

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF  FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

May 2023

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Iowa's rural electric cooperatives advocate for regulatory clarity during 2023 'REC Day on the Hill'

More than 200 employees and elected directors from Iowa's locally owned rural electric cooperatives (RECs) convened at the Iowa Capitol in mid-March to advocate for important issues during the annual "REC Day on the Hill" event. "Our annual advocacy day at the capitol is a valuable opportunity to meet face-to-face with our elected officials and share a local perspective on issues that impact rural Iowa and rural economic development," remarked Roger Solomonson, board president of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC).

"It was great meeting with Shannon Lathom, Waylon Brown, and Dennis Guth to speak on the current landscape of the energy sector and the issues important to our REC membership. I felt as though it was a productive time and our concerns were understood and heard by our

legislators. I greatly appreciate everything our representatives do on our behalf at the state capital," commented Garrett Thompson, Franklin REC CEO.

Specifically, advocates asked elected officials to support legislation that clarifies the authority and governance of local electric co-op boards. We believe locally elected co-op boards should have authority to set rates and fees for electric service. Member-consumers approving rates and fees that they would pay is perhaps the most effective "check and balance" possible.

Additionally, co-op representatives discussed the dangers of electric service deregulation and how it would negatively impact rural Iowa businesses and communities. Service territory protections have been in place for more than 40 years in Iowa to ensure that citizens in sparsely

populated areas have access to reliable and affordable power. In fact, electric cooperatives were formed in the 1930s and 40s because the investor-owned utilities at the time refused to serve unprofitable rural areas.

Advocates also educated legislators on the benefits of the cooperative business model, including local ownership, cost-based rates, and democratic governance. Several electric cooperatives displayed booths in the rotunda, which provided information on topics including economic development, electric vehicles, digital metering advancements, investments in technology, safety innovations, energy-efficiency efforts, and vegetation management work.

Learn more about the legislative priorities of Iowa's electric cooperatives and Iowa Rural Power grassroots advocacy at www.iaruralpower.org.



CLASS OF 2023!
FRANKLIN REC STAFF AND DIRECTORS WISH YOU THE BEST!

**Franklin REC Office and Line
Crew Summer Hours Effective**
Tuesday, May 30,
Through
Monday, Sept. 4:
6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
PHONES ANSWERED 24/7.

Shining the Light on community volunteers in June

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Iowa's electric co-ops are excited to once again participate in the statewide Shine the Light contest in June to celebrate local volunteers. Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the contest will accept nominations in June and select three winners who will each receive a \$2,500 donation to their local charity or nonprofit.

"We've been truly inspired by the contest entries we received in our first two years," remarked Erin Campbell, director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. "We're increasing our three charity donations from \$2,000 to \$2,500 each this year to encourage even more participation across the state."

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers during the month of June. If you receive electricity from Franklin REC, you're a co-op member-consumer and we encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians. In addition, previously nominated volunteers who did not win are eligible to be nominated again.

The three winners will be announced in September and featured in *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine.

Go to www.IowaShineTheLight.com to review the contest rules. Contest entries will be accepted at this website starting on June 1. Help us shine the light on community volunteers this summer and consider making a nomination.



**Nominate a local volunteer
and they could win
\$2,500 for their charity!**

Contest entries accepted during June at
IowaShineTheLight.com

MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

Follow these tips to help you find
and correct hazards that may be
lurking around the home.

 Safe
Electricity.org®

Electrical safety tips for home

May is National Electrical Safety Month and a good time to visually sweep your home for electrical safety risks.

1. Unplug and store extension cords.
2. If you have more than one power strip plugged into an outlet, chances are good that you are overloading your circuits, especially if you live in an older house.
3. Kitchen countertop appliances should be plugged into three-prong, GFCI receptacles.
4. Change the batteries in your smoke alarms twice a year and test them monthly to make sure they're operating properly.
5. Check your light bulbs and change any lightbulb whose wattage exceeds the fixture's capacity.

Dusty indoor air?

If the air inside your house is dusty, your air conditioning ducts may be leaking.

If you are changing your air conditioner filter regularly, it will trap dust and pollutants that get into the indoor air.

But if the ducts have tiny holes or cracks or are not well-sealed, dust can sneak into the ducts, blowing the dust all over the house.

It's well worth it to have the ducts of your air conditioning system sealed at the joints.

Not only will it prevent dust from flying around your house, it could reduce your air conditioning bills this summer. The average house loses about 20 percent of its conditioned air through ducts that are improperly installed or are leaking at the joints.

A house with "clean" air also is less likely to trigger dust and pollen allergies to family members while they are indoors.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Effective May 22, 1991, the Iowa Utilities Board passed a ruling requiring all non-rate regulated utilities to post the following notice to its memberships: If a member-consumer has a question or concern regarding his/her electric service, please write or call your local electric cooperative at the following address or phone number:

Franklin REC
1560 Hwy. 65, PO Box 437
Hampton, IA 50441
(641) 456-2557
www.franklinrec.coop

If your complaint is related to your cooperative's service rather than its rates, and your cooperative does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board by calling 515-725-7321 or toll-free 1-877-565-4450; by writing to 1375 E. Court Avenue, Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069; or by email to customer@iub.iowa.gov.



Don't let a controlled burn reach a power pole.

The pole could slowly burn from the inside out.

Learn more at: SafeElectricity.org

Prevent grass and brush fires

Grass and brush are excellent fuels for fire, making fires involving ground cover and foliage extremely dangerous and destructive.

Grass and brush fires can travel up to 15.5 miles per hour and can spread to tens of thousands of acres within a few hours of ignition. They can occur naturally when lightning strikes the ground or when high winds bring down power lines, both of which can cause a spark and ignite a fire. However, 85 percent of wildfires are caused by humans. The more common causes include burning debris, using hot equipment on grass, improperly discarding cigarettes, leaving campfires unattended, and intentionally setting a fire.

To keep your family safe from grass and brush fires, follow these safety tips:

- Be aware of any Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches.
- Never build a campfire, shoot fireworks, burn debris, use a barbecue pit, or initiate a controlled burn when warnings are in effect.
- Never leave the area unattended and keep a shovel, bucket of water, fire extinguisher, or other fire suppression tools on hand.
- If you see a downed power line or other damaged electrical equipment, notify Franklin REC immediately. Never approach a downed power line or try to move one; stay at least 50 feet away from the area.
- Do not park cars, trucks, boats, or recreational vehicles on dry grass or shrubs.
- Use an approved spark arrester on all internal combustion engine-powered equipment used on your property, such as lawnmowers, chainsaws, tractors, and trimmers.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER AND HONOR

Our office is closed Monday, May 29, in observance of Memorial Day.

Our phones are answered 24/7:

641-456-2557

SUMMER HOURS: BEGINNING TUESDAY, MAY 30, AND CONTINUING THROUGH MONDAY, SEPT. 4, FRANKLIN REC WILL BE OPEN FROM 6:30 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.



Kennedy Dodd



Emma Martinek



Emma Showalter

Scholarship winners announced

BASIN SCHOLARSHIP Congratulations to Iowa State University student, Kennedy Dodd, daughter of Aaron and Shayna Dodd, Ackley. Dodd is the recipient of Franklin REC's \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship. Franklin REC also awarded runner-up, West Fork High School senior, Emma Martinek, daughter of Ronald and Beth Martinek, Rockwell a \$500 scholarship.

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY Congratulations to West Fork High School senior, Emma Martinek, daughter of Ronald and Beth Martinek, and Hampton-Dumont-CAL High School senior, Emma Showalter, daughter of Matt and Jori Showalter. Both Martinek and Showalter were awarded a \$500 scholarship after showing their commitment to their communities by volunteering and being actively involved in their communities.

Hagenson attends conference

Recently, Scott Hagenson (*right*), Franklin REC line superintendent, attended the annual Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' Operations and Safety Conference for operations department review and improvement of safety and efficiency.



"The timing of this conference is really good as we get ready to start the summer construction season," said Hagenson.



Franklin REC donated over 150 pounds of non-perishable food and personal hygiene items to the Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. Iowa Falls Food Shelf during the month-long food drive hosted by the cooperative. Thank you to those who donated.



Annual meeting held

Thank you to our membership for a very successful 2023 annual meeting. We are delighted that this year's annual meeting, Franklin REC's attendance numbers were on the rise. Nearly 22% of Franklin REC's membership participated in this year's annual meeting in one form or another. Since the pandemic, Franklin REC has been modifying ways to interact with you, our member, to best fit the ever-changing lifestyles of our membership dynamic.

This year's annual meeting consisted of a drive-thru meal pick-up or the option of the traditional sit-down meeting and meal. The evening meeting attendees were entered in a surprise \$100 bill credit raffle awarded at the end of the meeting. Additionally, all returned voting ballots were entered into a bonus raffle in which the cooperative awarded ten - \$20 bill credits to cooperative members.

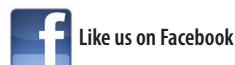
Franklin REC hopes to continue to increase our membership engagement by providing diversified opportunities to interact with you!

BOARD ROOM highlights

At their March meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved new memberships
- Approved work orders and special equipment totaling \$122,671.90
- Appointed Corn Belt voting delegate and alternate
- Approved 2022 IUB Reliability Report
- Approved revisions to sections 4 and 5 of tariff
- Approved purchase of new trailer

INTouch® is published monthly for members of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative
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 3:30 p.m.
CEO/GENERAL MANAGER: Garrett Thompson • EDITOR: Anne Gardiner, CCC



smart choices

Sign up for our e-newsletter at franklinrec.coop

Online bill pay at franklinrec.coop

Visit us online at www.franklinrec.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.