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# Southwest lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

February 2019

## Electric cooperatives discuss important issues at legislative reception



Over 150 directors, managers, and staff members from Iowa's electric cooperatives discussed priorities with nearly 100 state legislators and policy makers on January 15 during the annual Welcome Back Legislative Reception at the State Historical Building in downtown Des Moines. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, the Iowa Communications Alliance and the Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores of Iowa, hosted the annual reception. In the coming months, the Iowa General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of

issues, including items central to Iowa's rural economy. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, the directors, managers, and staff will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues allowing Iowa's member-owned electric cooperatives to continue providing safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible power to more than 650,000 Iowans. Electric cooperative representatives from all parts of the state will come to the state capitol in the next couple of months to visit with their legislators once again. The annual REC Day on the Hill will be held on March 20, 2019, at the capitol.



### 2019 Legislative Agenda

#### Energy & Transportation - Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

Iowa's electric cooperatives are committed to providing affordable and environmentally responsible power to our member-owners. We support efforts that will enable utilities and other stakeholders to responsibly and effectively increase the availability of electric vehicle charging stations throughout all of Iowa. As this new market develops, Iowa co-ops will support the re-sale of electricity at stations so long as:

- The electricity is purchased from the incumbent utility
- Co-ops retain control over line extension policies and rates
- The right of utilities, including co-ops, to own charging stations is preserved
- Basic consumer protections are in place for users of the charging stations

#### Safety & Reliability - Vegetation Management Rights

Iowa's electric cooperatives strive to provide safe and reliable service for the benefit of our members and our employees. Iowa co-ops have over 62,000 miles of lines crossing all terrains of the State. Unfortunately, a lack of recorded easements has resulted in some landowners disputing the right of their local co-op to perform needed vegetation management. Detailing specific vegetation management rights in Iowa code, including specific distances or parameters for such activity, where a prescriptive easement exists will allow co-ops the ability to continue providing safe and reliable electricity.

#### Rural Development - Empowering Rural Iowa

Iowa's electric cooperatives have a long history of being pillars in their community and our work on economic development projects is noteworthy. Members of the co-ops were proud to participate in the Governor's "Empowering Rural Iowa" initiative this past summer to find solutions to workforce, broadband and community leadership gaps. Iowa co-ops stand ready to work with the Governor and lawmakers on proposals to reinforce and grow rural Iowa.

CEO's COMMENTS:

# Farm Bill Provisions Support Rural Economic Development



**Phil Kinser**

As you may know, the 2018 Farm Bill was signed into law in late December, providing some certainty and stability for the years ahead. We want to recognize the efforts of Senator Joni Ernst, who served on the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee, for her tireless work in securing key provisions which will boost Iowa's ag industry. We are also thankful to the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for their advocacy efforts on our behalf.

There are several provisions within the \$867 billion Farm Bill that are very helpful to electric cooperatives as we work to modernize rural communities. In particular, funding for economic development efforts has been secured which will help electric co-ops across the country retain and create jobs in rural areas. In fact, Iowa's electric co-ops have been working with the USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program, often referred to as REDLG, for decades to support economic

development and job growth in rural Iowa. The REDLG program provides funding for rural projects through zero-interest loans to local electric cooperatives which they, in turn, pass through to local businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. The local businesses repay the lending co-op directly, and the co-op is responsible for repayment to USDA.

Before passage of the bill, future funding for the REDLG program was in question. But with the 2018 Farm Bill now signed into law, REDLG funding has been secured so electric co-ops can continue to provide financing for job growth projects within and beyond our service areas. After the current formula for REDLG funding expires in 2021, the \$5 million of mandatory funding that Sen. Ernst helped secure will kick in. These funds will be in addition to the traditional discretionary funds that are typically appropriated to the program, ensuring Iowa's electric co-ops can help fuel economic development well into the future.

This is great news for Southwest Iowa REC and for the Iowa Area Development Group, the business and community development organization for Iowa's electric cooperatives, which provides technical assistance and development services to Iowa businesses and communities. Southwest Iowa REC has awarded and managed 14 loans totaling \$2.25 million through its Revolving Loan Fund program. These loans have helped new business start-ups, business expansions, community development projects and has helped to retain and create jobs in our communities. Participating in the REDLG program is a major component of our core cooperative principle to invest in the communities we serve. To learn more about REDLG eligibility and economic development services in our area, contact Southwest Iowa REC at 888-220-4869 or [postmaster@swiarec.coop](mailto:postmaster@swiarec.coop).

## 2019 Washington D.C. Youth Tour June 9-20, 2019



Contact your local Southwest Iowa REC office for an application or visit [www.swiarec.coop](http://www.swiarec.coop)

## Scholarships Reminder



Southwest Iowa REC will once again be offering scholarships for the 2018-2019 school year to graduating high school seniors.

We will be awarding twelve (12) \$500 scholarships. In addition, two (2) \$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, 2019 to be eligible.

# 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.

## Plans for Iowa's Largest Project Announced by Central Iowa Power Cooperative

Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO) announced plans to partner with Clēnera LLC to develop the largest solar project in Iowa, and one of the largest in the Midwest. CIPCO will purchase 100 percent of the energy and capacity output for 25 years from Wapello Solar, a 100-megawatt solar facility to be located on approximately 800 acres in Louisa County. This area is served by Eastern Iowa Light and Power, a CIPCO member cooperative.

The project will incorporate the latest in solar array technology to provide cost-

effective, clean electric energy. Cutting-edge solar panel technology will be paired with efficient solar inverters and a single-axis tracking system to maximize energy generation. Clēnera, based in Boise, ID, will develop and operate Wapello Solar with the facility retaining all associated renewable energy credits. The completion date for Wapello Solar is expected to be December of 2020.

"We are thrilled to partner with Clēnera to bring low-cost, clean energy to our members," said CIPCO CEO and Executive

Vice President Bill Cherrier. "This is a milestone project as we look to strike a meaningful balance with energy cost, reliability and stewardship for our members. Energy produced by the sun provides an excellent complement to wind energy. Energy from Wapello Solar will be produced during our daily and seasonal peak demand times. This is an innovative way for us to offer reliability and efficiency to CIPCO's energy portfolio."

The Wapello Solar project meets Clēnera's mission of adding low-cost solar energy to the grid, according to co-founder and CEO Jason Ellsworth.

This is the second major generation project announced in as many months by CIPCO, as the cooperative recently announced a 60-megawatt project to repower the Summit Lake Generating Station in Creston. The project includes demolition of its 70-year old steam plant and installation of efficient natural gas-fired reciprocating engines by late 2022.

In addition, the Heartland Divide Wind Energy Center is expected to come online at the end of this month. CIPCO is purchasing 100 percent of the energy produced by the 103.5 megawatt Heartland Divide facility, making it CIPCO's largest wind energy project to date.

These announcements come on the heels of actions this summer by NextEra Energy Resources and Alliant Energy who petitioned the IUB to close the Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC) in Palo in 2020, 14 years before the plant's operating license would expire. CIPCO is 20 percent owner of the nuclear plant and receives 20 percent of its generating capacity from DAEC.

"We're pleased to add these cost-effective energy projects to our portfolio," said Cherrier. "Our members and their member-consumers benefit from advantageous pricing on these next generation resources. Not only do members insist on cost efficiencies, they also demand reliability. It's exciting to provide both through complementary generation projects powered by the wind and the sun."



# Bravo!

Thank you for your recent donation to the Lenox Neighborhood Center. We greatly appreciate your support.  
Debbie Tillman

Our wishes for a safe and healthy 2019. Thanks for keeping our lights on no matter the weather.  
Kurt & Rhonda Boehm

Your support means a lot to us – through your generous gift, we will continue to provide leadership for projects that enhance our region's natural beauty, promote rural vitality and engage the people, culture and communities that make rural southwest Iowa great.  
Michelle Wodtke Franks  
Golden Hills Resource Conservation and Development

## WHY DO CO-OPS ADVERTISE?

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

Here are a few other reasons we advertise:

### 1. Safety Awareness

As your electric cooperative, we have a duty to keep you safe from the dangers of electricity. Preventative safety messages are a top priority in our public communications efforts. For example, we remind farmers to watch out for electric lines and poles during planting and harvest seasons.

## Grilled Ribeye with Garlic Blue Cheese Mustard Sauce



- 1) In a small saucepan over medium heat, whisk together cream, mustard, 1/4 cup blue cheese and garlic. Bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to low; whisk occasionally.
- 2) Meanwhile, rub meat with olive oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Grill steaks, covered, on a greased rack over high direct heat 4-6 minutes on each side until meat reaches desired doneness (for medium-rare, a thermometer should read 135°; medium, 140°; medium-well, 145°). Remove from grill; let stand 10 minutes while sauce finishes cooking. When sauce is reduced by half, pour over steaks; top with remaining blue cheese.

**Total Time:** Prep: 20 min. Grill: 10 min. + standing. Makes 4 servings.



## The RECipe

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 cup half-and-half cream                              | 2 beef ribeye steaks (1-1/2 inches thick and 12 ounces each) |
| 1/2 cup Dijon mustard                                  |  |
| 1/4 cup plus 2 teaspoons crumbled blue cheese, divided | 1 tablespoon olive oil                                       |
| 1 garlic clove, minced                                 | 1/4 teaspoon salt  |
|  | 1/4 teaspoon pepper  |

We encourage members to call 8-1-1 before digging so underground utilities can be properly located. Throughout the year, we tell members to "look up and live" as they use ladders and tall equipment around the house, garage or farm.

### 2. Energy Efficiency

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

### 3. Cooperative Business

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

### 4. Regulatory Notices

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

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



### Laundry Tip:

Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter-weight clothing. You'll spend less time running the dryer for lighter-weight items, which saves energy.

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



Find us on Facebook

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