



Corning | Mount Ayr | Stanton

Southwest lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

February 2023

Electric Co-ops Advocate for Rural Iowa Priorities as 2023 Legislative Session Begins

More than 150 directors, managers and employees from Iowa’s electric cooperatives discussed priorities with over 100 state legislators on January 10 during our 2023 Welcome Back Legislative Reception in downtown Des Moines. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the annual reception in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and FUEL Iowa.

The event provided a valuable opportunity to meet with state legislators at the beginning of the 2023 Legislative Session to discuss issues that impact rural electric cooperatives and the communities we serve. For example, we’re concerned about secretive industrial and commercial corporations that are seeking to circumvent Iowa’s electric service territory laws; these protections exist to provide stability for Iowa homes, farms and businesses. Iowa’s electric co-ops are also opposed to any legislation that would deny landowners the option to use their property for utility-scale solar generation if they so choose.

In the coming months, the Iowa General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to Iowa’s rural economy. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, electric co-op directors, managers and staff will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues. Collectively, Iowa’s locally owned electric cooperatives provide affordable, reliable, safe and environmentally responsible power to more than 650,000 Iowans throughout all 99 counties every day.



Pictured left to right...

- Sarah Newton, SWIAREC Director of Finance/ Administrative Services*
- Phil Kinser, SWIAREC General Manager/ CEO*
- Marilyn Werner, SWIAREC Board President*
- Senator Amy Sinclair*
- Senator Mark Costello*
- Deena Moore, SWIAREC Board member*
- Justin Murphy, SWIAREC Director of Operations*
- Tim Pfeiffer, SWIAREC Director of Member Services*



Legislative Meeting



Representatives Tom Moore, Devon Wood, David Sieck and Jonathan Bladt, Regional Director with Senator Grassley

Proactively Providing Safe and Reliable Service



Phil Kinser, CEO

When electric cooperative member-owners are asked what they value most about their electric service, two things consistently rank near the top – reliability and affordability. With a 5-year annual average reliability rate of 99.98%, we know reliability doesn't happen by chance. It takes constant effort to maintain systems, improve where necessary, and anticipate our member-owners' increasing needs for electric service.

During the winter months, reliability is under greater scrutiny from our member-owners. Old Man Winter's fury of snow and ice storms, combined with strong winds, can put our systems to the test in a significant way. When outages occur, the most frequent cause is trees or other vegetation coming into contact with power lines. These types of outages are not only inconvenient for our member-owners but also costly to your cooperative's bottom line, which impacts affordability over the long-term.

We know that vegetation – especially trees – are valued parts of our landscape. Beyond enhancing the beauty of an area, they provide important functions like cool shade, noise barriers, supplying vital oxygen to the atmosphere, and providing a habitat for many animals. But trees also grow, which can cause problems with power lines if they are not properly planted or if volunteer trees rise in unintended areas.

When branches and limbs break off, they often land in roadways or bring the power lines down with them – posing a safety risk to cooperative employees and the public. Because our distribution system connects thousands of people across our service territory, one tree coming in contact with a power line may impact your neighbors near and far. The Iowa Electrical Safety Code requires electric utilities, including cooperatives, to have a schedule and procedures for regular tree trimming and vegetation management, which is critical in minimizing these instances.

Both federal and state policies require that vegetation must be cleared from power lines as a safety measure for member-owners and our employees. These groups also have strict guidelines, including prohibiting trees from being planted certain distances away from power lines.

Under our vegetation management program, maintaining line clearance is our primary objective. We do this while ensuring we trim vegetation in an environmentally responsible manner. The tree trimming process has two purposes – to remove elements that may already be coming into contact with utility equipment, such as wires and conductors and to create a clearance that will provide hazard-free operation of electric service.

Using the established standards as the guide, we also know that a methodical, proactive approach is important to ensure the safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible delivery of service. Like many things in life, preventative maintenance is a key to health – oil changes are vital to the longevity of a vehicle, regular dental visits are important in cavity prevention, and annual inspections and maintenance will likely extend the life of your furnace. Left to chance – rather than being proactive – your vehicle, teeth or furnace would likely suffer. The same is true with your cooperative's electric system. By proactively clearing vegetation before it reaches power lines, Southwest Iowa REC will be less impacted during severe weather and we'll avoid longer, more costly outages.

The areas we will be performing vegetation management practices in this year are as follows:

Adams County – Jasper and Nodaway townships

Cass County – Edna, Noble, and Victoria townships

Decatur County – Bloomington, Burrell, Eden, Fayette, Hamilton, Morgan, New Buda, and Woodland townships

Montgomery County – E. Jackson, Grant, Frankfort, Jackson, and Washington townships

Ringgold County – Athens, Lotts Creek, and Riley townships

Taylor County – Nodaway township

Your Privacy is Important

At Southwest Iowa REC, we recognize that a key element of the member-cooperative relationship is the trust that you place with us to respect the privacy and confidentiality of your personal information. We are committed to providing you with the highest quality of electric service. While personal information about you is fundamental to our ability to do this, your privacy is also very important to us.

Therefore, Southwest Iowa REC will not disclose to non-affiliated third parties any information, including personal financial or consumption histories, without the expressed consent of the member/consumer. The Cooperative does reserve the right to use information for purposes relevant to prudent engineering and design practices and power procurement practices, which are consistent with the industry requirements, and for the betterment of the Cooperative and its membership, as a whole.

We restrict access to non-public personal information for all member-consumers to only those employees or affiliates who need to know specific information to provide products and services to the member/consumer. We maintain physical, electronic and procedural safeguards that, to the best of our abilities, provide prudent and sufficient protection for all non-public personal information.

Information shall not be released to any third party until such time as the member/consumer approves, in writing, such authorization. Forms for the release of information may be obtained from the Cooperative office.

Southwest Iowa REC may collect non-public personal information from the following:

- a. Information we receive from you on applications or forms.
- b. Information regarding payment histories, consumption history, demand history or capacity requirements.

Scholarships Reminder



Southwest Iowa REC will once again be offering scholarships for the 2022-2023 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, 2023 to be eligible.

Please find scholarship applications at swiarec.coop/scholarships

Accepting Applications for High School Leadership Trip to D.C.

Southwest Iowa REC will send 1 student on an all-expenses Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., in June



Students can apply now for a trip to Washington, D.C., from June 17-23!



Area students interested in government and public service are encouraged to apply. Learn more at IowaYouthTour.com

At Southwest Iowa REC, one way we invest in the next generation of rural Iowa leaders is by participating in the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program. We're looking for high school sophomores, juniors, or seniors with a passion for government and public service to apply for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to our nation's capital in June.

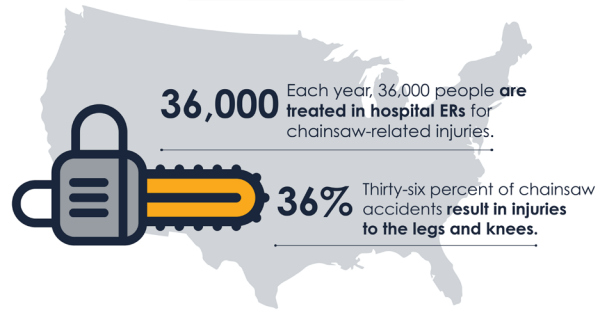
1 student will be selected from eligible candidates to attend the 2023 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., from June 17-23 along with 40 other student leaders from Iowa. The Iowa Youth Tour group will join with hundreds of students from across the country as they learn more about electric cooperatives and American history and come home with a greater understanding of their role as an American citizen. Students will also learn about U.S. government and meet with their members of Congress. On the trip, students take in the sights of D.C. as they visit monuments, museums, and historical landmarks. Students who go on Youth Tour often call it the trip of a lifetime!

We are accepting Youth Tour applications now through March 15th. High school students attending a school within our service area are eligible to apply; the student must be a current sophomore, junior or senior high school student. The application process consists of completing our application form which includes an essay question. We will conduct in-person interviews with finalists. You can download our form at swiarec.coop/youth-tour or stop by our office for a printed copy. Contact Suzy, Southwest Iowa REC Administrative Assistant, at 888-220-4869 ext. 1 for more information.

For more than 60 years, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives have been sending deserving students to D.C. This program is a great resume builder for student leaders and a wonderful opportunity to kickstart one's passion for government affairs or advocacy. Make sure to apply for Youth Tour 2023 by March 15th!

Chainsaw Safety

- STATISTICS -



The average chainsaw injury requires 110 stitches.



The two most common places for injuries are the front left thigh and the back of the left hand.



One in five chainsaw injuries is from kickback.



Kickback is the single greatest cause of injury to chainsaw users.



Medical costs for chainsaw injuries amount to around 350 million dollars per year.



Kickback, binding, and pull-in cause the most injuries from chainsaws.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- INJURIES -

Source: U.S. Product Safety Commission



Head Injuries
3,418



Upper Body Area
2,141



Arm and Hand Area
17,994



Leg Area
16,348



Foot Area
2,885

Safe Electricity.org®

Safety Tip

Do not trim trees/branches within 10 feet of a power line or pole. Only certified line clearance tree trimmers are authorized to trim near power lines.



Safe Electricity.org®

SCAM! Alert!

Beware of phone scams!!

Every year, thousands of people lose money to telephone scams — from a few dollars to their life savings. Scammers will say anything to cheat people out of money. Some seem very friendly — calling you by your first name, making small talk, and asking about your family. They may claim to work for a company you trust, or they may send mail or place ads to convince you to call them. Keep these tips in mind when dealing with questionable phone calls.

Fraud prevention tips:

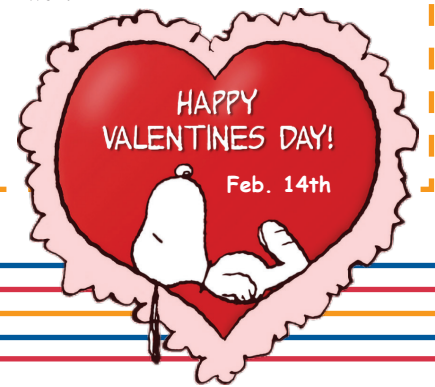
- The REC would never contact a member by phone and ask for their account number. If someone calls you asking for sensitive information including your utility account number, SSN, credit card number or bank account details, please hang up and call the REC directly to verify the call. (Do not use any phone number supplied by the possible scammer; call the REC using one of the phone numbers we have provided to you.)
- Do not accept offers from anyone, including those claiming to be REC employees, to pay your bill or provide any other service for a fee. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- REC members who have delinquent accounts receive multiple notifications over the course of several weeks prior to electric service disconnection – never just a single notification immediately before disconnection.
- If a REC lineman or member service rep comes to your door, they should be

Cowboy Casserole

- 1/2 pound ground beef, (85/15)
- 1 cup corn
- 2/3 cup Condensed Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded and divided
- 1/3 cup whole milk
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 32 ounces tater tots



1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a large skillet, cook beef over medium heat until browned.
3. Add the corn, cream of mushroom soup, 1/2 cup cheese, milk, sour cream, onion powder, black pepper, and bacon to the skillet and mix well.
4. In a 9x13 pan layer the beef, then the cheese and finally line up the tater tots before baking for 40-45 minutes uncovered.
5. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and bake another 5 minutes.



wearing REC apparel and have a marked vehicle with proper identification. If something seems suspicious, keep your door shut and call the REC office to verify that someone has been sent to your address.

- If you receive a suspicious call or believe you may be a victim of fraud or attempted fraud, call the REC and local law enforcement right away to report the incident.

You can find some additional resources online through the Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Information resource site:

<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0076-phone-scams>

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.



2022 Energy Efficiency & Beneficial Electrification Program Delivery Costs = \$.0030/kwh



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