heat until butter is melted and sugar is dissolved. Pour into a greased 9-inch pie plate; set aside. Separate crescent dough into 4 rectangles, gently pressing perforations to seal. In a small bowl, combine sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle evenly over rectangles. Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with the long side. Pinch seams to seal. Cut each into 9 slices; place cut side down in prepared pie plate. Bake at 375 degrees F for 15-18 minutes or until golden. Cool in pie plate for 1 minute before inverting onto a serving plate. *Serves 8-10*

Shirley DeSmet • Alvord • Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

HOLIDAY BRUNCH CASSEROLE

- 4 cups frozen shredded hashbrowns, thawed
- 1 pound pork sausage, cooked and drained
- ½ pound bacon, cooked and crumbled
- green pepper, to taste
- red pepper, to taste
- onion, to taste
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups milk
- 1 cup biscuit baking mix
- ½ teaspoon salt

Mix ingredients well and put in 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 375 degrees F for 1 hour. *Serves 6-8*

Melissa Schultes • Dedham
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

CINNAMON ROLL FRENCH TOAST CASSEROLE

- ½ cup butter
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup heavy whipping cream (or half and half)
- 3 teaspoons cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cans cinnamon rolls
- ½ cup pecans, chopped
- icing from cinnamon roll packages

In a large bowl, melt butter with sugar. Beat in eggs, cream, cinnamon, nutmeg and vanilla. Open canned cinnamon rolls, slice each roll into fourths. Place cinnamon roll pieces into the bowl of egg mixture and toss to thoroughly coat. Then pour the coated pieces into a greased 9x13-inch casserole dish and spread out evenly. Use any leftover egg mixture to coat the casserole. Sprinkle with pecans and bake on a low rack at 350 degrees F for 45-50 minutes or until brown. (For moist rolls, bake for 35 minutes.) Remove casserole from oven. Warm icing from cinnamon rolls in microwave for 15 seconds then pour evenly over bake. You can prepare the night ahead without pecans. Cover and refrigerate. In the morning, add the pecans and bake. *Serves 6-8*

Tamara Kramer • Le Mars
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

MERRY CHERRY BARS

- 1 cup butter
- 1¾ cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2¼ cups flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 can cherry pie filling
- powdered sugar icing

Cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs one at a time, beat well. Add vanilla and dry ingredients, beat well. Reserve 1½ cups batter, pour the rest of batter into greased 10x15-inch pan. Spread pie filling over top. Drop remaining 1½ cups batter on top of pie filling. Bake at 350 degrees F for 35 minutes. Add powdered sugar icing on top.

Mary Gropper • Chelsea • T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

GRANDMA'S CHRISTMAS ROLLS

- 1 24-count bag frozen dinner rolls
- 1 small box butterscotch pudding mix (not instant)
- ½ cup butter
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- ¾ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup nuts, chopped

Arrange rolls in greased, fluted tube pan (you may use your own frozen yeast dough). Sprinkle dry pudding mix over rolls. Cook butter and remaining ingredients over low heat until sugar is dissolved and mixture bubbles; pour over rolls. Cover tightly with foil and let stand on countertop overnight. Next morning bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes and then invert carefully over a serving dish.

Pat Lynch • New Hampton
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

CHRISTMAS MORNING BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

- 9 eggs
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups ham, diced
- 4½ cups milk
- 1 box dry hashbrowns
- 1 cup shredded cheese

Mix all ingredients and add to a 9x13-inch pan. Cooked sausage can be substituted for ham. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour.

Sue Koster • Gladbrook
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative

JACK FROST WARMER

- 1 quart apple cider
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 5 whole cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick

Heat ingredients slowly for 15-20 minutes. Remove spices and serve warm.

Natalie Rassi • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

QUINOA EGG BREAKFAST MUFFINS

- 6 eggs
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup Swiss cheese, shredded
- ½ cup onion, diced
- ½ cup green or red peppers, finely diced
- ½ cup ham, diced
- 1 cup quinoa, cooked

In large bowl, whisk together eggs, salt and pepper. Stir in remaining ingredients. Spoon into well-greased muffin cups. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20-25 minutes until knife inserted comes out clean. Can be baked ahead and popped into microwave to reheat. You can substitute the vegetables and cheese to suit your family, such as cheddar and broccoli or feta and zucchini with dill instead of salt and pepper. Make your own combination! *Yield 12 muffins*

Karla Colby • Ackley
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative

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(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

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ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS HONORED WITH IOWA VENTURE AWARDS

BY KAY SNYDER



The Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) and its electric cooperative, municipal utility and independent telecommunication company sponsors annually recognize outstanding companies and individuals with the Iowa Venture Awards.

Since 1989, the awards have provided an opportunity to uphold the courage, innovation, social responsibility, vision and contribution these people and organizations make in their community, region and state.

The following companies were honored at a luncheon celebration during the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' annual meeting in early December. Visit the Iowa Venture Award Hall of Fame at www.IADG.com/HallOfFame to view current and previous award recipients.

Hinterland Dairy
Nominated by Access Energy Cooperative

Ralph and Colleen Krogmeier's dairy farm sits on 400 acres near the southeast Iowa town of Donnellson.

They are committed to raising healthy cows fed non-GMO crops grown on their farm, caring for the land and producing high-quality, 100% natural milk.

In 2019, Hinterland opened a new cheese production facility and an on-farm store. Hinterland Dairy weekly produces cheese, Quark, a low-calorie, high-protein spreadable cheese, cheddar and Happy Jack (a take on Monterey Jack). They direct market cheese products to local grocery stores, markets, its on-farm store and an online store.

Industrial Packaging Corporation
Nominated by Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative

Industrial Packaging Corporation was founded in Tomahawk, Wisconsin, in 1989 to produce a product for the packaging market. In 2002, it expanded operations with a new plant in Wilton. This facility

specializes in honeycomb cardboard, a rigid board with hexagonal cells providing a high vertical compression resistance and load-bearing capacity.

The Wilton facility remains a profit center for the company and is approaching capacity as its customer base expands. In 2019, they more than doubled their Wilton operation with a 30,000-square-foot addition, adding a second honeycomb panel line.

ProPulse
Nominated by Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

ProPulse, a Schieffer Company, began in Germany in 1923. In 1998, the third generation of Schieffers and managing partner Jeff Theis located their first U.S. manufacturing plant in Peosta. Starting with a 12,000-square-foot building, the company has consistently grown, and in 2015, it underwent a rebranding to become ProPulse.

Combined with rental space, ProPulse has more than 135,000-square-feet under roof today.

ProPulse manufactures hoses and fittings for high-pressure fluid conveyance used mostly in industrial applications. It serves world-class OEMs, including John Deere, Equalizer and Tommy Gate. The company also manufactures the popular Flexzilla-brand garden hose.



RiverView Ridge

Nominated by North West Rural Electric Cooperative

RiverView Ridge is an independent and assisted living facility owned by a group of approximately 50 local investors. Construction of the new facility was nearly complete in June 2019. Tragically, the building was destroyed in a fire just days before opening.

Investors boldly moved forward with rebuilding plans and completed the project in fall 2020. Residents moved into this 39-unit facility in October 2020. RiverView Ridge is meeting an important need for housing in Rock Valley.

Rolinda Acres

Nominated by Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative

Rolinda Acres, owned by Tara and Pat Reisinger, is located near the northeast Iowa town of Waterville.



The Reisingers have five hog buildings, farm 1,500 acres, milk 785 cows and operate a dog breeding business.

In 2001, the Reisingers milked 150 cows. Today, that number has climbed to 785 cows, with plans to nearly double in 2023. To grow the herd and shorten their workdays, they constructed a 96,000-square-foot barn housing eight robotic milkers in 2020. Approximately 550 cows are milked robotically, while 260 are still milked in the existing parlor. Rolinda Acres plans to add another building and eight additional robotic milkers by 2023.

Sister's Home Style Entrees

Nominated by Midland Power Cooperative

Deb Davis, owner of Sister's Home Style Entrees, turned her hobby of preparing meals for family and friends into a statewide business in 2011. Today, 47 employees prepare more than 70,000 meals per month and serve all of Iowa and its bordering states.

Sister's Home Style Entrees strives to provide delicious meals at an affordable price. Its core customers are elderly and homebound populations, but families also love the convenience and flexibility of its savory meals.

RAND FISHER

Leadership in Economic Development Award Recipient

Rand Fisher, president of IADG, has presented Iowa Venture Awards to deserving leaders from across Iowa for 25 years. This year, he is recognized with an Iowa Venture Award for Leadership in Economic Development.



With Fisher retiring on Jan. 31, 2022, it is fitting to recognize his contributions over this quarter-century of leadership and support for economic development. Partnerships are the bedrock of economic development, and Fisher has been a part of creating many important partnerships to support business development and community vitality. Fisher has been a resource and advocate for rural Iowa and a mentor to many.

During his tenure, IADG and its partners have supported 1,756 projects totaling \$9.25 billion in investment and creating or retaining 40,000 jobs. In addition, 358 awards were secured through the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant program totaling more than \$159 million in project support across Iowa. Fisher's efforts will live on through the businesses, communities and people he supported throughout his career.



TRINITYRAIL NAMED "OUTSTANDING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR"

Nominated by Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative

Trinity Industries selected Butler Logistics Park near Shell Rock as the location of TrinityRail, a \$60 million state-of-the-art rail maintenance facility to serve the upper Midwest. This facility is the largest and most equipped maintenance facility in the Trinity Industries network serving Class 1 railroads and shippers. Activity at the facility ranges from repairs and maintenance to coatings, cleaning, inspections, testing and full rebuilds.

The facility includes 370,000-square-feet of manufacturing floor space and 7 miles of rail track. It currently employs 150 with plans to expand to 260 employees and beyond based on demand.

CORN BELT POWER LINEMAN RETURNS FROM ACTIVE DUTY

BY RYAN CORNELIUS

Howard Henkelvig admits he's not a huge fan of airplanes. There's a big difference between being 30 feet in the air in a bucket truck and descending from 30,000 feet into a war zone that's home to America's longest war. As his Iowa National Guard unit landed in Afghanistan in 2020, he realized his next eight months would be a little different.

"I realized we were finally here," he says. "There's no going back. We weren't really sure what to expect. But, we were there."

After spending eight months at Camp Dwyer in the Helmand River Valley in Afghanistan, Corn Belt Power Cooperative happily welcomed Henkelvig back to the Emmetsburg transmission crew in October.

Henkelvig is a Sergeant in the 1-194th Field Artillery Unit in the U.S. Army National Guard. His active duty rotation with the Iowa National Guard was responsible for counter artillery.

Job in Afghanistan

"Our job in Afghanistan dealt with the C-RAM, which stands for counter rocket, artillery, mortar," he says.

He served as Battle Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in the Engagement Operations Cell (EOC) and as a BCP Section Leader during deployment.

"As a Battle NCO, I had to make sure all my soldiers were doing their jobs and that equipment maintenance was done daily and weekly," he explains.

When the Battle Captain was away, Henkelvig stepped in as the engagement authority.

"As section leader, I made sure the overall health and well-being of the soldiers was good and that they carried themselves to Army standards," he says. "I performed monthly evaluations



Photo: Marena Fritzer, Corn Belt Power Cooperative



Photos: Howard Henkelvig



on overall performance to help them become better future leaders."

Before his time in Afghanistan, Henkelvig's unit spent three months in classes, eight to ten hours a day, in Oklahoma. There, the group learned the workings of the C-RAM unit.

"During that time, we didn't have a whole lot of freedom to move around due to COVID," he says.

The simplicity of his time in Oklahoma proved to be a sign of things to come.

Daily work schedule

"Once we were in Afghanistan, we had simple lifestyles," he says. "We worked seven days a week. I would get up at 6 a.m. to get ready for my shift. We would perform our normal duties until 3 p.m. and head back to our rooms."

Henkelvig says the work schedule helped the time pass quickly. "It would feel like a week went by, and it'd been a month."

As for free time, Henkelvig says it's not much different from home.

"We'd hang out as guys, read or

watch some Netflix," he says. "Friday nights, we'd get our crew together and play cards or board games, which helped keep soldiers' minds off home or staying in their room with no interaction."

Making history

As their time in Afghanistan gradually came to an end, Henkelvig's unit began to realize they were going to be some of the last U.S. military personnel to leave Afghanistan.

"If you think about it, we were making history," he says. "The U.S. had been there for 20 years."

Following his unit's exit from Camp Dwyer (a camp built in 2007), the base was shut down. Henkelvig is in his 11th year in the Iowa National Guard, with his service ending in January 2023.

"The Army as a whole has helped me become a better leader and teacher," he says. "I hope to apply what I learned to my job here at Corn Belt Power."

Ryan Cornelius is vice president, corporate relations for Corn Belt Power Cooperative.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND THE MOST HOME ENERGY SAVINGS?

BY PAT KEEGAN AND BRAD THIESSEN

As temperatures fall, your home energy bill will likely rise. If you're looking for energy savings during the cold winter months, now is a great time to explore efficiency options throughout your home.

Heating and cooling costs add up

For most homes, the months that require the most energy use are in the winter and summer, when temperatures are most extreme. To see the difference, total up your average energy use for the months when you use the most energy, then subtract the average amount you use during "shoulder months," when you're barely using your heating or cooling system – typically during fall and spring.

The likely reason for the difference in energy use is heating and cooling your home. If someone says switching to a new heating or cooling system could save you 20%, they likely mean you can save 20% on heating or cooling costs, which are a portion of your overall energy costs.

Ideas for cost-effective savings

Sealing air leaks is often the least expensive energy-saving measure that delivers the most bang for your buck. The second most cost-effective way to cut heating and cooling costs depends on your situation.

If you have an older propane or oil furnace, replacing it with an energy-efficient heat pump might be your best investment. If you already have a relatively efficient furnace or air conditioning unit, insulating your attic could be the next most cost-effective measure, followed by insulating exterior walls or the crawl space or basement.

Replacing windows is a high-priority project for many homeowners, and new windows can certainly add value to your home. However, this can be a costly project, making it difficult to

A single ductless heat pump can serve up to four rooms through blowers installed in each room.



Photo Credit: Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

New windows can increase comfort and resale value, but this can be an expensive upgrade to achieve efficiency.



Photo Credit: Roger Mommaerts

Loose-fill insulation is the most common and preferred method of insulating your attic floor. Notice the baffles near the attic perimeter that allow air to ventilate from the eaves into the attic space.



Photo Credit: Owens-Corning

justify solely based on potential energy savings. If your windows are old and leaky, it could be worth the investment.

Efficiencies in water heating

After you've found ways to reduce heating and cooling costs, your next largest energy use is likely water heating. A few low-cost measures like repairing leaky faucets and insulating the first 6 to 10 feet of hot water line could deliver significant savings. Installing energy-efficient showerheads can save water and reduce energy use. Check out Consumer Reports for reliable comparisons and reviews of energy-efficient showerheads.

If your water heater is more than 10 years old, it's likely time to consider how and when to replace it. You can

purchase a traditional water heater that uses the same fuel you're using now. But there are several other options, including heat pump water heaters, tankless water heaters and even solar water heaters.

Other opportunities for savings

Appliances and lighting account for a smaller portion of your energy use. As you replace older appliances and lighting, look for options that include the ENERGY STAR® sticker. You should also review energy use information found on the EnergyGuide label.

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

NEW PROGRAM ENGAGES HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS

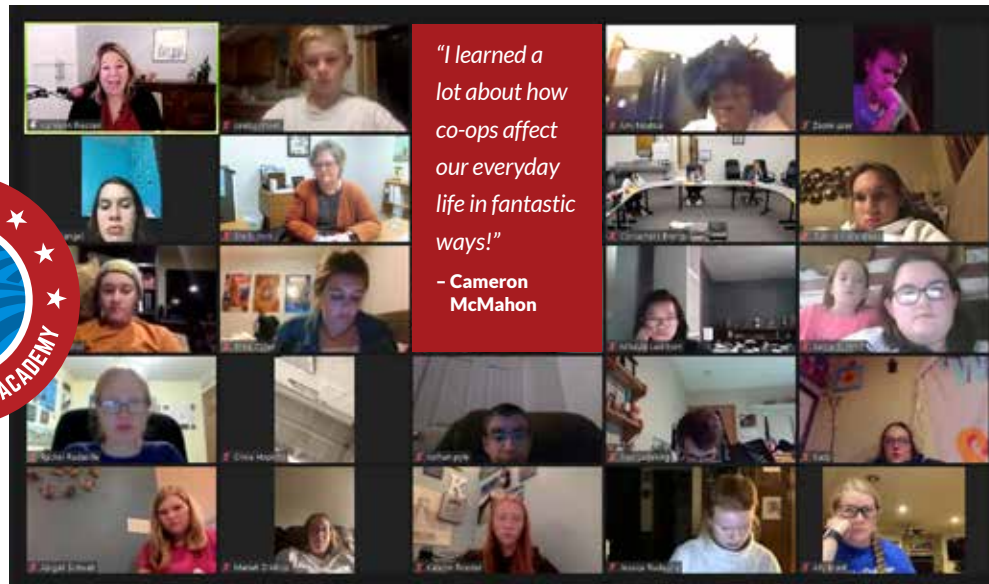
Rural Iowa high school students gathered for the first-ever Iowa Youth Leadership Academy (IYLA) in October as part of National Co-op Month. The virtual, three-part academy explored the cooperative business model, electric cooperative career opportunities, civic involvement and how to advocate for issues impacting rural Iowa.



"The response was overwhelmingly positive," says Shelly York, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) office manager and Iowa Youth Tour director. "We are encouraged by the level of student engagement and look forward to hosting IYLA again in 2022."

IYLA was developed by IAEC to connect with students while building momentum and excitement for the upcoming national Youth Tour trip to Washington D.C.

Recordings of the three IYLA sessions are available at www.iowarec.org/youth-tour/iyla-resources.



BY THE NUMBERS

SESSION 1
ATTENDEES: 75

SESSION 2
ATTENDEES: 65

SESSION 3
ATTENDEES: 54

ATTENDED AT LEAST
ONE SESSION: 90

ATTENDED ALL
THREE SESSIONS: 42

COOPERATIVES REPRESENTED: 23

REGISTRATIONS: 133

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Kadence Parizek from Belle Plaine was randomly selected as the IYLA \$1,000 college scholarship winner! Students who attended all three virtual sessions were entered to win.

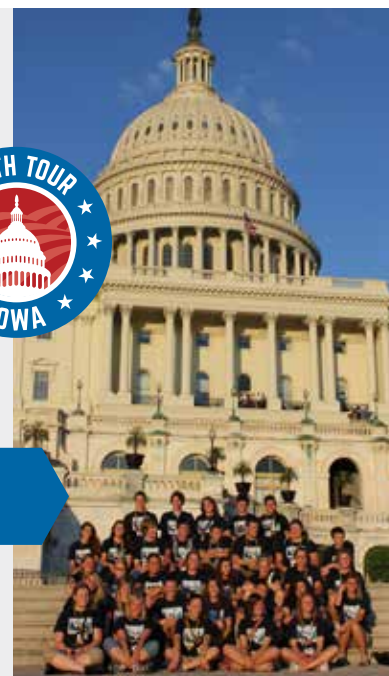
2022 YOUTH TOUR

Giving back to the community and investing in the next generation of leaders is part of every electric cooperative's mission. To put this mission into action, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives send approximately 40 high school students on the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., each year.

During the weeklong tour, students learn about electric cooperatives, meet with elected leaders and participate in National Youth Day. Alongside 1,800 students from co-ops across the nation, participants walk away with a greater understanding of their role as an American citizen.

The 2022 Youth Tour will be held June 18-24, with an orientation the evening of June 18 in Des Moines.

Students with a passion for government and public service are encouraged to apply to attend the Youth Tour. Each cooperative sets its own selection criteria, so students should contact their local electric co-op for application details.



CHRISTMAS CRAFTS GONE WRONG

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

I have a friend who has “homemade” Christmas celebrations with her family. Each member lovingly crafts or creates something for the others, while everyone “ooh and ahhs” over each gift, marveling in the talent of the creator.

Good thing I’m not in that family.

Once – and only once – did I try a homemade gift for Christmas. It was 2006, and my son had a bedroom with a Western theme. After catching an episode of Martha Stewart creating a bulletin board from ripped paper bags and polyurethane, I figured I could do it as well. (*Insert hysterical laughter here.*) In retrospect, my faith in my creative abilities was severely overestimated.

Craft-time trial and error

It looked incredibly easy. Tear paper grocery bags into strips, dip them in polyurethane and then lay them at angles on a cork bulletin board. They would dry into a craggy, suede-like appearance that would be perfectly at home in a 12-year-old boy’s cowboy bedroom.

Oh, if only it had been that easy. I tore the strips – simple enough – and dipped them into a container that I’d poured the polyurethane into. Trying hard to keep that goo from dripping onto the floor, I put the strips across the bulletin board in a hodge-podge pattern.

Even though I had the sense to put strips with letters on them face down, the ink showed through. Soon, random “Y”s and “H”s were floating up through the paper. Could I pretend that this was some sort of new branding wave? You know, like kids wearing product names on their T-shirts? Somehow, I didn’t think I’d get away with that.

By the time the entire 24x36-inch board was covered, I was almost overwhelmed with fumes. The cat had brushed past the container, getting polyurethane in her fur, and the



bulletin board appeared to be a hot mess. My faith in Martha was waning.

But hope springs eternal. By the time it dried, I surmised, it would magically turn into the bulletin board I had coveted. But where to dry it? I knew a warm room would be better, but I didn’t want my son to see it. I placed it in the garage, on top of a high shelf.

Discovered and discarded

A few hours later, when my son came home from school, he detoured through the garage to take off his boots. He came flying into the house with a pronouncement: “There’s something really stinky in the garage,” he sputtered. “I climbed up to see what it was, and it looks like an alphabet

board with varnish on it!”

I hemmed and hawed and took no ownership of said malodorous object. He continued, “Can I throw it out? We’re all going to die of fumes!”

Permission granted. I never did fess up to what was really going on. For all he knew, someone had broken into our garage and left a reeking paper-bag-soaked bulletin board, intending to kill us all with the stench.

That Christmas, everyone got gift cards.

Valerie Van Kooten is a writer from Pella who loves living in the country and telling its stories. She and her husband Kent have three married sons, two incredibly adorable grandsons and a lovely granddaughter.

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