



**Guthrie County REC**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



NOVEMBER 2021

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

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Elden Wolfe retires**

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## ON THE COVER

Congratulations to Dawn Joerg, a Harrison County REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to [editor@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:editor@ieclmagazine.com). You could win \$100!

# THE BEST TIME TO ADVOCATE IS ALWAYS

BY KEVIN CONDON



Have you ever talked to your lawmakers about a specific issue? Your county supervisor? Have you ever spoken up on behalf of your fire department? If so, then you've

advocated for something before, perhaps without even realizing it.

As part of larger electric cooperative family, I hope you'll consider standing up on behalf of your co-op. The next decade will be critical for the electric industry as policies and regulations that come from federal and state governments will impact how your cooperative provides power. The time to start educating has begun, and your statewide association wants to help you to make informed decisions about how your co-op will adapt to a changing energy industry.

## Proposed federal policies

Currently, Congress is debating what is referred to as the Build Back Better Act (BBBA) under a budget-setting process called reconciliation. When this magazine went to press, the U.S. Senate still had not announced provisions they could agree on for the U.S. House-passed version. Regarding the energy industry, the "carrots and sticks"

approach included in the House version has caused concern for electric utilities, including co-ops. To be clear, there are positive attributes contained in the bill, including:

- Direct-pay tax incentives for cooperatives to use for renewable energy and carbon capture projects.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture-administered funds that will help rural electric cooperatives increase clean energy and reduce carbon emissions.
- Expansions of projects to increase support for much-needed transmission infrastructure.

While the Senate Majority appears to not have the required amount of support, the proposed Clean Electricity Performance Program (CEPP) concerns cooperatives due to the punitive measures in the plan. The \$150 billion program would reward utilities that increase their use of clean energy by 4% annually but would penalize those that don't without consideration for whether that percentage threshold affects the reliability and/or affordability of power for member-consumers.

Recently, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Jim Matheson told federal lawmakers in a letter that the program's 10-year

timeframe to achieve the bill's mandates is "is unrealistic because of longer-term existing contractual obligations." He also called the clean energy targets "too aggressive," adding that "a year-over-year 4% increase in clean electricity deployment is not attainable for many of our members."

Further, the CEPP "makes a significant mistake by requiring compliance on load-serving entities," Matheson says. "Many electric cooperatives are relatively small distribution entities that own little, if any, generation."

## Balanced power generation

Iowa's electric cooperatives support the inclusion of clean energy through a balanced and responsible "all-the-above" power generation strategy. When the battery storage puzzle pieces fall into place, intermittent wind and solar will see an increase in their reliability score, but the technology isn't yet there. Policy or regulatory efforts to prematurely close baseload generation facilities ahead of those developments fails to appreciate your cooperative's responsibility to provide you with affordable, reliable and efficient power.

## Make your voice heard

Making sure the co-op perspective is heard and understood is why we advocate. Most lawmakers have never worked for or belonged to an electric cooperative. We must continue to put into practical terms how laws and regulations will actually impact member-consumers.

Now is the time to get involved and educate yourself on these issues. Contact your cooperative or your District Board Director to better understand the positions of the co-op. Your cooperative takes pride in being part of your community, and you are the co-op. Help your co-op advocate for you!

For more information, visit [www.iaruralpower.org](http://www.iaruralpower.org).

*Kevin Condon is the director of government relations for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win a \$100 gift card

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

## Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest at [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than Nov. 30, 2021. 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 Keurig from the September issue was David Foelske from Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative.





## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Guthrie County REC Board of Directors has voted to hold the cooperative's upcoming annual meeting in person.

The event will take place Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at the Lake Panorama Conference Center in Panora. Registration will open at 11 a.m. with a free meal beginning at 11:30 a.m. and the business meeting beginning at 12:30 p.m.

Watch this magazine for more information on the annual meeting agenda and board candidates up for election. We look forward to seeing you there!



**Guthrie County REC**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## LONGTIME CO-OP EMPLOYEE ELDEN WOLFE RETIRES



After 47 years of service to Guthrie County REC, Elden Wolfe hung up his hooks and retired at the end of October.

As the co-op's longest serving employee, Elden was hired in September 1974 as part of the tree crew. This was a group of employees in charge of clearing right of way areas of vegetation to keep the power lines clear. With on-the-job training, Elden became an apprentice lineman and was then promoted to line foreman. His last position with the cooperative was as line superintendent, overseeing the operations department.

As Elden grew in his career, so too did the co-op.

"We only had one bucket truck when I first started and now, we have four, plus two digger trucks," he says. "The growth in technology and the improved capabilities of our equipment has helped us become more efficient in our work."

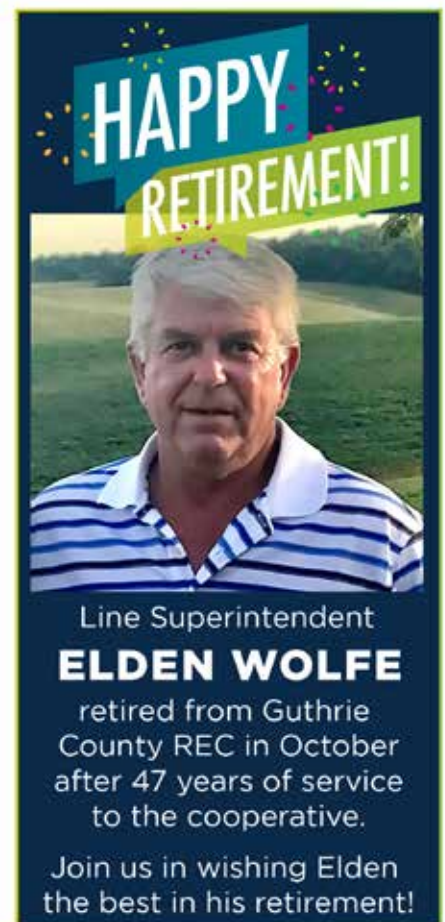
Linemen have the responsibility of supplying power to co-op members no matter the weather. And as part of an electric cooperative family, Guthrie County REC is always ready to help fellow cooperatives recover following major storms.

"A lot of my memories are from ice storms we have had over the years," Elden says. "We've had times when lines and limbs were coated with about an inch of ice causing extensive outages in our service territory. Other times, we

would dispatch linemen to neighboring states where co-ops needed assistance after major storms because we knew they would do the same for us in that situation."

Elden and his wife Cheryl have one son Lucas and his wife Kate along with grandsons Bennett and Graham who are 9-year-old twins. With family close by in Waukee, Elden plans to watch his grandchildren play sports and engage in their interests. He also plans to spend some time restoring a family tractor.

"I have worked with and met so many great people throughout my co-op career," Elden says. "I feel lucky to have had mentors along the way who encouraged me and instilled in me the respect for the job and the members we serve."



# UNPLUG WITH MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

BY COZY NELSEN, CEO



Today, we are more connected than ever before through our phones – from cameras to calendars to social media connections – that

truly disconnecting from them can be tough. But it's even harder for our kids to unplug because they only know life with these tiny screens. It's difficult for them to imagine life without computers, gaming devices, tablets or cell phones.

But there's great value in unplugging for children and adults, even if it's for just a short period of time. For kids, time away from the screen to be outside with other children allows them to connect with nature and others in a way that a virtual experience simply can't.

## Ideas to disconnect from digital

Fortunately, we have access to great community programs and organizations, such as 4-H, FFA, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, which provide children with a safe place to play, learn and grow, while cultivating new skills and interests.

These types of clubs and programs offer kids an opportunity to explore activities and interests outside of school academics they might not

otherwise have access to. They often learn new skills and strengthen existing ones. It's no secret that the broader the range of experiences and activities children are exposed to, the more likely they are to find their own path and possibly a career. Through guided and informal play and activities, children learn problem-solving and interpersonal skills that enable them to resolve conflicts peacefully and improve interpersonal relationships.

Adults can also find meaningful opportunities to spend time with the kids when we all unplug. From board games to craft projects to playing in the park, there are many ways we can unplug for family fun.

## Energy-saving opportunities

While you and your children are disconnecting, take a moment to identify potential energy savings. Unplug electronics that are not in use to avoid "vampire" energy loss. This is the energy that is drained from technology and electronics even when they are not in use. For example, although it is turned off, your TV is waiting to receive a signal from the remote and your DVR is waiting to record the next show or perform an update.

Let's encourage youngsters to step away from the screens and join in. To play and be part of an organization that helps them connect with others and find meaningful interactions and explore new activities and interests.

When you do plug back in, Guthrie County REC is here to help you save money and energy by connecting you with our energy saving programs and services. While we'd love to see you in person, we're also just a call or click away!

*Cozy Nelsen is the CEO of Guthrie County REC.*



## SOLAR-POWERED FUN

The sun has an incredible amount of energy – more than we could ever fully harness. Fortunately, there's an array of solar-powered gadgets and devices available to help you take advantage of this free source of energy. Here are three gadgets worthy of consideration, just in time for holiday shopping:

### 1. Solar-powered Bluetooth speaker.

As long as the sun is shining, the speaker will never run out of power. But even without sunlight, many speakers include a backup battery that allows them to run long after the sun goes down.

### 2. Solar pathway lights.

Technology and efficiency have come a long way in the development of solar lighting. They come in a variety of styles and offer a wire-free installation. When given enough light, they will continue to shine throughout the night.

### 3. Solar-powered grill.

With a price range comparable to a traditional gas grill, solar-powered grills convert solar energy into heat up to 550 degrees F, making them a great portable option for traveling, camping or even during a power outage.

The sun provides an endless amount of energy, and these gadgets are a great way to power everyday devices. As more solar-powered technologies are developed, you may find yourself considering a solar-powered gadget for your next purchase.





# SHOP CO-OP LOCAL THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

BY ANN THELEN

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

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

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



## BERGMAN FARMS

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

Facebook: BergmanFarms1884

From their pasture to your table, Bergman Farms offers quality beef, pork, chicken and produce. Located between Cedar Falls and Hudson, the online shop offers a variety of cuts and package sizes. Plus, they also own Velvet Hoof, a customized apparel and gift company. See more information on the next page.



## BRITCHES 'N' BOWS

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

Facebook: shopbnnb

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



## CAM CUSTOM DESIGNS

Facebook: CAM-Custom-Designs-104853484709869

Located in Reinbeck, owner Carrie McCalley offers customized apparel and home decor.



## BENTON AVE. BOUTIQUE

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

Facebook: bentonaveboutique

Instagram: bentonaveboutique

Benton Avenue Boutique is located on the beautiful historic square in Albia. Two moms with a love for cute clothes bring trendy looks to small-town Iowa so that women in every size look good and feel good. Shop online or visit their storefront.



## COUNTRY BLEND SEASONING

Facebook: CountryBlendSeasoning

Country Blend is Grandma's secret to excellent cooking. The seasoning blend is manufactured in Rockwell City by Midwest Flavors, LLC. It makes the perfect addition to grilled or baked chicken, pork, beef, turkey, fish and wild game. It's also great on potatoes, salads or in soups and sauces.





## DOWN HOME CREATIONS

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

Facebook:

DownHomeCreationsAlbia

Down Home Creations is a handmade-focused gift shop with more than 25 artisans and crafters who sell handmade and refurbished creations. Shop online or visit their storefront.




## THE HOLTON HOMESTEAD

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

Facebook: TheHoltonHomestead

Instagram: theholtonhomestead

Owners Sara and Tyler Holton founded The Holton Homestead in 2015 on their small acreage in Elkhart. The farm specializes in market gardening, beekeeping, honey production, food preservation, natural remedies and lifestyle products. Products can be purchased at a small store on the farm or in numerous retail locations in central Iowa.



## J&J CANDLES

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

Facebook: jjcandlesmanson

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



## MOLLY'S

Facebook: mollyscountrystore

Molly's is an old barn turned vintage-inspired retail store in Audubon. The shop offers quality home décor, clothing and accessories in a weathered and worn, tattered and torn style.




## MUSTARD SEED

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

Facebook: mustardseedcoalbia

Mustard Seed Co. is a family-owned, unique shop featuring home inspirations. Located one block south of Albia's quaint historic square, the shop delivers with charm and character. Shop online or visit their storefront.



## NIGHTINGALE BAKERY

Facebook: Nightingale-Bakery-473092180174458

Nightingale Bakery offers homemade pies, cakes, cheesecakes, cupcakes and more in a cozy setting in Albia.



## THE PINT-SIZED FARM WIFE

Instagram: ThePintSizedFarmWife

Email: [thepintsizefarmwife@gmail.com](mailto:thepintsizefarmwife@gmail.com)


Katie Putnam and her husband Nick farm corn and soybeans in rural western Iowa. Katie offers custom sugar cookies featuring everything from farm scenes to business logos to holiday greetings.



## RECREATION UNLIMITED

Facebook: recreationunlimited04

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



## SWEET HONEYMOON WINERY

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

Facebook: sweethoneymoonwinery

Sweet Honeymoon Winery is a craft winery in Calhoun County making quality wines (including dry wines) in small batches from imported grape juice from all around the world. Because of this approach, the business offers varieties not normally available to wineries in our northern climate. They also make an award-winning Mead (honey wine).



## VELVET HOOF

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/groups/366408144865806](https://www.facebook.com/groups/366408144865806)

The shop expresses a love for the outdoors, hunting, farming, cattle, livestock and all things western and rustic with custom creations. Shoppers can find stickers, decals, apparel, decor and more. Join The Velvet Hoof's Facebook group to learn more!

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

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



# SOUP & STEW

## RECIPES

### RIBOLITA SOUP

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 onion, minced
- 3 stalks celery, minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 large potatoes, peeled and diced
- pinch of dried sage
- 1 bunch kale, washed, stemmed and shredded
- 1 small head green cabbage, chopped
- 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 3 cans kidney or navy beans, rinsed
- 8 cups water or chicken stock
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 8 thick slices French bread, toasted
- Parmesan cheese
- olive oil
- parsley, chopped

In a very large pot, heat olive oil. Add garlic, onion, celery and carrots. Cook until the onion is transparent, stirring constantly. Add potatoes, sage, kale, cabbage, tomatoes, beans and water or stock. Bring to a boil and add oregano and basil. Simmer 30 minutes, until potatoes are tender. Add more water or stock if the soup seems too thick. Season with salt and pepper. Put the toast in the bottom of a big soup bowl, drizzle with olive oil and ladle soup over the toast. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and parsley to serve. **Soup secret:** Use Swanson's chicken stock diluted with 50% water. Don't use bouillon cubes or paste as they are too salty. Serves 8-10

### CREAMY TORTELLINI SOUP

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup flour
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 8 ounces cheese tortellini
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese
- 10 ounces spinach, chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste

Melt butter over medium heat, add onion and cook 5-7 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute. Add flour and cook 1 minute more. Add broth, diced tomatoes, tomato paste and tortellini; bring to boil. Simmer on low heat 10 minutes or until tortellini is tender. Add Parmesan and let melt. Add spinach and let wilt. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and serve. If desired, garnish with more Parmesan and fresh spinach, sliced small. Yields 8 cups

Linda Coats • Mount Pleasant  
Access Energy Cooperative

Lauren Zollinger • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative



## PEANUT SWEET POTATO SOUP

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 large carrot, diced
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 1 small red pepper, diced
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon chili pepper
- ½ teaspoon seasoned salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 14.5-ounce can chicken broth
- ½ cup corn
- 3 tablespoons peanut butter
- chopped peanuts, garnish

Sauté vegetables (except corn) and seasonings in butter, adjusting seasonings to taste. Add broth and corn. Simmer until vegetables are tender. Stir in peanut butter. Garnish with chopped peanuts. *Serves 4*

Chris Daniels • Casey  
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

## CHEESY VEGETABLE SOUP

- 1 quart water
- 5 chicken bouillon cubes
- 1 cup onion, diced
- 1 cup carrots, sliced
- 2 cups potatoes, cubed
- 1 20-ounce package frozen broccoli and cauliflower
- 1 pound box Velveeta cheese
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup

Simmer all ingredients (except cheese and soup) until vegetables are tender. Add cheese and cream of chicken soup; simmer until cheese is melted. Be careful not to scorch. *Yields 1 gallon*

Phyllis Bosma • Ocheyedon  
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## CORN CHOWDER

- 1 pound sausage
- ¼ cup onion
- 1½ cups potatoes, chopped
- ½ cup carrots, chopped
- 1 cup water
- 1 12-ounce can evaporated milk
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- 1 can creamed corn

Mix sausage and onion. Add potatoes, carrots and water, cook until done. Add evaporated milk, soup and creamed corn. Heat together until hot. *Serves 6*

Glenda Jager • George • Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## PORK & BEAN SOUP

- 3 or 4 medium potatoes, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 15-ounce cans pork and beans
- 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 14.5-ounce can beef broth
- 1 pound hamburger, browned
- salt and pepper, to taste

Place potatoes and onion in pan and almost cover with water. Boil until tender. Add pork and beans, tomatoes, beef broth and hamburger. Season to taste. Heat thoroughly and serve. *Serves 8-10*

Norma Skogman • Hawarden  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## CREAMY CHICKEN & WILD RICE SOUP

- 1 6-ounce package chicken and wild rice mix
- 5 cups water
- 2 medium carrots, shredded
- 2 tablespoons dried minced onion
- 8 ounces cream cheese, cubed
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 2 cups chicken, cooked and cubed

In a large saucepan, combine packaged rice and seasonings with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 10 minutes. Stir in carrots and onion. Cover and simmer 5 minutes. Stir in cream cheese, soup and chicken. Cook until heated through. *Yields 6 bowls*

Elizabeth Hartter • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

**WANTED:**

## FAVORITE FISH RECIPES

**THE REWARD:**

**\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!**

**Deadline is Nov. 30, 2021**

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

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

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

**MAIL: Recipes**

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# GETTING CHARGED UP ABOUT ELECTRIC VEHICLES

BY PAT KEEGAN AND BRAD THIESSEN



Photo Credit: Ford

Ford, Hyundai, Kia and Volkswagen will be offering EVs in 2022 that can potentially power your home during a prolonged power outage.



A variety of new EV models will be available to drivers soon, including the 2022 Ford Mustang Mach-E.

Photo Credit: Ford

This JuiceBox L2 EV charging station connects to Wi-Fi and includes smartphone app capabilities.





As the buzz continues to grow around electric vehicles (EVs), it's important to think about how they will be charged. This includes understanding the basics on batteries and charging options.

Batteries, like the vehicles they power, come in different sizes that provide different mileage ranges. Most people charge their EVs at home, but if you take a cross-country trip, you can charge your EV at one of the rapidly growing number of charging stations around the country. The Department of Energy estimates there are currently 50,000 EV charging sites in the U.S.

EVs will tell you how many miles are remaining before a charge is needed, and many models offer in-car navigation to the next charger. For EVs without this feature, there are many smartphone apps available to help you navigate to the next charging site.

### Understanding charging levels

We often refer to three levels of EV charging.

A new EV comes equipped for **Level 1 (L1)** charging, which simply plugs into a regular electrical outlet. This is the slowest option for charging, but if you don't travel many miles per day or your EV is a plug-in hybrid (PHEV) with a small battery, L1 charging will likely meet your needs.

L1 requires less than 1.5 kilowatts, which is about the same as a hair dryer, and will give the battery 3 to 5 miles of range per hour of charging. If you drive your car 40 miles or less during

the day and can charge it for 10 hours every night, this method should work for your daily driving needs. But if you have an all-electric EV with a 60-kWh battery, it would take more than 40 hours to fully charge with L1.

**Level 2 (L2)** is the most common type of charging because it operates on 240-volt power, which nearly every home has. L2 can supply roughly 6 to 19 kW of power, depending on what your vehicle can accept and your electric circuit's amperage. L2 can provide 100 miles of charge in several hours, and fully charge a large battery in 8 to 10 hours. You may need to install a new circuit if there isn't a 240-volt circuit near the area you park. L2 is the most common type of charging at public sites, like grocery stores, libraries and workplaces.

**Level 3 (L3)** chargers, often called DC Fast Chargers (DCFC), require much more current and are not installed in homes. L3 chargers are typically seen at specific EV charging sites and some gas stations. These chargers have power levels from 50 to 350 kW, depending on the charging station. Some new EVs can accept 250 kW or more and charge a battery from 10 to 80% in less than 20 minutes. Some older EV models may take an hour or more to achieve 80% at 50 kW. When selecting an EV, the charge time from 10 to 80% can be an important factor if you regularly head out on road trips.

### Charging considerations

"Vehicle to home" is an exciting new technology that enables EVs to power



a home or shop during a power outage. Ford's upcoming F-150 Lightning Pro (2022), Hyundai's Ioniq5 and Kia's EV6 crossovers, and the 2022 Volkswagens are slated to offer this option.

Another important decision is when to charge your EV. Your local electric co-op may offer special rates if you charge your EV at night when energy demand is lower, which can help keep electricity costs down. Electric co-ops around the country are working on programs to prepare for more EV home charging, so reach out to your co-op if you have questions about EVs, charging or specific programs and rates.

EV charging infrastructure is currently being built across the country. You may not see them in your area yet, but they're coming, so get charged up about EVs!

*Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

## HOW IS IOWA CHARGING UP?

According to Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Iowa Economic Development Authority, 5,880 EVs and hybrids are registered in Iowa.

Polk, Dallas, Linn, Johnson and Scott are the top five counties for EV registration.

Anyone with an EV in Iowa must pay a special registration fee in addition to the annual vehicle registration fee to the Iowa

DOT. Beginning Jan. 1, 2022, the battery electric (BEV) fee is \$130 and the plug-in hybrid electric (PHEV) is \$65.

**Plugshare** is one of the most accurate EV charging station maps. Drivers can download a free app or visit [plugshare.com](https://www.plugshare.com) to find charging stations, leave reviews and connect with other plug-in owners.





## DO FIREPLACES ACTUALLY SAVE ON HEATING BILLS?

As the weather turns colder, you may be thinking it's a great time to fire up your fireplace and get cozy. As we head into the winter months, using the warmth from a fireplace may give the impression that your heating system is not running as much, and therefore your utility bill will not be as high.

If your fireplace is gas or electric, chances are it's not going to affect the amount of your regular utility bill. In fact, because only gas-insert and electric fireplaces are energy efficient, combined with the fact that homeowners need to use them strategically, most homeowners with fireplaces end up using *more* energy instead of less. And, while you may enjoy the authenticity of a wood-burning fireplace, it is the least efficient method to heat your home, with roughly 80-90% of the heat escaping up the chimney.

The bottom line is, if using your fireplaces does not cause your furnace to run less, it will not save you money. If that is your goal, there are two ways to use your fireplace instead of your furnace:

1. Zone heating. Turn down the thermostat when you're in the same room as the fireplace so you can stay comfortable.
2. If your fireplace is near your thermostat, the fireplace's heat will affect the thermostat temperature sensor. Since the thermostat doesn't know what the temperature is around the rest of the house (unless you have sensors in multiple rooms), it will run less.

Of the three types of fireplace choices – electric, gas or woodburning – electric is by far the most cost and heat effective. Only about 1% of the heat produced is lost. They also don't create gas fumes or smoke, so they are far better for the air quality in your home.

## AVOIDING COLLISIONS WITH DEER

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) is reminding rural drivers to be vigilant for animals this time of year, particularly around dawn and dusk. Peak activity for deer is the first three weeks of November during breeding time when they are much more active than the rest of the year.

According to a State Farm study, Iowa has the seventh-highest rate of animal-vehicle collisions in the country.

"October and November are the highest months for vehicle versus animal crashes for two reasons," says Andrea Henry, director of strategic communications at Iowa DOT. "First, farmers are harvesting crops, which is where the deer have been living during the summer months. The second reason is it's also their rutting season, so deer are more active at dawn and dusk."

In Iowa in 2020, there were 7,276 car collisions with animals, including four fatalities, 25 major injuries and 146 minor injuries. As hard as it may be, it's important not to veer when an animal

crosses your path as this increases the likelihood of losing control of the vehicle. Drivers should be extra cautious when driving near lakes, rivers and wooded areas.

### Here are some additional safe driving tips to avoid hitting deer:

- Watch for the rest of the gang. Deer typically travel in groups.
- Use your headlights. You're more likely to spot a deer because their eyes will brightly reflect the headlights.
- Brake calmly and firmly and stay in your lane.
- Honk! Don't rely on hood whistles or other devices designed to scare off deer.



If you hit a deer, call 9-1-1, especially if the carcass may pose a roadway hazard to other drivers. If the collision resulted in property damage (to your vehicle or other objects), you may be required to file a police report. This report can also be helpful in filing your insurance claim. Do not go near the animal if it is nearby. A frightened, wounded deer can use its powerful legs and sharp hooves to harm you.

## Thank You, Veterans

To all our veterans – those who have served, and those who continue to serve – thank you.



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# THE COOPERATIVE MODEL BENEFITS RURAL AND URBAN IOWANS

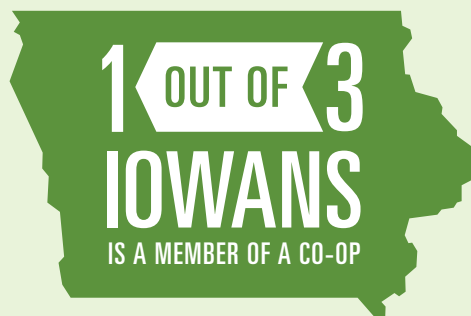
BY DAVE HOLM, CHUCK SODERBERG AND MURRAY WILLIAMS

For more than 200 years, Americans have worked together in cooperatives to meet challenges that are too big to solve individually. People often think of agriculture when they hear the word co-op in Iowa. In reality, more than one out of every three Iowans is a member of a co-op through industries like rural electric, credit unions, rural telephone, farm credit, petroleum and more.

What is a co-op exactly? Co-ops are not-for-profit organizations that are owned and democratically controlled by their members. They exist to benefit the people who use the co-op's services rather than generate profits for outside investors. Members elect their board of directors from within the membership.

As part of National Co-op Month, Gov. Kim Reynolds declared October as Co-op Month in Iowa. While co-op month is traditionally celebrated in October, the positive economic impact these organizations have in our state is something to be celebrated every day and month of the year.

Co-ops benefit both rural and urban Iowa, serving more than 1.4 million members throughout the state. In rural communities alone, co-ops pay approximately \$41 million in property taxes and help support critical infrastructure.



CO-OPS PAY APPROXIMATELY \$41 MILLION IN PROPERTY TAXES AND HELP SUPPORT CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

CO-OPS SERVE MORE THAN 1.4 MILLION MEMBERS THROUGHOUT IOWA



CO-OPS EMPLOY MORE THAN 11,000 IOWANS

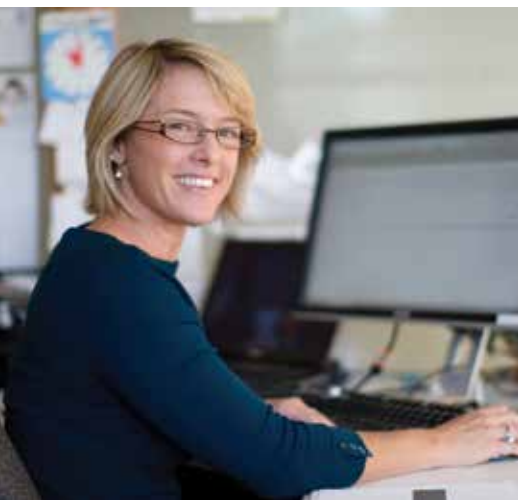
More than 11,000 Iowans are employed by co-ops, which often provide first-class benefits like health care, benefit programs, 401(k) plans, life insurance, paid time off, continued education incentives and even wellness plans. In fact, if these cooperative employees were grouped together, cooperatives would be in the top 10 largest employers in Iowa. Visit [www.iowacooperatives.com](http://www.iowacooperatives.com) to learn more about how cooperatives are critical to Iowa's economy.

This year's National Co-op Month theme of "Build Back for Impact" will be an ongoing focus for the months ahead. It is a chance to leverage our shared cooperative identity in the face of some of the biggest challenges

we have faced as a state and a nation. Our cooperative industries have been serving members on the forefront of the pandemic, and our most significant impact comes from embracing the values and principles that make us truly unique.

Whether it's the members we serve or the Iowans we employ, our cooperative movement is committed to enhancing economic opportunity and improving the quality of life in Iowa's cities, towns and rural areas.

*Dave Holm is executive director of the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives. Chuck Soderberg is executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. Murray Williams is president and CEO of the Iowa Credit Union League.*





# POWERFUL FUN: FIVE COOL USES TO POWER YOUR YULETIDE

BY PAUL WESSLUND



At the end of the year, thoughts of gifts dance in our heads, whether for others or just treating ourselves to the achievement of being able to turn the page on 2021.

Electricity offers one way to brighten gift choices as inventors and innovators keep coming up with new gadgets and gizmos to power our lives with efficiency and fun. Here are five electric ideas to add pizzazz to your holiday shopping list.

- 1 Healthy French fries?** Air fryers aren't really fryers but high-heat convection devices that simulate traditional recipes like chicken tenders, egg rolls, potato chips, fried vegetables and apple fritters. It's a health-conscious way to enjoy the comfort of fried favorites with much less oil. A friend of mine calls his electric air fryer "the greatest invention of all time."
- 2 Hit the road.** "Electric vehicle" doesn't mean just cars and trucks anymore! The sidewalks of college campuses and downtowns are now shared with electric scooters. And if you're having trouble keeping up with a bicycle fanatic, an electric bike might help you scale those
- steep hills. You can go off-road while hunting or bird watching with an electric All-Terrain Vehicle.
- And if you were born to be wild, you can head out on the highway on a battery-powered motorcycle. The electric Harley Davidson boasts instant 100% torque, electronic safety features and the ability to use your smartphone for checking battery status and stolen vehicle tracking.
- 3 Walk the talk.** Walkie-talkies are one of those old technologies for staying in touch that still work great for businesses, conference coordination, hiking or camping. They can help keep a caravan of cars and trailers together. Let the kids figure out games like hide-and-seek or scavenger hunts. When shopping, it's helpful to know what you'll use them for because there are both indoor and outdoor models, and range can vary from a half-mile to 20 miles.
- 4 Easy reader.** If being at a computer keyboard seems too much like work and you're tired of squinting at the little screen on your phone,

look at tablets. They come in a variety of screen sizes that make it easier to enjoy that magazine, detective novel, streaming movie or TV show or your computer game of choice. Most models come with the ability to write or draw on them.

- 5 Packing power.** A portable charger may seem like one of the least-exciting gifts you can give or get. But you'll be thankful for one when your phone's about to die as you hike over a hill and see a sunset vista to photograph, or you're at a concert and the song you wanted to record comes on! A word of advice: charge it up the day before you expect to use it because the smallest ones for your purse or pocket tend not to hold a charge for several weeks.

Shop carefully and know how you want to use the device because they all come with a variety of features and prices. And be cyber safe by using a strong password because anything connected to the internet can be hacked. Then focus on having some powerful fun!

*Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*



# PETEY THE PEACOCK FINDS A HOME

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

A few months ago, a friend of mine on Facebook was wondering where she could find peacocks. She thought they'd be wonderful gracing her yard with their fully furled tails, strutting around.

I let her have her illusions of grandeur, but I know the truth about peacocks.

## Fowl farm guests arrive

Twenty-some years ago, three of these creatures showed up at my folks' place, about a half-mile across the pasture from where we live. They comprised a male and female pair and another male. No one was sure where they had come from, but my mom was hoping they'd move along soon.

No such luck. The trio made their nests at the farm and was determined to stay. Watching them was a reminder of the nightmare of junior high politics. The female laid eggs and hatched five of them. She led the peachicks into the cornfield and returned with only one. These three – the mother, father and chick – banded as a group and wouldn't let the lonely male anywhere near them. The old bachelor had a tough time of it, wanting to fit in. We could hear his piteous calls from our house.

The peacock population waxed and waned over the next couple of years. Eggs were hatched, and babies wandered off. Coyotes took some. That left the one bachelor peacock at my folks, a bird my grandsons have dubbed Petey.

## The truth about peacocks

Petey's idiosyncrasies are amusing and sometimes barely tolerated at my parents' house. If you've never heard the call of a peacock, it's shrill and loud and grating. Sitting on our deck in the evening, we can hear Petey, no problem. On telephone calls with my mom, he's easily identifiable in the background.

Because peacocks and peahens like to nest up high, they are constantly



flying into trees. Or the rafters of the machine shed. Or on top of your car. And because they have sharp, long talons, they scratch whatever it is they're climbing up.

Maybe you can handle the racket. Maybe you can even tolerate the scratched cars and house siding. But once ensconced in their perches, peacocks provide a constant stream of droppings, drippings, downpours and deluges. Your sidewalks will be a mess. Your movement under any tree where they are roosting had better be brisk or you risk being covered.

## Petey becomes a family friend

Since Petey is the lone male now, he doesn't unfurl his tail that often, as there's no female attention waiting to

be sought. But he's become an integral part of our family to my grandsons.

On Father's Day of this year, a tornado ripped through my parents' farm, taking down their pole barn, machine shed and several mature trees. My grandsons' first question was, "Are Grandma and Grandpa okay?" Their second question was, "Is Petey okay?"

Oh yes, Petey is a survivor. If you don't believe it, the truth is in his beady, gimlet eye, where he seems to be warning you to stay away from his tree.

*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, two incredibly adorable grandsons and a lovely granddaughter.*





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The magazine  
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