



Touchstone Energy®  
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NOVEMBER 2022

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**Shop co-op local  
this holiday season**

**Winterization tips  
for energy savings**

**Thanksgiving side dishes**

**Win a \$100 gift card to a local business ▶ See Page 3**

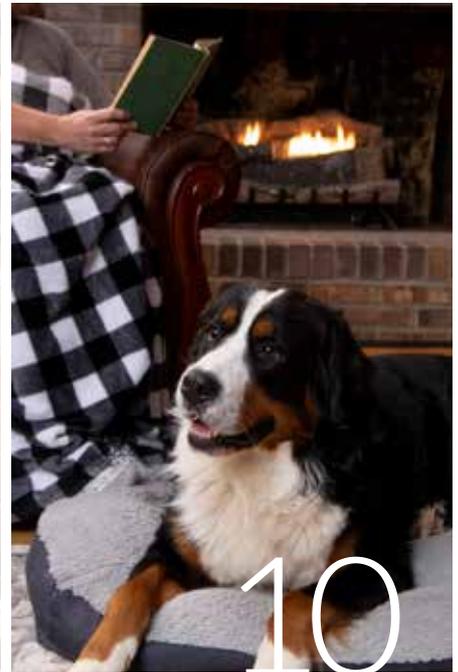
# CONTENTS



6



8



10

VOLUME 75 • ISSUE 11

3

### STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE

Commitment to learning is critical

3

### EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a \$100 gift card

10

### EFFICIENCY MATTERS

Winterization tips for energy savings

14

### GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

Co-ops discuss industry issues with policymakers

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### ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Renae Wolter, an Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc. member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could win \$100!

# COMMITMENT TO LEARNING IS CRITICAL TO COOPERATIVE SUCCESS

BY KATRINA DAVIS



Some people think education and learning end at graduation. For Iowa's electric cooperatives, that philosophy just doesn't hold up. We

strongly believe in keeping our co-op employees, board directors and member-consumers informed on industry trends, new technologies and best practices to ensure local cooperatives will continue to power lives and empower communities for years to come.

Investing in education and training has been a core cooperative principle since the beginning. This year alone, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, the statewide trade association that provides many services for Iowa's locally owned electric co-ops, hosted more than 50 conferences, workshops and events for employees and board directors. Collaborating face-to-face with peers is essential for improving our cooperative mission to enhance member-consumers' quality of life.

And that same cooperative commitment to education, information and training explains why your local electric co-op sends a member newsletter to you, connects with you at events and subscribes to this magazine. A cooperative is more successful when its members are informed and engaged.

## Information is critical for longevity

The electric industry is experiencing an unprecedented era of rapid change today. We're facing incredible challenges and opportunities in the years ahead as we adapt to a clean energy economy, the mass adoption of electric vehicles and advancements

in storage capabilities. Keeping co-op staff, leaders and member-consumers informed is critical to the longevity of the cooperative business model as we rely more and more on electricity to power our lives.

## New cooperative leadership program coming in 2023

My passion is training, and I am excited to share a new leadership program we are offering to Iowa's electric cooperatives in 2023. Called the Cooperative Leadership in Iowa Program (CLIP), this new initiative will provide valuable leadership knowledge and skills for co-op employees in all roles. CLIP is a yearlong learning experience incorporating in-person, virtual and on-demand sessions. We'll cover several aspects in our sessions, including strengths assessments and strategic financial planning, along with other cooperative business

topics like regulatory affairs, board relations, legal considerations and communications. Our goal is to identify emerging leaders at all local co-op levels and equip them for successful cooperative careers as they serve their local communities.

And at the end of the day, that's really why I'm committed to education and training – to help people achieve their fullest potential. Statewide and national associations provide your co-op staff and board directors with indispensable learning opportunities as they make important business decisions that will serve your best interests for years to come. You can do your part as a member-consumer by staying informed about your local co-op. Never stop learning!

*Katrina Davis is the director of education and training for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win a \$100 gift card

Just in time for holiday shopping, we're giving away a \$100 gift card to your choice of a hometown business. It will be good for a restaurant, hardware store, gift shop, grocery store, beauty salon or other local business that's vital to your community.

## Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than Nov. 30. 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 GreenPan™ Ultimate Gourmet Grill from the September issue was Galen Eisentrager, Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative.



**ENTER ONLINE BY NOV. 30!**

## LIHEAP APPLICATION PERIOD IS OPEN

The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) reminds consumers that limited financial heating assistance is available to income-eligible utility customers through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The annual application period runs from Nov. 1, 2022, through April 30, 2023. The application period for homes with elderly or disabled residents began Oct. 1.

The LIHEAP program is designed to help low-income homeowners and renters pay a portion of their primary home heating costs through a one-time payment made directly to the utility or heating fuel vendor. Under LIHEAP or the weatherization assistance program, Iowa law protects qualified applicants who are the head of a household from being disconnected from natural gas or electric service from Nov. 1 through April 1. Although qualified applicants cannot be disconnected during the annual winter moratorium, the IUB urges all LIHEAP-certified customers to continue paying toward their energy bills through the winter to avoid accumulating high debt and facing potential utility service disconnection in the spring.

Eligibility for the federally funded LIHEAP program is based on household size and income, type of fuel, and type of housing. Interested applicants should review the federal income guidelines then apply at the community action agency serving their area. Heating assistance dollars for LIHEAP and the weatherization assistance program are limited.

For assistance, utility customers may contact their local utility company or contact the IUB Customer Service staff at 877-565-4450 or [customer@iub.iowa.gov](mailto:customer@iub.iowa.gov).

Learn more on the IUB's LIHEAP webpage, or through the Iowa Department of Human Rights online at [humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/liheap](http://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/liheap) or call 515-281-3861.

# GOV. REYNOLDS ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$450,000 IN EMPOWER RURAL IOWA GRANTS

Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Economic Development Authority recently announced more than \$450,000 has been awarded through six Empower Rural Iowa Grant Programs. The grant awards will support rural initiatives from child care and housing to workforce attraction and leadership development in more than 20 counties.

"I signed the Empower Rural Iowa Act in 2019 to ensure that the rural communities that are the heart of who we are as a state have the resources needed to connect, invest and grow," says Gov. Reynolds. "Since then, Empower Rural Iowa grants have provided support for dozens of now thriving businesses, communities and entrepreneurs in our rural communities."

For example, the IGNITE Pathways program in Woodbine will leverage Rural Innovation funding to help create an automotive maintenance and care training program to address the lack of local options in this field. The need was identified through research and analysis by a local high school program, which focuses on developing innovative solutions to rural problems.



In another example, Iowa Central Community College will use Rural Scale-Up funding to bring the successful career academies model to the western part of their region by developing a new regional center in Storm Lake. This opportunity will enhance learning capabilities, provide equitable access to high-quality career technical education programming and help close opportunity gaps in the region.

In its inaugural year, the Rural Enrichment grant is funding 11 projects across the state, including "OkoboTree," a visual art tree preservation project; a live music venue in an alley off Polk City's main square; and a downtown lighting project in Osceola.

For more information, visit [iowaeda.com/empower-rural-iowa](http://iowaeda.com/empower-rural-iowa).

## ENTER TO WIN

WIN \$100 FOR A PUBLISHED COVER PHOTO

We're always looking for stunning images for the cover of *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine. If we select your photo for a cover, we'll award you with \$100. The photos must be clear, of an Iowa place served by an electric cooperative and in high resolution. To be considered, email photos to [editor@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:editor@ieclmagazine.com) with "Cover Submission" in the subject line.



# KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON DURING THE ENERGY TRANSITION

The following are excerpts and key points from an article written by Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative



Association, and published Sept. 26, 2022, in *RE Magazine*.

- The ability to keep the lights on is a cornerstone of our economy. No one recognizes that more than America's electric cooperatives. The co-op focus on local communities lends us clarity on these issues that few other organizations have. That's why NRECA continues leaning into our role as truth-tellers amid the ongoing conversation about the energy transition.
- Other organizations have recently sounded a similar alarm about reliable electricity in the months and years ahead. Electric co-ops have been voicing grid reliability concerns for years, while simultaneously rising to the challenge to keep affordable, reliable electricity a constant in rural America.
- Some are quick to blame these reliability threats on changing or more extreme weather patterns. That's certainly part of the story, but there's a deeper problem that must be acknowledged.
- Spurred by policy and market factors, the ongoing energy transition has prioritized the disorderly and premature closure of baseload power plants without considering the collective impact on the power grid and the availability of feasible technology to fully replace them. That's proving to be a misstep with potentially severe consequences.



- Driven by a focus on keeping the lights on, America's electric cooperatives have demonstrated what a responsible energy transition can look like. Electric co-ops lowered their carbon emissions by 23% between 2005 and 2020. Co-ops also continue investing in energy innovation technologies to help meet tomorrow's electricity needs with speed and flexibility.
- Policymakers play a critical role in our energy future. As they establish energy policies, legislators and regulators must consider threats to reliability before setting arbitrary dates and deadlines. This must include allowing adequate time, technology development and the

construction of desperately needed transmission lines.

- NRECA and our member co-ops consistently push policymakers to recalibrate their focus on a commonsense energy transition that recognizes all of the factors above and doesn't jeopardize reliability or punish families already struggling to make ends meet.

Scan this QR code to read the full article or visit [bit.ly/KeepingtheLightsOn](https://bit.ly/KeepingtheLightsOn).



## 3 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking for easy ways to lower your energy bills this winter? Here's a few tips from the Department of Energy:



Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep cold, drafty air out.



Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.



Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75% less energy.

# SHOP CO-OP LOCAL THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN

Ho, ho, ho! It's time to deck the halls, turn on the holiday music, roll out the wrapping paper and start this year's holiday shopping.

Electric cooperatives are committed to the communities we serve, and it shows with the way member-consumers, employees and directors rally around to support one another. During the holiday season, shopping local is one of the easiest ways to support your friends and neighbors who are also business owners.

To help your holiday gift-giving or list-making, we've combined a list of electric cooperative-served businesses that offer unique gifts to place under the Christmas tree or in a stocking. As you embark on Santa Claus duties this year, keep in mind that this list is just a sampling of local businesses. Take a walk along your community's Main Street or explore all that your local area offers for additional inspiration to shop local this holiday season!



## BLOOM AND BARK FARM

[bloomandbark.com](http://bloomandbark.com)

**Facebook:** [bloomandbarkfarm](https://www.facebook.com/bloomandbarkfarm)

Bloom and Bark is a glass-blowing studio, local artisan market and natural farm. They offer glass-blowing classes and demonstrations along with an artisan market filled with local art and fine crafts.



## BOERNSEN BEES

[boernsenbees.com](http://boernsenbees.com)

**Facebook:** [BoernsenBeesHoney](https://www.facebook.com/BoernsenBeesHoney)

A family-owned business that sells premium raw honey and raw honey products. Customers can shop for delicious raw honey, flavored creamed honey, comb honey, beeswax hand lotion bars in five fragrances and beeswax lip balm, all crafted from the Boernsen's honey bees.



## BRITCHES 'N' BOWS

[britchesnbowscountrystore.com](http://britchesnbowscountrystore.com)

**Facebook:** [shopbnb](https://www.facebook.com/shopbnb)

Britches 'N' Bows is a rustic country gift shop in Panora offering modern farmhouse décor, boutique-style clothing and trendy accessories. The shop also offers rustic wedding rentals, styling services and fresh wedding florals.



To find more local businesses in your area, check with your local chamber of commerce or electric cooperative. Happy shopping!



## EBERT HONEY

[eberthoney.com](http://eberthoney.com)

**Facebook: EbertHoney**

Ebert Honey produces 100,000 pounds of Iowa honey per year. Most of the Iowa honey is sold directly to grocery stores, bakeries, breweries and restaurants throughout central and eastern Iowa.



## GARRETT LAND AND CATTLE BEEF

[glcbeef.com](http://glcbeef.com)

**Facebook: glcbeef**

From the Garrett's sixth-generation family farm in western Iowa to customers' kitchen tables, the business is committed to providing the highest quality, home-raised beef.



## GREAT RIVER MAPLE

[greatrivermaple.com](http://greatrivermaple.com)

**Facebook: greatrivermaple**

Great River Maple is a family business producing 100% natural maple syrup. They offer a variety of additional maple products, including cream, sugar, bratwurst, granola and gift baskets.



## HARVEST BARN MARKETPLACE

[harvestbarnmarketplace.com](http://harvestbarnmarketplace.com)

**Facebook: HarvestBarnMarketplace**

A barn doubles as a gift shop, and the family sells frozen and fresh pre-made meals, their locally raised beef and homegrown produce. They offer a variety of amazing, custom gift boxes with a variety of Iowa foods. Make it a holiday destination every year; September through December. Online shopping is available and products can be found at the Des Moines' Downtown Farmers' Market.



## HEAVEN BOUTIQUE WINERY

[heavenwinery.com](http://heavenwinery.com)

**Facebook: HeavenWinery**

Heaven Winery is a beautiful place to discover your new favorite Iowa wine or craft beer, pick up the perfect gift and unwind with friends. They feature more than 110 different native Iowa wines and craft beers, wine slushes, art and gifts by Iowa artists, and two unique, one-of-a-kind lodging options.



## INSPIREU ALL THINGS GOOD

[stylebyinspireu.com](http://stylebyinspireu.com)

A boutique offering a wide variety of home decor, unique clothing, coffee and delicious baked goods. A variety of the store's clothing items are also available online.



## IRISH MEADOWS YARN BARN AND BOUTIQUE

**Facebook:**

**[irishmeadowsyarnbarnandboutique](https://www.facebook.com/irishmeadowsyarnbarnandboutique)**

Irish Meadows is an Alpaca farm featuring the Yarn Barn and Boutique in a beautifully restored red barn. Shoppers can peruse a selection of scarves, hats and gloves handmade with fleece from Alpaca. The boutique also features other women's fashion, home décor and alpaca-themed items.



## J&J CANDLES

[www.jjcandlesmanson.com](http://www.jjcandlesmanson.com)

**Facebook: jjcandlesmanson**

J&J Candles is a family-owned business that has been offering handcrafted, scented products for more than 25 years. They feature nearly 200 scents. In addition to individual sales, they offer wholesale pricing with minimum orders and do fundraisers. All the scented products are made at its facility south of Manson.



## KRYSTAL'S HONEY

**Facebook: busybee.beekeeper**

A local beekeeper sells raw honey made from wildflowers.



## THE PIE LADY

[iowapielady.com](http://iowapielady.com)

**Facebook: iowapielady**

The Pie Lady offers made-from-scratch pies, cheesecakes, and rolls and cinnamon rolls during holidays. There are no preservatives or additives added to any of her pies.



## RECREATION UNLIMITED

[recreationunlimited.net](http://recreationunlimited.net)

**Facebook: recreationunlimited04**

A family-owned and operated business in Traer offering top notch outdoor equipment and accessories, including Green Mountain Grills.



## RED ROCK SIGNWORKS

[redrocksignworks.com](http://redrocksignworks.com)

**Facebook: RedRockSignworks**

Red Rock Signworks is a full-service, family-owned sign shop providing everything from the original concept to the creation and installation of the sign. The facility has a complete fabrication and production shop, using the most current equipment and technologies to build, fabricate and produce signage. In addition to signs, they also offer promotional printed items.



## THE RED SHED

**Hwy. 63, Bloomfield**

The Red Shed has a wide variety of gifts, including their handmade chocolates, a large selection of farm toys, games, dolls, craft kits, home décor, Amish-made rugs and baskets, soaps and candles. The Red Shed serves lunch daily and also carries kitchenware and outdoor merchandise.

*Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.*



THANKSGIVING

# SIDE DISH

RECIPES

## EASY HASHBROWN POTATOES

- 1 30-ounce package frozen shredded hashbrowns, thawed
- ½ cup butter
- salt
- pepper
- 1 pint whipping cream
- 2 cups cheese, shredded

Spread hashbrowns in greased 9x13-inch pan. Slice butter and add on top of hashbrowns. Add salt and pepper to taste. Pour whipping cream over top and sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees F for 1-1.5 hours. Serves 20

Bethany Van Wyhe • Lester  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## AUNT NANCY'S SLOW COOKER BUTTERY BACON GREEN BEANS

- 4 14.5-ounce cans green beans, drained
- 8 slices bacon, chopped
- ½ cup onion, diced
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 4 tablespoons butter, cut into slivers
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ - ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

Place green beans in 4- or 6-quart slow cooker (either grease slow cooker or use a cooking bag). Cook bacon in a large nonstick skillet until crispy, adding onion when the bacon is almost fully cooked. Continue to cook until onion soaks bacon flavor and softens. Remove bacon and onion with a slotted spoon and add to slow cooker. Drizzle about 1 tablespoon of the bacon grease into the slow cooker. Add remaining ingredients and stir. Cover and cook on low for 4-6 hours, stirring occasionally.

Tamara Kramer • Le Mars  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## OUR FAVORITE BROCCOLI CASSEROLE

- 2 10-ounce packages frozen chopped broccoli
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 10.75-ounce can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 cups buttery crackers, crushed
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

Cook and drain broccoli. In a large mixing bowl, combine broccoli, mayonnaise, cheese, soup and eggs. Mix well. Place mixture in a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Top with crushed crackers and pour melted butter evenly over top. Bake at 350 degrees F for 35 minutes or until set and browned. You can substitute a can of cream of chicken soup.

Susan Harrison • Le Mars  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## CHEDDAR BACON BISCUIT STUFFING

- 8 cups biscuits, cubed
- 8 slices bacon, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 stalks celery, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced or ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon chicken seasoning blend
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 4 ounces cheddar cheese, shredded
- chives, optional

Dry cubed biscuits overnight or in an oven at 300 degrees F for 20 minutes. Cook bacon until crisp and remove from pan. Cook onion, celery, garlic and seasonings in bacon drippings over medium-high heat until vegetables are tender. Turn off heat. Add biscuits and broth and stir gently to combine. Fold in bacon and cheese. Put stuffing in a greased 9x13-inch dish and bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes. You can adjust baking time if you like moist or crispy edges. Garnish with chives if desired. *Serves 10*

Chris Daniels • Casey  
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

## MAPLE CRANBERRY SAUCE

- 1 cup real maple syrup
- ½ cup water
- 1 bag fresh cranberries
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange rind, finely grated

Combine maple syrup, water, cranberries and orange juice in medium saucepan, bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat, stir in orange rind. Store in refrigerator, but best served at room temperature. *Serves 10-12*

Lorna Easton • Hawarden  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## MOM'S CRANBERRY SALAD

- 1 pound package raw cranberries
- 4-5 apples, quartered, with peel
- 2 small cans crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup English walnuts, chopped
- 2 small packages lemon Jell-O
- 2 cups hot water

Grind cranberries and apples through a food chopper or food processor. Place in a bowl and add pineapple, sugar and walnuts. Mix well. Dissolve Jell-O in hot water then stir in cranberry mixture. Pour into a ring mold or bowl. Refrigerate until solid and the flavors meld. *Serves 12-20*

Kathie Anderson • Blockton  
United Electric Cooperative

## PILGRIM PIE

- 1 cup sugar
- 4 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup oatmeal
- 1 cup shredded coconut
- 1 cup Karo syrup (dark or light)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup chopped pecans, optional
- pie shell

Cream sugar and margarine, then add eggs. Add remaining ingredients and put in an unbaked pie shell. Bake at 375 degrees F for 10 minutes. Lower heat to 350 degrees and bake for 35 minutes.

Cynthia Snider • Seymour  
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative

## BAKED PINEAPPLE

- ½ cup butter
- ¾ cup sugar
- 3 eggs, beaten
- dash salt
- 1 20-ounce can crushed pineapple
- 5 slices white bread, cubed

Cream butter and sugar, then add eggs and beat. Add remaining ingredients. Mixture will look curdled. Place in 1½ quart casserole dish and bake 40-50 minutes at 325 degrees F. Serve hot alongside your favorite Thanksgiving meal. *Serves 6*

Jennine C. Maas • Casey  
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

WANTED:

## IRISH-INSPIRED RECIPES

THE REWARD:

\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is Nov. 30

Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions. Also provide the number of servings per recipe.

EMAIL: [recipes@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:recipes@ieclmagazine.com)

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

MAIL: Recipes

Iowa Electric Cooperative Living • 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992



# WINTERIZATION TIPS FOR ENERGY SAVINGS

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE



Windows can be a source of drafts and wasted energy. Weatherstrip and close windows tightly to prevent warm air from escaping your home.



Your fireplace adds ambiance to your home but isn't necessarily effective at heating it. If you have a wood-burning fireplace, close the damper when your fire is extinguished.



Insulating your water heater can save 7% to 16% on water heating costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Winterizing is an important step to keep your home cozy and your bills low. These tried-and-true methods and essential tips will ensure your home is sealed tight and ready for colder weather.

**TIP 1** **Insulate pipes and the water heater**

You can raise the water temperature inside your home's water pipes by 2 to 4 degrees simply by insulating them, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Insulating allows you to turn down the heat on your water heater, saving energy and money.

Start by insulating the pipes coming out of your water heater. If you have a gas water heater, keep pipe insulation at least 6 inches away from the flue. Insulate hot and cold water lines. The latter can prevent condensation and freezing pipes. Insulating your water heater can save 7% to 16% on water heating costs, according to the DOE. Insulation kits are available at hardware stores, but remember – don't obstruct the pressure relief valve, thermostats or access valves.

**TIP 2** **Seal air leaks**

Air sealing and insulation are an excellent combination for minimizing home energy use. Insulation is like

a warm sweater for your home, and air sealing is the windbreaker. All the cracks, gaps and holes in a typical home can be like having a window open year-round. Air sealing eliminates those leaks. It can be done as a do-it-yourself project or by a professional.

**TIP 3** **Keep windows tight and add layers**

Windows can be a source of drafts and wasted energy, so close windows tightly.

Add weatherstripping around windows to prevent warm air from escaping your home and caulk the gaps where the window trim meets the wall and the window frame. Add curtains to make the room feel warmer.

Storm windows are a lower-cost option for upgrading single-pane windows. They are available with low-emissivity coatings, which insulate better, and are available for installation either from the inside or outside of the window.

**TIP 4** **Use dampers effectively**

When I was little, my dad told me it was too cold to have a fire. I remember thinking that made no sense, but he was right.

We had an open, wood-burning fireplace – not a wood stove. A fireplace can draw the warm air out of the house, cooling it down or causing your heating system to use more energy.

Your fireplace adds ambiance to your home but isn't necessarily effective at heating it. If you have a wood-burning fireplace, close the damper when your fire is extinguished. An open damper in the winter is an easy exit for the air you paid to heat.

Adding tempered glass doors to a wood-burning fireplace can create an extra buffer between the cold outside and a cozy living space.

Some gas fireplaces require a damper to remain permanently open so that gas can vent out of the home. Check the specifications of your unit to ensure safe operation.

**TIP 5** **Check your filters**

Maintaining a clean filter in your furnace is one of the best ways to keep it running efficiently and prevent costly repairs. Check your furnace or ductless heat pump filter monthly during peak heating season.

*Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

## ARE YOU CLOSING OFF PART OF YOUR HOME DURING THE WINTER?

### FOLLOW THESE BEST PRACTICES

There is often a lot of debate about the best way to close off rooms or parts of the home in the winter to save energy.

Best practices come down to the type of heat source. If you have a zonal heating system, where individual areas are controlled separately, you can close doors and only heat the areas you use. Examples of zonal systems are wall heaters, baseboard heat, hydronic radiant heat, radiators and ductless heat pumps, also called mini-splits.

Keep areas with plumbing or water lines warm enough so pipes do not freeze.

If you have a central forced-air heating system, leave doors open to all heated areas. Closing doors and register dampers force the system to work harder, use more energy and can shorten the life of heating equipment.



# APPLIANCES THAT USE THE MOST ENERGY

BY TOLU OMOTOSO

Have you ever received your energy bill and wondered which appliances use the most energy? Don't worry – you're not alone. A few years ago, after being away for a somewhat lengthy trip, I arrived home to a typical energy bill. I was surprised because I expected a lower bill after being away from home, so I began a search for some answers.

## Home heating and cooling adds up

According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), a typical U.S. home spends more than \$2,000 annually on energy bills, and on average, more than half of household energy consumption is for just two energy end uses: space heating and air conditioning. This shows the importance of adjusting the thermostat when you're away because it truly makes a difference on monthly bills.

Water heaters tend to be the third-largest energy user at 13%, followed by lighting, which usually accounts for about 12.5% of the average energy bill.

These insights can help you better understand and control your energy consumption. I've been able to save money by using helpful devices like smart thermostats, water heater controllers and smart power strips to control my energy consumption.

## Factors affecting energy use

Several factors affect the amount of energy a household uses, including geographic location and climate, the number of people in the home,



A smart or programmable thermostat can help you manage energy used to heat or cool your home.



Photo Source: Steven Ungermann

If your major appliances are more than 10 years old, they're likely operating inefficiently. Consider purchasing newer, more efficient models to save more energy over the long run.

the type of home and its physical characteristics. The efficiency of energy-consuming devices and the amount of time they are used also impact home energy consumption.

## Six tips to save energy and money

- 1 Use ENERGY STAR®-rated appliances and devices.**
- 2 Replace old, inefficient equipment.** If your air conditioner, furnace or water heater is more than 10 years old, it is likely using a lot more energy than necessary. A newer model will save you money in the long run.
- 3 Use appliances with efficiency in mind.** Only wash full loads of clothes or dishes, and cook with smaller, countertop appliances instead of the oven when possible.
- 4 Set your thermostat.** When you're in the home and active, the Department of Energy recommends setting it to 78 degrees in the summer and 68 degrees in the winter.

- 5 Use energy-efficient LED bulbs.** They use 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs and last 25 times longer.

- 6 Plug electronics into a smart power strip.** This allows you to designate "always on" for devices that need to maintain network connection, while cutting power from devices like speakers and TVs when they are not in use.

In addition to the tips shared above, consider using real-time energy monitors to help identify faulty appliances or other problems that might run unnoticed for extended periods of time, leading to high energy bills.

With a little extra attention to how you use energy in your home, you'll be well on your way to a path of energy savings and lower energy bills.

*Tolu Omotoso is the director of energy solutions at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

# 4 STEPS FOR FOOD SAFETY WHEN COOKING WITH TURKEY

Food safety is a top priority when you're in the kitchen. A few simple steps will help make sure your Thanksgiving turkey is ready for the table and you and your loved ones stay healthy.

When cooking with turkey, as with all fresh products, consumers should wash their hands, surfaces and cooking utensils, avoid cross-contamination with other foods, cook food to a proper internal temperature and refrigerate leftovers promptly to eliminate food safety risks.

When in doubt, following the Core Four Food Safety Practices will help protect you from foodborne illnesses.

## STEP 1

### Clean – Hands and surfaces

In the kitchen, handwashing is a critical step in preparing healthy, safe meals and preventing foodborne illnesses. Wash hands with soap vigorously before and after handling raw poultry.

Wash used cutting boards, dishes, utensils and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item.

Consider using paper towels to clean kitchen surfaces and dry your hands. If you use cloth towels, wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.

## STEP 2

### Separate – Prevent cross-contamination in the kitchen

Use separate cutting boards for raw poultry and any other food that does not require cooking. Carefully clean all cutting boards, countertops and utensils with soap and hot water before and after preparing raw poultry. Don't rinse your turkey!

Rinsing your turkey can spread harmful germs and bacteria around the kitchen and increases the risk of cross-contamination.



## STEP 3

### Cook – Cook turkey to proper internal temperature

Use a meat thermometer to verify your turkey has reached the safest internal temperature of 165 degrees F. For a whole turkey, the temperature should be checked in at least three places: the innermost part of the thigh, the innermost part of the wing and the thickest part of the breast. If stuffed, the innermost part of the stuffing should also reach 165 degrees F.

Never place cooked turkey on an unwashed plate that was used to hold raw meat. Sanitize meat thermometers in-between tests.

Leftover foods or ready-to-eat foods should be cooked until steaming hot. You can also use your meat thermometer to make sure they reach 165 degrees F.

## STEP 4

### Chill – Refrigerate promptly and properly

Refrigerate perishable foods as soon as possible. Freeze raw turkey that will not be cooked before the “use-by date” on the packaging or within two days of purchase. Thaw turkey in the refrigerator, ideally in a bowl or other dish on the lowest shelf. Never thaw or marinate foods on the counter.

Once cooked, slice turkey off the bone (you can leave the leg and thigh intact), cover and refrigerate promptly. According to USDA guidelines, discard any uneaten food if left out for more than two hours. Leftovers can be kept in the refrigerator for 3-4 days or frozen for 3-4 months.

Source: National Turkey Federation

# IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES DISCUSS INDUSTRY ISSUES WITH NATIONAL POLICYMAKERS

Earlier this fall, two dozen Iowa Rural Power advocates participated in the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' (IAEC) annual fall fly-in to Washington, D.C.

Iowa electric cooperative board directors and staff attended meetings and events coordinated by IAEC along with other Midwest electric cooperatives and statewide associations as part of our annual Congressional advocacy work. In consultation with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), Iowa's electric co-ops highlighted issues of concern related to permitting reform, the 2023 Farm Bill, land use policy for renewable energy projects and supply chain uncertainty.

Over two days in D.C., co-op advocates met with all six members of Iowa's Congressional delegation to continue the dialogue about policy issues that impact Iowa's electric cooperatives and the rural communities we serve. The group also visited with representatives from the Nuclear Energy Institute to learn more about the group's national perspective and the potential of small modular reactor technology.

"We appreciate the service of Iowa's elected officials and the tireless work of their staff who help look out for Iowans in the halls of Congress," says Kevin Condon, IAEC director of government relations. "These meetings are important to provide electric cooperatives and elected officials the opportunity to discuss topics that have the potential to impact member-consumers in all of Iowa's 99 counties."

The next planned trip for Iowa Rural Power advocates will be in the spring of 2023 as part of the NRECA's annual Legislative Conference. If you have questions about policy issues impacting the energy industry, feel free to contact your local electric cooperative.



# LONG LIVE THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

In this month of Thanksgiving, there's so much to be grateful for – including good roads.

I've been thinking a lot about roads the past few years as I wrote "The Lincoln Highway in Iowa – A History." I've traveled the Lincoln Highway countless times during my more than 20 years as an ag journalist. The more I learned about this storied route, the more I knew this history needed to be preserved.

If you've ever traveled on an interstate (or any paved road, for that matter) you owe a debt of gratitude to the visionaries who promoted the Lincoln Highway. In 1913, the Lincoln Highway became the first coast-to-coast highway, connecting New York City to San Francisco. It passed right through Iowa, from Clinton to Council Bluffs.

## Paving a grand idea

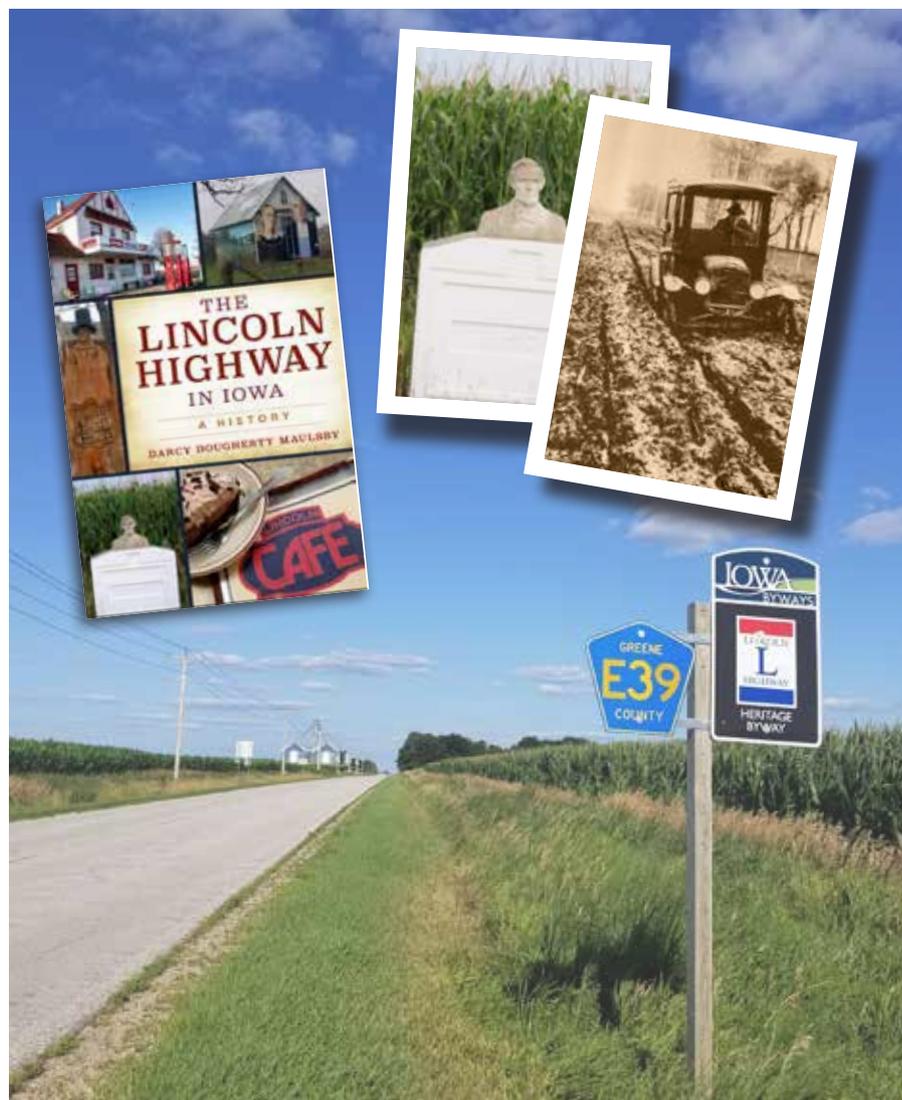
The Lincoln Highway is what we know as Highway 30. As much as 85% of the original highway is still drivable in Iowa, according to the Lincoln Highway Association (LHA).

While it's hard to imagine now, there were almost no good roads to speak of in the U.S., especially in Iowa, as late as 1912. Most roads were just dirt: bumpy and dusty in dry weather, muddy and impassable in wet weather. It was much easier to take the train – or just stay home.

Still, Iowans were restless, especially after Henry Ford introduced the Model T in 1908. As automobile fever spread, an entrepreneur named Carl Fisher took note. His Indianapolis Motor Speedway proved successful, especially after he paved it with brick. By 1912, Fisher dreamed of another grand idea: a highway spanning the continent.

## Pieces of the past remain

It was a long, hard road (pun intended) to make this dream a reality, but by Oct. 31, 1913, the LHA dedicated the route of the Lincoln Highway. I'm convinced no state today can compare



to Iowa when it comes to getting a sense of what it might have been like for earlier generations of motorists on the Lincoln Highway.

We can check into some of the same places travelers did decades ago, like the Lincoln Hotel in Lowden. We can eat in the same restaurants, like the Lincoln Café in Belle Plaine, Taylor's Maid-Rite in Marshalltown or the Pink Poodle Steakhouse in Crescent.

There are countless pieces of the past just waiting to be discovered along the Lincoln Highway in Iowa. This reminds me of the late Charles Kuralt. After retiring from CBS News, he hit the road to explore America. He valued good

food, neighborliness, craftsmanship, quaintness and quirkiness, all linked to the good, decent people who live in America's cities, small towns and farms.

## Experiencing the real America

Here in Iowa, in the spirit of Kuralt, you can still find inspiring stories of dynamic entrepreneurs, people who care about their community, and rural revitalization, mixed with historic preservation, along the Lincoln Highway. This is the ultimate Iowa road trip, especially if you want to experience the real America. For that, I am thankful.

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