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AUGUST 2020

Win a food dehydrator and cookbook ▶ See Page 3



Iowa students take top honors for electric co-op documentary

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Celebrating a voting milestone; hear from female electric co-op directors

Recipes to use fresh herbs

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Features

6 Iowa students break through barriers; take top honors

Five northwest Iowa middle school students are celebrating after winning top honors for their documentary on rural electrification at the 2020 National History Day® national finals.



8 Herbalicious recipes

Fresh herbs can elevate any dish! Co-op cooks share their favorite recipes to use the flavor-packed accents. **PLUS:** Find out how you can receive a \$25 credit on your power bill!



10 Electric cooperatives' commitment to democratic values

In August, the nation marks the centennial of women's right to vote. Iowa's electric cooperatives have served as incubators for the leadership skills that guide co-op-served communities today.



Favorites

3 Statewide Perspective

Adapting to new circumstances

14 Financial Matters

Utility bill assistance for small businesses

3 Editor's Choice Contest

Win a food dehydrator and cookbook

15 Out Back

Memories of baling hay

ON THE COVER



Shining Examples

Five Akron-Westfield students earn top honors retelling the rural electric cooperative story. From left to right: Ben Philips, Hayden Wahlberg, Lainey Schuknecht, Addison Naslund and Josie Jacobs. On Pages 6-7, read more about the students' achievement. Photo by Rachel Rogers, Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative. ⚡

Adapting to new circumstances as we educate and train

BY KATRINA DAVIS

As a new school year is about to begin, parents and school staff have been learning a lot about the complex challenges of providing quality education and ensuring safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), the statewide trade association for your local electric co-op, we are experiencing similar hurdles. In my role as the director of education and training, I manage and coordinate dozens of conferences, trainings and workshops in a typical calendar year, but this year has been anything BUT typical.



One of our top priorities at IAEC is to provide valuable and relevant training and educational opportunities for the employees and directors of our member cooperatives. As we adapt to physical distancing restrictions to ensure safety, meeting face-to-face has become impractical for most of our usual events. But where some may see obstacles, we are working to identify opportunities to deliver necessary information through virtual formats.

For example, our statewide safety department usually conducts on-site inspections and safety visits with our member co-ops throughout the year. During the pandemic, they have modified their usual face-to-face approach and pivoted to virtual check-ins to provide needed safety communication. It's not a perfect substitution, but the virtual technology allows our job training and safety instructors to keep close contact with operational staff at our member cooperatives without the health risks during the pandemic.

At IAEC, we also manage several in-person conferences for various co-op employee groups like accountants, managers, information technology

professionals, human resources professionals, line superintendents and foremen, and communicators during a typical year. Like many other events across the country, these conferences were canceled in the spring and summer of 2020 due to pandemic-related health concerns. As the dates for our fall conferences come into focus, we're evaluating our options to deliver the training and educational

resources in a virtual format as we adapt to our new reality. Maintaining a safe distance between attendees at a conference center is difficult when you consider how to safely serve meals, coordinate breaks and ensure proper distancing in elevators and restrooms. Even something simple like providing coffee becomes a health concern during the pandemic. Managing large groups of people has suddenly become a challenging effort,

as school administrators are well aware.

So, while our circumstances have been limiting for the time being, we are moving forward in exploring other ways to deliver educational resources to Iowa's electric cooperatives. Advancements in technology make it possible for us to bridge geographical and physical limitations so our association members can continue learning and networking as they serve rural Iowans with safe, affordable, reliable and sustainable power.

As you work to overcome challenges brought on by the pandemic, I hope you embrace new and creative ways to connect and learn. I am confident that we can adapt to our circumstances and thrive if we look out for one another and stay optimistic. ⚡

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

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a food dehydrator and cookbook!



Win a six-tray food dehydrator, perfect for food storage like beef jerky, fruits, vegetables and making fruit rolls for the kiddos. Plus, win an essential cookbook to put your food dehydrator to work with instructions and techniques for drying all the most popular fruits and vegetables, along with meat and herbs. ⚡

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.livingwithenergyiowa.com no later than Aug. 31, 2020. 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 home improvement gift card from the June issue was Christi Eckhoff, Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Everybody counts in applying democracy. And there will never be a true democracy until every responsible and law-abiding adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own inalienable and unpurchasable voice in government.”

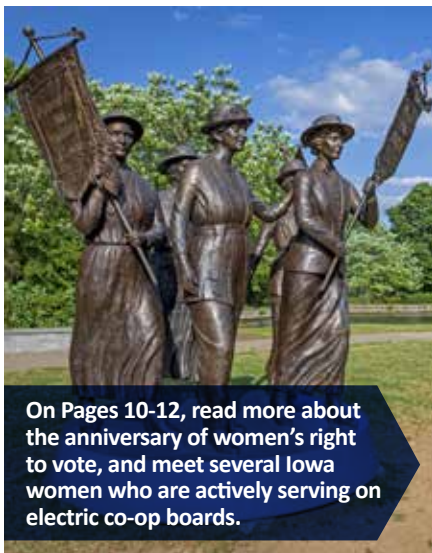
– Carrie Chapman Catt in 1917

Carrie Lane Chapman Catt, an Iowa State University alumna who devoted most of her life to the expansion of women’s rights around the world as well as international peace, is recognized as one of the key leaders of the American women’s suffrage movement. Her superb oratory and organizational skills led to ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote in August 1920.

The Carrie Lane Chapman Catt Girlhood Home and Museum, located near Charles City, Iowa, is the historic site that provides an opportunity for guests to visit the home where Carrie’s personality – and spunk – were formed by her family and community.

The home and museum are served by Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative, which is based in Allison and serves members in the Iowa counties of Bremer, Butler, Floyd and Chickasaw. For more information on the tourist attraction, visit www.catt.org.

Sources: Iowa State University and www.catt.org.



On Pages 10-12, read more about the anniversary of women’s right to vote, and meet several Iowa women who are actively serving on electric co-op boards.

SCOTT'S SAFETY SHARE



Keeping hand sanitizer in a vehicle



There has been a lot of concern about the safety of keeping hand sanitizer inside a vehicle. I believe the benefit of having quick

access to hand sanitizer currently outweighs the risk. However, every person should determine their own personal comfort level for doing so.

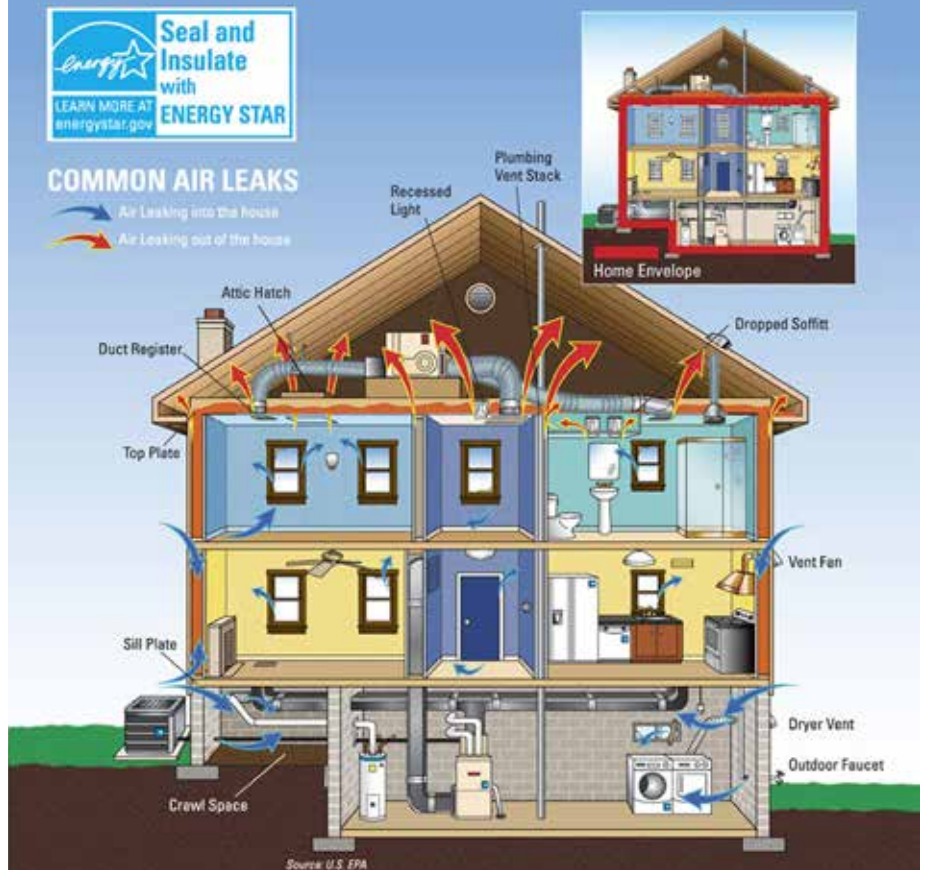
My rationale:

All materials must be converted to a vapor before burning. If you look closely at a candle, you will notice a gap of vapor between the wick and the flame. All materials convert to

vapor at different temperatures, and of course, not all materials will burn. Hand sanitizer contains approximately 80% alcohol and converts to a vapor around 72 degrees F (its flash point). It would still require an ignition source to burn. There are some pictures online showing an interior car fire related to hand sanitizer. A spark likely occurred in the door control or by a cigarette, which led to the fire. ⚡

Scott Meinecke is the director of safety and loss control for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. He is also an assistant chief on an Iowa fire department and a fire service instructor for the State Fire Marshal’s Office.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Some of the most common areas for air leaks may not be where you think they are. Visit Page 13 for some easy, step-by-step ways to seal air leaks.

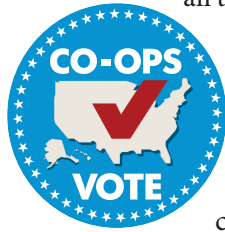
Photo Credit: ENERGYSTAR

Acting for the future



Across the country, electric cooperatives understand what's important to our homes and our communities, and we understand that registering to vote and voting in every election is vital to protecting our way of life. So is building relationships with elected officials, so they understand the unique issues we face.

Co-ops Vote is a grassroots movement designed to encourage voter registration, political engagement and participation in local, state and national affairs. The initiative strives to ensure that issues



that matter in rural America are heard everywhere, from local councils all the way up to the U.S. Capitol.

"We provide the information to co-op consumer-members to find out how, where and when to vote, and information on the issues that affect rural communities," says Laura

Vogel, an NRECA senior political advisor. "We do not tell people who to vote for, and we don't endorse candidates."

As part of Co-ops Vote, Iowa's electric co-ops are supporting National Voter Registration Day,

Sept. 22, to encourage political participation leading up to the November elections.

Please join us, and make sure our elected leaders know that we expect them to represent all the people electric cooperatives serve. Follow @CoopsVote on Facebook and Twitter to stay updated and watch for more information in upcoming issues of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine. ⚡

To register or to find out if you are registered to vote, visit the Iowa Secretary of State's website at www.sos.iowa.gov or contact your local county auditor.

SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE

Iowa's electric co-ops support biofuels bill becoming law

On June 30, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds was joined by many biofuels supporters, including representatives from Midland Power Cooperative and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), as she signed Senate File 2403 into law.

IAEC's coordination with and support for the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association, the Iowa Corn Growers Association and the Iowa Soybean Association helped lend a hand in securing an overwhelming bipartisan, unanimous passage of the

bill. Specifically, the law modifies and expands the tax differential applied to a gallon of gas that includes E15 ethanol, up from the E10 blend that was required under the previous law. This action will help incentivize the higher blends of ethanol and will hopefully help bring back some stability to the industry over time.

Additionally, the law will also help stretch the current Road Use Tax Fund by tens of millions of dollars over the next few years, which will ensure that more of Iowa's roads and bridges receive the repairs and maintenance they need.

The signing ceremony took place in Hardin County at the Pine Lake Corn Processors facility in Steamboat Rock. Midland Power Cooperative, based in Jefferson, serves the facility and

the co-op's presence helped put a face on cooperative support for the biofuels industry.

"Iowa biofuels are a vital element of the state's entire economy, and we thank Gov. Reynolds for signing Senate File 2403 into law. Extending Iowa's biofuel tax differentials and providing support at this critical time is important for Iowa's economy and environment," says Jack Runge, board president, Midland Power Cooperative. "We thank the Iowa Legislature and also appreciate the efforts of Sen. Randy Feenstra and Rep. Louis Zumbach for their leadership in managing the legislation."

Bill McKim, CEO, Midland Power Cooperative, adds, "Biofuels, like ethanol, provide a market for our electric cooperative members' grain, and these facilities are also important sources of feed products for livestock producers across the state. The economic ripple effects of a strong biofuels industry in Iowa are significant. ⚡



Photo courtesy of Iowa Gov. Reynolds' office.

Iowa students break through

BY ANGELA CATTON

Five northwest Iowa middle school students are celebrating after winning top honors for their documentary on rural electrification at the 2020 National History Day® (NHD) national finals. The NHD awards ceremony was held online in June due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each year, more than 500,000 middle and high school students around the world participate in the NHD program. Iowa sent 69 students to this year's national finals where they competed for top honors against nearly 3,000 other students. "We are proud of our student participants who represented Iowa well on the national level and congratulate them on their achievements," says State Historical Society of Iowa Administrator Susan Kloewer.

Josie Jacobs, Addison Naslund, Ben Philips, Lainey Schuknecht and Hayden Wahlberg, students at Akron-Westfield Middle School in Plymouth County, Iowa, won first place in the junior group division for their 10-minute documentary, "Rural Electrification: Breaking Barriers with the Flip of a Switch." Valorie Philips, Akron-Westfield Middle



This past winter, the Akron-Westfield students met with Ben Philips' great-aunt Wanda Philips. Learning about her experiences was a key element in their research about the history of rural electrification.

School instructor and NHD coach along with parent mentors LeAnne Philips and Arica Schuknecht, provided ongoing guidance to her students during project development.

"What is exceptional about this group's success is that these students have not been together in the same room since the district contest in mid-March," Philips says.

The National History Day in Iowa program has been coordinated by the State Historical Society of Iowa, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, since 1994. Students progress through achievement levels during the competition; however, this year's pandemic restrictions kept the students from showcasing their work in Des Moines and Washington, D.C.

National History Day is a non-profit education organization, which provides a yearlong academic enrichment program that challenges students to research, develop and present papers, exhibits, documentaries, websites and performances about historical topics related to a designated annual theme. This year's theme was "Breaking Barriers in History."

Why rural electrification?

The five students from Akron-Westfield Middle School chose to tell the story of rural electric cooperatives because they live in the heart of rural America and many of them have relatives who remember the day electricity came to the farm.

Lainey Schuknecht, a seventh grader involved in the project, says that the easiest part of the project was selecting rural electrification as the subject because, "We all liked it and agreed it fit the theme well. It is also an important part of history that doesn't get talked about much."

Student Ben Philips, who lives on Iowa's electric cooperative lines, shares, "My family's farm was one of the last ones in Plymouth County to get electricity through the local REC (rural electric cooperative) before World War II started. In our research, we learned that if farms didn't get connected before the war, they had to wait several more years for electricity until the war was over and electrification work started again."

Ben's family farm was originally served by Plymouth Electric



The students were invited to spend time at North West REC's Orange City office. CEO Lyle Korver provided a tour and talked with them about how cooperatives have evolved in their service to members over the past eight decades. Two students of the group are served by North West REC.

barriers; take top honors



Cooperative Association, which merged with two other area RECs in 1998 to form North West REC.

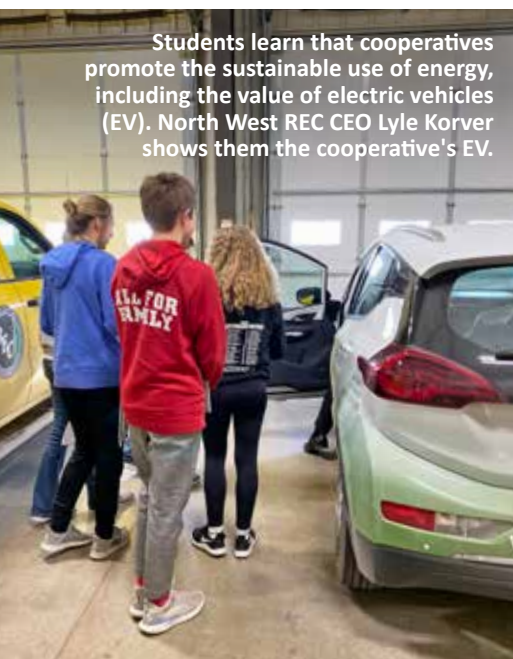
Ben's great aunts contributed to the retelling of the rural electrification story, adding a personal perspective to the work. In the students' documentary, Margaret Talbott and Wanda Philips speak of the physical and emotional impacts they felt when their lives – as young women responsible for carrying out many chores on the farm and in their homes – were made better through the introduction of electricity. The students' documentary opens with a quote from Wanda Philips, "A miracle is something that is resoundingly unusual and wonderful, and all of electricity was a miracle to me."

Seventh-grader Addison Naslund, was impressed that, "Electric co-ops are still working to serve many farms across the country today."

Shining light on the story

In October, the national organization communicates the chosen theme and students must select a related historical subject

Students learn that cooperatives promote the sustainable use of energy, including the value of electric vehicles (EV). North West REC CEO Lyle Korver shows them the cooperative's EV.



IOWA SENT 69 STUDENTS TO THE NATIONAL FINALS

WINNING

TOP HONORS OUT OF 3,000 OTHER STUDENTS

matter. Students must prepare a process paper, which frames the scope of the project in 500 words or less and include an annotated bibliography. For "Rural Electrification: Breaking Barriers with the Flip of a Switch," the group tapped 148 different sources.

North West REC and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (the primary power provider for North West REC) supplied historical photos and resources, such as the book, "The Next Greatest Thing: 50 Years of Rural Electrification In America" (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, 1984). The Iowa students were afforded a special opportunity when American Broadcaster Orion Samuelson agreed to a phone interview. Samuelson, inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame in 2003, is best known for his agricultural reporting. He talked with the students, providing extra commentary to support his videos that the students had already obtained while conducting their research. Samuelson is an enthusiastic proponent of rural

electrification and the value that it brought to rural America.

Wired to succeed

Students compiled their research and assets and worked as a group during school days in the winter. Then, in mid-March, everything changed. Josie Jacobs, a seventh grader, says, "I thought that sourcing the group's research was the easiest part of the project but the most challenging was finishing the documentary. We had virtual meetings once a week and did sources at home."

Hayden Wahlberg, a seventh grader, has prior experience with NHD projects and won first place at nationals with a previous entry. He says, "This year proved much more difficult because we were not able to meet up and work on the documentary together before nationals."

The story of these five young students' success has much in common with the story of rural electrification and the dedicated work of many individuals to bring electricity to America's farms and rural communities. Success can only be achieved when people work together for a common goal. Addison, Ben, Hayden, Josie and Lainey displayed a high degree of dedication that was also evident more than 80 years ago when hard work and commitment broke through barriers to bring electricity to rural Americans. ⚡



Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/DJKHAX34TfY>

Angela Catton is the manager of member relations and development for Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative.

Herbalicious

RECIPES



Summer Herb Meatballs

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 8 fresh sage leaves
- 8 large fresh basil leaves
- thyme leaves from 4 sprigs
- rosemary leaves from 1 sprig
- ¼ cup Italian parsley
- 1 large handful of arugula, chopped
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1 teaspoon coarse sea salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 cups tomato or marinara sauce (choose your favorite)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

Combine onion, garlic, herbs and arugula in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Transfer the mixture to a large mixing bowl along with turkey, salt and pepper. Combine, then roll into golf-ball sized meatballs. Begin warming the tomato sauce. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook the meatballs in batches until they're browned, 2-3 minutes each side. Transfer the meatballs to the tomato sauce and let the meatballs cook for 30 minutes. Serve with pasta, rice or summer veggies.

Kelly Pieper • Wever • Access Energy Cooperative

Bruschetta

- 12 slices of baguette, ¼-inch thick
- 3 roma tomatoes, diced small
- 9 large basil leaves, sliced very thin
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- 6 kalamata olives, pitted and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper

Bake bread on baking sheet at 350 degrees F for 5-6 minutes, turning once. Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl. Spread each toast slice with about 1 tablespoon of topping and enjoy.

Mary Thatcher • Breda
Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

Herbed Tomatoes

- ⅔ cup canola oil
- ¼ cup vinegar
- ¼ cup parsley, snipped
- ¼ cup green onion, sliced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme or marjoram
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- cherry tomatoes, halved

Combine all ingredients except for tomatoes in a bowl. Stir well and pour over desired amount of cherry tomatoes (or peeled tomatoes). Cover and chill several hours, occasionally spooning the dressing over the tomatoes. Keeps well in refrigerator.

Doris Redding • Parnell
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

Chive Parmesan Potato Chips

- 1 large red potato, may leave unpeeled
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 tablespoons fresh chives, minced
- ¾ teaspoon salt

Using a mandolin slicer, make long, thin slices of potato. Place potato slices and oil in a bowl. Add cheese, chives and salt, tossing to coat. Using an air fryer set at 375 degrees F, place a single layer of potato slices in the basket. Cook until edges are golden brown, about 20 minutes.

Twyla Godbersen • Arthur
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

IDENTIFYING HERBS

If the stems are tender and green, they're likely to fall into the soft or tender herbs category. Some common varieties include basil, parsley, mint, dill, tarragon and cilantro. Herbs with a harder wooden stem, one you wouldn't really want to eat, such as rosemary, thyme and sage, are generally called hardy (or hard) herbs.

Thai Quinoa Salad

- 1/2 cup quinoa or rice
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 2 celery stalks, finely diced
- 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and diced
- 2 scallions, white and green parts, finely snipped
- 1/4 cup packed, fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 tablespoons stacked, fresh basil, chopped
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 1/2 teaspoons fish sauce or salt to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes, or more to taste
- sunflower or pumpkin seeds

Soak rice 4 hours or overnight, rinse well. Cook according to package directions to create 1 cup cooked. Add to rice bowl the carrots, celery, cucumbers, scallions, cilantro and basil. Combine carefully. In a small bowl, whisk together lime juice, oil, honey, fish sauce or salt, and pepper flakes. Pour dressing over veggie bowl. To serve: sprinkle with sunflower or pumpkin seeds.

Anita Doughty • Ankeny • Consumers Energy

Delish Veggie Dip

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup Miracle Whip
- 1 tablespoon dill
- 1 tablespoon chives, chopped
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon onion, minced
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Combine all ingredients together and whisk until blended. Chill 1-2 hours, enjoy!

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

Grilled Rosemary Chicken

- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons balsamic or red wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 frying chickens

Combine all above ingredients except for chicken to make a marinade. Place chicken pieces in large plastic bag and pour marinade over. Seal bag and refrigerate 2-3 hours. Grill or broil chicken until juices run clear, about 15 minutes per side.

Janet Winter • Panora • Guthrie County REC

Sliced Tomatoes with Fresh Herb Dressing

- 4 large ripe tomatoes, sliced
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh chives, chopped
- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- salt and ground pepper, to taste

Arrange tomato slices in a shallow dish. Mix olive oil, herbs, garlic and vinegar. Pour mixture over tomatoes, covering evenly. Top with Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper. Cover and let set for 1 hour before serving.

Laura DeSmet • Larchwood
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

Wanted: Holiday appetizers and snacks The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

Delicious appetizers and snacks are often a favorite part of enjoying the holidays. Share your festive favorites! If we run your recipe in the magazine, we'll send a \$25 credit for your electric co-op to apply to your power bill. Recipes submitted also may be archived on our website at www.livingwithenergyiowa.com.

The deadline is Aug. 31, 2020. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions.

NEW: Please also provide the number of servings per recipe.

EMAIL:
recipes@livingwithenergyiowa.com
(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

MAIL:
Recipes
Living with Energy in Iowa
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48
Des Moines, IA 50322-2992

WASHING METHOD

Submerge herbs in a large bowl of cold water and gently agitate with your hands. Transfer damp herbs to a salad spinner and spin dry or spread damp herbs out on a towel or paper towel to dry.

HERB TIPS

USING LATER

Many clean, fresh and roughly chopped herbs can be frozen in ice cube trays, filled with olive oil or water. These individual herb cubes can be preserved for later use.

HERB TIPS

STORING METHODS

Tender or harder herbs require different storing methods to best ensure the levels of light, temperature, oxygen and moisture are balanced to avoid spoilage.

HERB TIPS

Electric cooperatives: A long and lasting commitment to democratic values

BY DERRILL HOLLY AND ANN THELEN



Congress approved the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on June 4, 1919, but it took more than a year for the measure granting women the right to vote to gain ratification by 36 states. On Aug. 18, 2020, the nation marks the centennial of this human rights milestone.

Rural America was built by and owes much of its success to family-run farms and businesses. While fathers and husbands are often celebrated throughout history and heritage, wives and mothers have been full partners in creating thousands of communities. In fact,

electric cooperatives have served as incubators for the leadership skills that guide co-op-served communities today. In Iowa, many female leaders serve as directors, helping to guide their local electric co-op.

Power and partnership

“Historically, rural wives were always isolated and only had interaction with their husbands and children, but they helped run farms and their homes,” says Betsy Huber, president and CEO of the National Grange.

Founded in 1867, the Grange chapters took root as fraternal

community organizations committed to promoting sound agricultural concepts in the North, South and the expanding West.

By the early 1900s, organizations like the Grange were providing rural women with meaningful leadership opportunities and fueling passions for full engagement in public life that included political participation.

Among the farm women embracing the suffragist cause was Febb Ensminger Burn, a widow from Tennessee, who ultimately played a decisive role in earning women the right to vote and forever changing U.S. history.

Between running her farm and caring for her family, she followed



Erected in 2018, the Burn Memorial depicts Rep. Harry Burn of Niota and his mother, Febb, and honors each of their roles in the ratification of the 19th Amendment.



Marchelle Brown
Centerville
Chariton Valley
Electric Cooperative

Director, 2.5 years

“When I first learned of the open director’s seat, I had recently retired from my full-time job and was intrigued by the opportunity. Being a director involves a lot more than attending monthly meetings. I strive to learn as much as possible through educational opportunities to help continue moving the co-op forward. It’s important to me to help bring new opportunities to our members. As a female board member, I can often bring a different perspective on how the services we provide can positively impact our members’ daily lives.”

Sue Shelton White, of Jackson, Tennessee, was state chairperson of the National Woman's Party and one of the editors of *The Suffragist* weekly newspaper.



news accounts from Nashville and was turned off by harsh opposition speeches against ratification in the summer of 1920. In August, she penned a seven-page letter to her son, Henry T. Burn, a freshman representative in the House of the Tennessee General Assembly.

"Vote for suffrage and don't keep them in doubt," Burn wrote to her 24-year-old son. "Don't forget to be a good boy and help."

With the letter from his mom in his pocket, Rep. Burn broke a 48-48 deadlock by changing his vote to pass the measure, and women nationwide were guaranteed the right to participate in all national elections.

"Voting is so much more than just a right, it is a privilege," says Amanda Wolfe, an NRECA senior political advisor, who lives in Nashville. "The Suffragettes fought for generations to finally win that privilege 100 years ago, and every time we cast a ballot, we honor their memories."

Fueling cooperative change

When electric cooperatives were organized years later, many of the same principles honored by rural organizations, including recognition of property rights, were among the fundamental tenets included in co-op charters. Family memberships were vested in heads of households, regardless of gender, and women were among the founding members of



Crystal Pluth
Estherville
Iowa Lakes Electric
Cooperative

Director, 8 years

"I work at a credit union full-time and understand that the cooperative business model is a positive differentiator when it comes to service. I was eager to run for the Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative board of directors when the opportunity came up. As a director, safety for our employees and members is always the number one priority. The seven cooperative principles guide our focus for every aspect of setting the strategic direction of the co-op. I truly appreciate the diverse perspectives between males and females, which add value to discussions and decision-making processes."

many electric cooperatives.

When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, farm magazines quickly published stories about the news. Maye Shaw of Quitman, Texas, was a former teacher and regular reader who knew life on the farm would be easier with electric power.

She wrote Rep. Morgan G. Sanders for information and persuaded her husband Virgil Shaw to look into

it. By 1937, they both were riding through the surrounding countryside recruiting members and collecting \$5 sign-up fees. Shaw eventually became the founding general manager of Wood County Electric Cooperative, which now serves nearly 36,000 meters and is still headquartered in Quitman.

"Though it was men who signed their names to charter Taylor EMC [in 1937], women have played a vital role in the cooperative's development and success," wrote authors of a 75th anniversary book on the history of Flint Energies. The Reynolds, Georgia-based co-op, originally founded as Taylor Electric Membership Corp., has enjoyed an active female membership since its early days.

Beulah Taylor and Ruby McKenzie became the cooperative's first female board members in 1938 and helped lead the co-op through some of its formative years. Similar stories took place across the county.

Fast forward to 2020, and female directors continue to be advocates for the cooperative business model, which is just as relevant today as it was in the 1930s. Embracing the dynamic and ever-changing industry, these leaders help to guide co-ops across Iowa. ⚡

Ann Thelen is the editor of *Living with Energy in Iowa*. Derrill Holly writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



Rebecca DeTar
Albia
Chariton Valley
Electric Cooperative

Director, 15 years

"I've been a member of an electric cooperative all of my life and understood the cooperative business model. I ran for election to see if I could put my experience to work. As a farm wife, I have always been involved in decision-making alongside my husband, and it's given me a lot of business understanding. As electric co-op members, it's important to remember that we all have a voice and that co-ops are different from for-profit utilities."

Electric cooperatives: A long and lasting commitment to democratic values

BY ANN THELEN

Embracing the dynamic and ever-changing industry, these female leaders help to guide electric co-ops across Iowa. They share why it's important to serve as directors of their local electric co-op. ⚡



The Woman Suffrage Monument, located in Nashville's Centennial Park, features five women who were actually in Nashville during the final ratification effort: Anne Dallas Dudley of Nashville; Frankie Pierce of Nashville; Sue Shelton White of Jackson; Abby Crawford Milton of Chattanooga; and Carrie Chapman Catt, the national suffrage leader who came to Nashville during the summer of 1920 to direct the pro-suffrage forces and stayed at the Hermitage Hotel.



Marilyn Werner
Shannon City
Southwest Iowa
Rural Electric
Cooperative

Director, 27 years

"I was elected in 1993 and became the first woman to serve on Rideta Electric's board of directors. The co-op consolidated with Southwest Iowa REC in 2004. As a director, the most important thing I do is share in the responsibility of providing safe, reliable energy to our cooperative membership by helping to set policy and make long-term decisions. To be an effective team player, I take my participation, good communication and continuing education very seriously. This is an exciting time in the electric industry, and it's important to stay informed and keep abreast of changes."



Pat VonAhnen
Marshalltown
Consumers Energy

Director, 12 years

"As an electric cooperative director, the most important thing is knowing that we represent our fellow co-op members. This service requires integrity and ethics. I strongly believe in the seven cooperative principles because they represent our members, communities and other co-ops. I encourage other women to become engaged; the co-op and the utility business is fascinating. I have learned so much about the industry and have met many wonderful people."



Shirley Benson
Remsen
North West Rural
Electric Cooperative

Director, 8 years

"As the first woman to have served on North West REC's board of directors, I enjoy the opportunity to impact the electric service members receive from the co-op. I have learned so much about how my cooperative operates financially and operationally. I also have become much more involved in local, state and federal legislative issues faced by cooperatives. Building relationships with elected officials and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives statewide has allowed me to widen my perspective of the importance of grassroots advocacy."



Share Brandt Allison
Butler County Rural
Electric Cooperative

Director, 3 years

"When I ran for an open seat on the board, I had just retired from a career working for electric co-ops. My experience was in education, member and legislative relations at statewide trade associations. I knew that I could contribute locally, so I threw my hat in the ring. I would urge other women members of an electric co-op to consider running for the board. Remember when electric co-ops were formed, it was also the housewives who called on neighbors to sign up for memberships. Their gain was electric stoves, washers and water pumps, and no longer lugging buckets. Your gain today is contributing to your community and co-op while learning about electricity in all its new forms."

Sealing air leaks, step by step

BY PAT KEEGAN AND BRAD THIESSEN

In many homes, about half of the conditioned air leaks to the outside every hour. The good news, especially if you don't want to spend a lot of money, or if you're hesitant to invite contractors into your home right now, is that you can seal air leaks on your own with a little time and effort. It will also be beneficial in the colder weather months.

Here are three steps to get you started. Keep in mind, there's much more to learn about sealing your home than we can cover in this article, so consider researching trusted websites for additional tips and tutorials.

Step 1: Find the leaks

The first step is a thorough visual search of the interior and exterior of the home. Look for gaps and holes in exterior walls, flooring and the ceiling. These will often occur where different building materials meet, such as the top of cement foundation walls or around windows and doors. Another common source of air leaks is where pipes or wiring penetrate a wall, floor or ceiling. Ductwork located in unheated crawl spaces or attics can also contain air leaks.

Exterior doors and windows that open deserve your attention. Open each door or window and place a dollar bill between the door or window sash and the frame. If you can pull the bill out easily when the door or window is closed again, the seal is not tight enough. Also, a window that rattles when it's closed or when it's windy probably isn't sealed sufficiently.

The best way to find all air leaks is to hire an energy auditor to do a blower door test. The blower door is a large fan that is mounted in a doorway to depressurize the house. The auditor can then find the leaks and may even be able to recommend ways to seal them.



Photo: Scott Van Osdol

Use caulk to seal gaps around non-moving parts of doors and windows.

Electrical outlets on outside walls are a common source of air leaks and are easily patched.



Photo: Marcela Gara, Resource Media

It's also possible to conduct your own whole-home pressure test. The Department of Energy provides detailed instructions at www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize/air-sealing-your-home/detecting-air-leaks.

Step 2: Gather the materials you'll need

Here's a quick list of materials to get you started:

- **Caulk:** You'll need a caulk gun (\$4+) and caulk (\$4 to \$10). We recommend indoor/outdoor waterproof silicone or latex caulk that is water-soluble until it cures and is paintable when dry.
- **Expanding spray foam:** One can typically costs \$4 to \$6. While it's an effective way to plug leaks, it can be a messy job.
- **Weather stripping:** There's a wide variety of weather-stripping options made of vinyl, metal and felt, or open-cell foam that works for most situations. Prices vary depending on type and length of the materials.

- **Pre-cut foam socket sealers:** A pack of 24 sealers typically costs about \$3.
- **Chimney plug balloon:** Prices range from \$50 to \$90. You may need a chimney plug balloon if your chimney flu doesn't seal well. Buy a square or round one to match the shape of your chimney flu.
- **Adhesive plastic window insulation sheets:** Prices range from \$2 to \$14 depending on size. You may need insulation sheets later in the year for windows that can't be sealed and don't have storm windows.

Step 3: Do it!

If you are unfamiliar with how to apply any of these materials, consider watching online tutorial videos. Sealing air leaks is one of the best ways to boost your home's energy efficiency. ⚡

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency.

Utility bill assistance available for Iowa small businesses impacted by COVID-19

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) recently announced a new program to assist small businesses and nonprofits struggling to pay their electric and natural gas bills due to economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Small Business Utility Disruption Prevention Program will distribute \$14.5 million to provide short-term relief to eligible small businesses. Gov. Reynolds allocated funding for this program from Iowa's share of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump in March.

Applications will be accepted at www.iowabusinessrecovery.com until Aug. 21, 2020, or until funding is depleted, whichever comes first. An eligible business can apply for a grant up to \$7,500 to cover utility bill debt incurred for electric or natural gas service provided between March 17, 2020, and June 30, 2020. The applicant's utility service provider(s) will receive a credit, which will be applied to the applicant's utility debt. ⚡



Eligibility guidelines:

- For-profit and nonprofit businesses with 50 or fewer employees
 - Must have a physical location (non-residential location) in Iowa
 - Have not received any IEDA Small Business Relief Grant funding or any assistance from the State of Iowa Nonprofit Recovery Fund
 - Must be registered with the Iowa Secretary of State to do business in the state
 - Must have experienced a COVID-19 loss of revenue on or after March 17, 2020, that resulted in unpaid bills for electric or natural gas service provided between March 17, 2020, and June 30, 2020
 - A business's average monthly energy use must not exceed 25,000 kWh for electricity or 2,500 therms for natural gas
 - A business must not have incurred more than two late charges in 2019 for not paying their utility bills prior to March 17, 2020
 - Businesses must be open or planning to reopen
- For more information on this program, please go to www.iowabusinessrecovery.com. Contact your local electric co-op for details on your business's average monthly electric use and payment history. ⚡

Memories of baling hay

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

It was late on a June afternoon, with the sun dropping just below the horizon in the West. A farmer with a couple of hired kids was picking up small, square bales from a field near our house. Silhouetted against the radiance of what was left of the sun, he pulled a hayrack, piled high with bales; perched on top, on her hands and knees, was his teenage daughter, holding everything together in a tenuous formation.

Because I never have my camera when I need it, I missed the photo. But I didn't need a picture to ricochet me back into the days when I baled hay.

From the time I was 5 and drove a little AC back and forth along the rows of "The 90" (which, in case you haven't figured out, was given that label because it was 90 acres), to the high school years when the work became more strenuous, baling hay was a part of the summer I actually looked forward to.

The summer of 1968 found me inching down the rows, barely creeping along, as my dad and a hired man picked up round straw bales and loaded them onto the hayrack. Covered by a huge gold umbrella, I knew how to pull back the brake when a snake slithered out from under its straw nest or when a burrow of baby bunnies was exposed. At the end of each row, Dad would hop on behind me and turn the whole contraption around. I doubt using a 5-year-old to drive tractor would fly these days, but I was proud of my contribution to the farming world.

At the end of each day, we'd head to Van Zee Implement in Pella, where they had a marvelous machine that allowed you to drop in your dime, and then thread the glass bottle through a maze before pulling it up and out. Icy cold grape pop was the best when the temperature and humidity were about the same.

As I got older, the baling work became more hands-on. My sister



Amber and I were in charge of unloading each hay bale into the elevator that chugged it up into the barn, where a hapless neighbor boy would stack them. His was a miserable job – a barn interior over 100 degrees. Dust and particles clogging the nose. Hay stuck to a sweat-soaked body. Every once in a while, an angry red head would stick itself out the barn hatch and bellow: "Slow down! You're going to kill me!" and for a little while, at least, we would space our bales a little farther apart, depending on our opinion of said neighbor boy.

I'll never forget the heft of the bale, holding it by its pair of twine bindings, having to rest the bale on one leg, where it thumped

against your thigh with each step. Part of the fabric of my childhood is remembering when the twine bindings were pulled off, how the bale would separate into what I started calling "paragraphs," and still do – my love of reading and writing evident at an early age.

Most bales these days have become the giant round ones that need hay forks to lift them. That's more efficient, I suppose. But there's something to be said for a little girl who was Queen of the Tractor ... for a couple of summers, anyway. ⚡

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 and two incredibly adorable grandsons.



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