

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF  FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

November 2021

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



A WORD FROM



**Garrett Thompson**  
Chief Executive Officer

## New advanced metering system selected

It's no secret that technology is constantly growing and advancing at break-neck speeds. For example, let's think back all the way to 2009. What were the televisions like back then? What kind of cell phone did you have in 2009, if you had one? How far has agricultural equipment

come from that time? The energy sector is not immune to these rapid technological developments either.

Advancements in metering technology since our current system was installed 12 years ago is nothing short of amazing. New systems can now narrow down outages to a specific meter, which will help in reliability as well as restore your power more quickly. They can also give us loads of data and information, so we know where equipment upgrades need to take place. These equipment upgrades will help with improved power quality, efficiency, and reliability.

With a new advanced system comes more information for you, the member. We are currently working with our billing software company so your individual usage will be available to you 24/7/365. This usage will be reported on every hour of every day so it's easier to pinpoint when a spike or dip may have occurred.

Because of the reasons mentioned above, along with the obsolescence and lack of support for our current metering system, your board of directors recently selected a new advanced metering system. This system will be supplied by Tantalus with a deployment date scheduled for July 2022.

More information will be provided as we move closer to summer 2022, but if you have questions in the meantime, please contact us at 641-456-2557.



*Franklin REC will be closed Thursday, Nov. 25, and Friday, Nov. 26, for the Thanksgiving holiday. If you have an emergency or outage, give us a call.*

*We'll answer: 641-456-2557.*



## Win a trip to our nation's capital

**HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS:** The Youth Tour is returning in 2022!

Franklin REC will select one student from its service area to participate in the 2022 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. the week of June 18-24.

Eligible students must be a high school sophomore or junior living in the Hampton-Dumont-CAL, West Fork, or AGWSR school districts. If the student attends another school, his or her parent or guardian must be active members of Franklin REC.

Attendees will visit national landmarks, meet with members of our Congressional delegation, learn about the cooperative difference, and develop new friendships.

Approximately 40 high school students are chosen by electric cooperatives across Iowa to attend, joining more than 1,800 students from electric cooperatives across the nation.

Visit our website at [www.franklinrec.coop](http://www.franklinrec.coop) for more information on the all-expense paid 2022 Youth Tour. It's a once-in-a-lifetime trip!

# Cold? Use your space heater safely

Electric space heaters can help quickly take the chill off, but they can be dangerous if used incorrectly. Your Touchstone Energy cooperative urges everyone in your home to understand the importance of using space heaters safely:

- Purchase only space heaters that have been safety tested and UL approved with an emergency tip-over shut-off feature and heating element guards.
- Before using a space heater, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working condition.
- Make sure the heater is clean and in good condition, and have all problems professionally repaired.
- Place the heater out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface—NOT on carpets, furniture, or countertops.
- Space heaters have one purpose—to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food, or dry clothing or towels.
- Remember to keep space heaters at least three feet from combustible liquids and flammable items.
- Never allow pets or children near an electric heater.
- Do not overload circuits. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater.
- If your space heater is plugged into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and the GFCI trips, immediately stop using the heater until a professional can check it.
- Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Replace older space heaters with newer, safer models.

In addition, space heaters are not inexpensive to run. Be sure to contact us to find out how much using your space heater might add to your electric bill.



## Our Touchstone Energy Values



Integrity | Accountability | Innovation | Commitment to Community | Teamwork

## Save with rebates!

Your electric cooperative offers members a variety of incentives for new electric heating and cooling systems, including air source and geothermal heat pumps.

Rebates are also available for insulating and weatherizing your home, appliances, LED lighting, and additional options to help you save.



Contact us for details and rebate forms



## Cook up a new recipe for the holidays

**Looking for a new recipe for the holidays?** Visit the *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* website at [IECLmagazine.com](http://IECLmagazine.com) for a searchable recipe archive.

**Have a recipe everyone loves?** *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine is always looking for recipes to publish. If yours is chosen, you will earn a \$25 power bill credit!



During this season of giving thanks, we want to share our genuine appreciation for you. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you!

# It's time to deck the halls

Your local Touchstone Energy cooperative can help you decorate AND save money this holiday season with our LED holiday light rebate! Purchase any LED-lighted item and *we will rebate that item for up to \$2*, with no limit on the number of items.

LED lights use less electricity compared to conventional bulbs, their lifespan is up to 50,000 hours outdoors and twice as long indoors, and they are safe.

[Visit our website for a lighting rebate form!](#)



- Dependents of cooperative members are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship for tuition at a two-year or four-year college. Contact your electric cooperative for information.
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative partners with Northwest Iowa Community College (NWICC) in Sheldon, Iowa, to offer four \$500 scholarships. Recipients must be students at NWICC studying Industrial and Commercial Wiring, Powerline, or Powerline Technology. Contact Sheila Van Engen, 800-352-4907 ext. 246, or [svanengen@nwicc.edu](mailto:svanengen@nwicc.edu). Application deadline is March 1, 2022.
- Corn Belt Power also partners with Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa, to offer one \$500 scholarship for students enrolled in the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program. For more information, contact Institutional Advancement, 712-362-0450 ext. 0491, or [institutionaladvancement@iowalakes.edu](mailto:institutionaladvancement@iowalakes.edu). Application deadline is March 1, 2022.

## BE SAFE DURING THE **HO-HO-HOLIDAYS** 10 TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY JOLLY



*Before you plan out your new holiday lighting scheme or repeat last year's festive design, keep these 10 safety tips in mind when decorating outdoors:*

- 1 Do not toss light strands up into the air. They could get too close to or come into contact with a power line.
- 2 Before using a ladder, always look up and assess all power line locations.
- 3 Carry a ladder horizontally when transporting it.
- 4 Keep at least 10 feet between yourself (and any item you are holding) and a power line.
- 5 Do not use staples or nails or tacks to secure light strands, cords, wires or extension cords.
- 6 String together no more than the number of strands recommended by the manufacturer.
- 7 Plug all lights and extension cords into GFCI-protected outlets.
- 8 Use lights and extension cords rated for outdoor use.
- 9 Do not use frayed, cracked or otherwise damaged cords, plugs or lights.
- 10 Use only lights and products certified by a reputable testing lab.

# Holiday spirit to shine during event

Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) is overjoyed to bring back the Hampton lighted parade tradition this holiday season, followed by the premier of Light Up the Park.

In the spirit of commitment to community, your Franklin REC board of directors wanted to do something special this holiday season for our community. The board felt "with everything that's happened with COVID, something was needed," stated Madison Alert, Franklin REC consumer accountant. Madison and Emily Rush, Franklin REC accountant, are leading the committee for the REC and working in conjunction with the Greater Franklin County Chamber of Commerce to create a spectacular event.

The holiday festivities will take place on Saturday, Nov. 27, with the parade lineup at 4 p.m. at the Hampton Aquatic Center at 600 1st NW, and the parade starting at 5 p.m. Follow the lighted parade through downtown Hampton and accompany us at Band Shell Park as we Light Up the Park to radiate holiday spirit this season.

Grab a cup of hot cocoa or apple cider, have your photo taken with Santa, grab your reindeer feed for Christmas Eve, take a look at the parade floats, and capture your evening with a selfie by the stunning 20-foot evergreen tree in the middle of Band Shell Park.

If you would like to participate in the parade, sign up at either Center One, 5 1st St. SW, Hampton, or Franklin REC by stopping in our office or calling us at 641-456-2557.

We look forward to seeing everyone on Nov. 27. If you are unable to attend, please enjoy a stroll through the park as the lights will be displayed until the New Year.

## Members' calls help lead to quick response

Thank you to our members alerting us to this smoking pole (right) at the intersection of 255th and Timber, east of Sheffield. Franklin REC line crews were able to respond quickly due to the information provided by these members. Even though it was only one pole, many members were affected when the pole top broke.

Remember to contact Franklin REC if you see anything that might be concerning – a safety issue, the cause of an outage, and so on. This leads to faster response times and shorter outages for your neighbors.



Photo credit: Cole Marzen, lineman

## SPARKS of news

### Board room highlights

At their most recent meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved work orders and special equipment, totaling \$85,246.33.
- Discussed employee staffing.
- Voted on delegates for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' annual meeting.
- Reviewed September 2021 financial reports.
- Prior to the meeting, the board watched the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy presentation. Franklin REC had two participants in the academy, who attended three evening presentations to learn about cooperatives. Each student will receive a \$1,000 scholarship for college.



**FRANKLIN RURAL  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**If your outlets are warm, cracked or sparking, your home is sending you a message.**



Don't ignore the warning signs of a serious electrical problem. Shut the outlet or switch off at the circuit breaker, and contact an electrician to make repairs.

Learn more at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

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1560 Highway 65 • PO Box 437 • Hampton, IA 50441  
PHONES: 641.456.2557 • FAX: 641.456.5183  
OFFICE HOURS: Mon. - Fri., 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
GENERAL MANAGER: Garrett Thompson • EDITOR: Anne Sesker, CCC



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.