

Southwest lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

May 2019

Meter Upgrade Project In Progress

Project – All Southwest Iowa REC members will have their meter(s) replaced in 2019.

When - The project began in mid-January and will be completed around June 1st.

Why – Meters are being upgraded to the next generation to continue to meet our members' needs. The next generation of meters are capable of much faster communication and provide for real-time data delivery allowing us to use the data for outage management, billing, operations efficiency and SmartHub, which is an online portal that can be accessed by members to see energy use trends and to help manage energy consumption. This generation of meter uses a similar method of communication like many modern conveniences, such as the Wi-Fi signal used in homes for wireless internet. The new metering technology will help Southwest Iowa REC build for the future and meet growing member demands for a safe, reliable and resilient electric grid.

Who – We have contracted with Allegiant Utility Services, Inc. to perform the meter replacements.



What to Expect – Members do not need to be present during the meter changeout. If you have a separate heat meter located in your home, a meter technician will request to replace it if you are home. If you are not home, Southwest Iowa REC will contact you to make other arrangements to replace the meter inside your home. You will experience a short disruption of your power while the meter base is inspected and the new meter is installed.

Board Approves Patronage Allocation

In March, the Board of Directors allocated margins for 2018. Margins are the “bottom line” on our financial operating statement when all the expenses of providing electric services to our member-owners are deducted from the revenues taken in. After the annual independent audit of the books, these margins are allocated to the various reserve accounts and also as patronage capital to the member-owners who received service from the Cooperative during the year the margin was created.

For 2018, margins of \$656,542.18 will be allocated to the member-owners based upon the amount each paid for electricity in proportion to what the other member-owners paid. The payment of patronage capital is deferred until a future point in time when the financials of the Cooperative allow a refund. Member-owners who purchased electricity from us in 2018 will receive a patronage allocation notice in the mail in late May or early June.

Wenstrand Earns Trip to Washington, D.C.

Congratulations to Anika Wenstrand of Stanton for being selected to represent Southwest Iowa REC on this year's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.



Anika, a junior at Stanton Community High School, was selected by an independent committee through an essay and interview process. She will represent Southwest Iowa REC on an expense paid trip to our Nation's Capital June 14-20 with more than 1,500 students from all over the country. While there, Anika will meet with legislators, tour historic sites, museums and memorials, meet other student leaders and learn more about the history of the electric cooperative business model. Anika is the daughter of John and Teresa Wenstrand of Stanton.

MEMORIAL DAY

NEVER FORGET THOSE WHO GAVE US OUR FREEDOM

Our offices will be closed Monday, May 27th in observance of Memorial Day.



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CEO's COMMENTS:

Safety Starts with You

Electricity plays many roles in our lives, from powering baby monitors, cell phones and lighting, to running HVAC systems and appliances. No wonder we get so comfortable with its instant availability that when we flip a switch, we expect most systems or devices to do the job.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and here at Southwest Iowa REC, we think it's a great time to look around your home and check for potential safety hazards.

Remember, every electrical device has a purpose and a service lifespan. While we can extend their operations with maintenance and care, none of them are designed to last or work forever. When electricity is involved, failures can present electrical hazards that might be avoided with periodic inspections.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters

Outdoor outlets or those in potentially damp locations in a kitchen, bathroom or laundry room often include GFCI features. They are designed to sense abnormal current flows, breaking the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks from devices plugged into the outlets. The average GFCI outlet is designed to last about 10 years, but in areas prone to electrical storms or power surges, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently by pressing the red test button. Make sure you hit the black reset button when you are done. Contact a licensed electrician to replace any failing GFCI outlets.

Loose or Damaged Outlets or Switches

Unstable electrical outlets or wall switches with signs of heat damage or discoloration can offer early warnings of potential shock or electrical fire hazards. Loose connections can

allow electrical current arcing. If you see these warning signs, it may be time to contact an electrician.

Surge Protectors

Power strips with surge protectors can help safeguard expensive equipment like televisions, home entertainment systems and computer components from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb. That means if your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops, and you're left with a basic power strip.

Some surge protectors include indicator lights that flicker to warn you when they've stopped working as designed, but many do not. If your electrical system takes a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, replacement may be the best option.

Extension Cords

If you use extension cords regularly to connect devices and equipment to your wall outlets, you may live in an underwired home. With a growing number of electrical devices connecting your family to the electricity you get from Southwest Iowa REC, having enough outlets in just the right spots can be challenging. Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary, occasional or periodic use.

If an extension cord gets noticeably warm when in use, it could be undersized for the intended use. If it shows any signs of frayed, cracked or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced. If the grounding prong is missing, crimped or loose, a grounded cord will not provide the

protection designed into its performance. And always make sure that extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.



Phil Kinser

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 51,000 electrical fires are reported each year in the United States, causing more than \$1.3 billion in annual property damage.

Electricity is an essential necessity for modern living, and Southwest Iowa REC is committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable power to all of our members. We hope you'll keep these electrical safety tips in mind so that you can note any potential hazards before damage occurs.

May is Electrical Safety Month.
Safety Starts with You.

#ElectricalSafetyMonth

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

* * * 2019 Annual Meeting Plans * * *

Plans are well underway for this year's Annual Meeting. Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting will be held at the Lenox Community Center on Thursday, September 5, 2019. The general business session will be called to order at 7:00 p.m. In addition to reports being presented that cover our 2018 operations, a major item of business will be the election of three directors to serve one three-year

term each. Directors whose terms expire at the Annual Meeting in September are:

Region 1, District #4 – Dick Ballantyne
Region 2, District #8 – Dennis Meier
Region 2, At-Large – Mark Herzberg

A nominating committee will be named at the May board meeting and given the task of nominating qualified candidates to run for each of these

positions. Once the slate of candidates is chosen, members will be given the opportunity to vote by mail or at the Annual Meeting on September 5th. A detailed explanation of the nominating and election process will be provided in the next newsletter. If you are interested in being considered to serve on the nominating committee this year, please contact Phil Kinser at (888) 220-4869.



Reduce Energy Use During Peak Hours

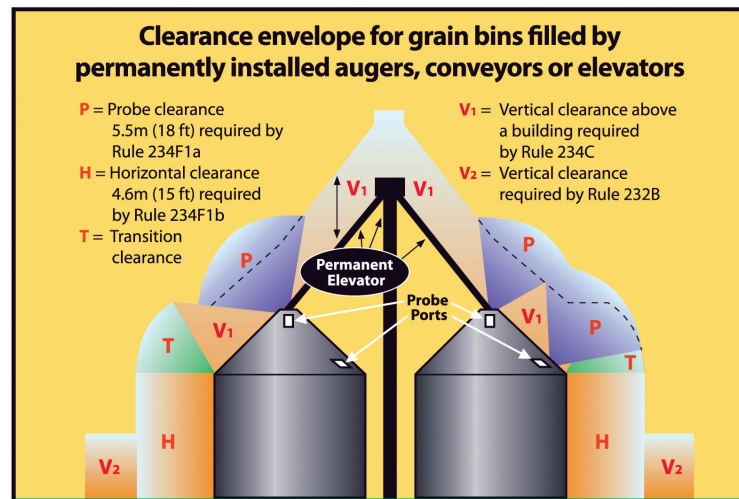
Peak hours are the busiest times for your local electric cooperative since many people are using electricity at the same time. In addition, it costs your co-op more to generate electricity when demand soars during peak periods – and the cost of your electricity also may rise. Obviously, using less electricity during peak periods can save your co-op – and you – money.

Here's how you can help during peak hours, which generally are on the hottest summer days between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.:

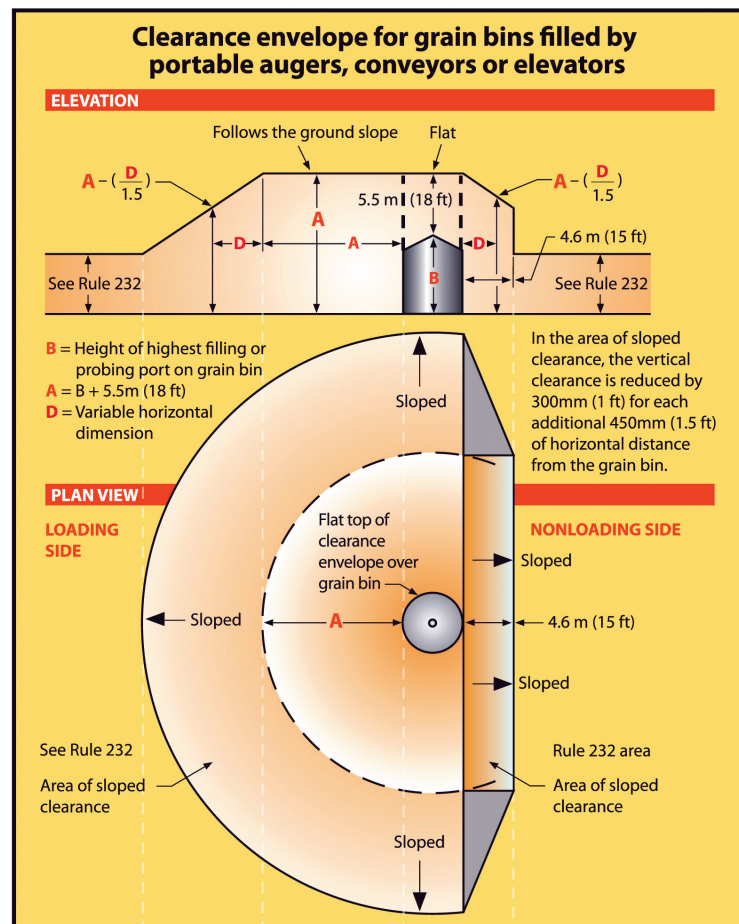
- Shift household chores and activities away from peak periods. Wait to run your dishwasher until you go to bed, for instance.
- If you have air conditioning, turn the thermostat up when you are gone and at night. Cool only the rooms that you are using.
- Use the most energy-efficient appliances you have. Your microwave oven, for example, uses considerably less energy than your stove or cooktop.
- If you're buying a new appliance, make sure you get a highly efficient one. Look for ENERGY STAR® labels when you're evaluating different models.
- Be aware of your energy consumption, and try to get in the habit of using energy efficiently year-round.

Use the energy you need, but use it wisely! You'll help your co-op avoid building expensive new power plants – and that, in turn, will help keep your electric rates stable.

Maintain Proper Clearance Around Grain Bins



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Southwest Iowa REC is required by the Iowa Utilities Board to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants, and city and county zoning officials. If you have any questions concerning clearance regulations, please call Southwest Iowa REC.

Disclaimer: These drawings are provided as part of Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication. Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents for these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.

When you start to plan for a new grain bin, please contact Southwest Iowa REC. Southwest Iowa REC will provide assistance in planning for a safe environment for everyone working and living around grain bins. The State of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors and elevators.

The drawings on this page show the specific clearances required for both scenarios. If you have any questions concerning the drawings, please contact Southwest Iowa REC.

According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 -- 25.2(3) b. An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)C2-2017 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234F. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after September 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after December 24, 1997.

(As adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board)

Bravo!

Thank you so much
for being part of our
Griswold S.T.E.M.

Festival. We appreciate you taking the time
to share your expertise with our students and
parents.

-Gail, Sue, Deb, Katie & Nigel

Thank you for your pledge to the Stanton
Senior Center. We are excited to get our
project started.

-Pat & Members of the Stanton Senior Center

Thank you for helping to make Central
Decatur's Career Day successful! Our
students appreciated hearing from people
that were passionate about their careers.

-Central Decatur Staff & Students.

**HAPPY
MOTHERS
DAY**

Sunday, May 12th

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Avoid placing items like
lamps and televisions
near your air-
conditioning thermostat.
The thermostat senses
heat from these
appliances, which can
cause the A/C to run longer than necessary.

Source: energy.gov

Grilled Chicken Fajitas in Foil



*An easy, healthy recipe for
perfectly seasoned Grilled Chicken
Fajitas in Foil Packets. Foolproof
and perfect for fast, healthy
dinners and summer cookouts.*



Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds Simple Truth Chicken Breasts — cut into 1/2-inch strips
- 2 red bell peppers, — or yellow, or orange bell peppers, seeded and cut into 1/2-inch strips
- 1 red onion — seeded and cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 1 zucchini — cut into 1/4-inch rounds
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- For serving: flour or whole wheat tortillas — sour cream (or plain Greek yogurt), shredded cheese, diced avocado, sliced green onion, fresh cilantro, lime wedges

Instructions

1. Preheat the grill to medium/medium high (about 450 degrees F). Place the chicken, bell peppers, onion, and zucchini in a large bowl. Top with the lime juice, chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, salt, onion powder, and cayenne. Toss to coat.
2. Lay 6 large pieces of heavy-duty foil on the counter (if not using heavy duty, use two pieces of regular foil stacked on top of each other for each packet). Generously coat the foil with nonstick spray. Divide the chicken and vegetables among the 6 pieces of foil, then wrap them to form packets: bring up 2 sides of the foil so the edges meet. Seal the edges, making a tight 1/2-inch fold, then fold again, allowing space for heat to circulate. Fold in the ends to seal.
3. Grill for 8 to 12 minutes, until the chicken is no longer pink in the center and the vegetables are crisp-tender. Carefully open the foil and allow steam to escape. Serve warm with tortillas and desired toppings.

Marilyn
Werner



Southwest Iowa REC participates in CPR, AED and First Aid Training

Southwest Iowa REC practices safety year round and is also dedicated to furthering our safety practices in the event of a medical emergency. At our April safety meeting all employees and Board President Marilyn Werner received instruction and hands-on training in adult and infant CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), the use of an AED (automated external defibrillator) device and a refresher on first-aid procedures.



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Corning
1801 Grove Ave., Corning, IA 50841

Mount Ayr
1502 W. South St., Mount Ayr, IA 50854

Stanton
415 Broad Ave., Stanton, IA 51573

Phone Number: (888) 220-4869

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