

● APRIL 2025

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**Spring safety tips**

**Ways co-ops build  
effective boards**

**Recipes with an  
international flair**

**Join the Energy Trail Tour ▶ See Page 13**

# APPRECIATION FOR OUR CO-OP EMPLOYEES

BY GARRETT THOMPSON



I don't say it enough; Franklin REC has a fantastic group of employees! I'm thankful for every one of them and I want our membership to

know how special they are, too. There is no way I could fit all the remarkable attributes of our employees into an article of this size. However, I decided to give a short and concise overview of what makes each team member special and unique. I hope you enjoy getting to know the individuals behind your power in a more personal way.

## LINE CREW/OPERATIONS



### Tom Demro

The grey beard of the linemen bunch. Tom's seen, and probably worked on, every inch of our system. He's also the one you go

to when you have a question about where something might be within our service territory. His photographic memory of every span of line is quite impressive!



### Chase Klein

The hometown kid. Chase has really grown into his own over the last several years. Taking on the additional responsibility of mapping and staking duties, all while becoming a better lineman has been fun to watch.



### Cole Marzen

Often dubbed the quarterback of the crew. Cole has a knack of seeing how a job should go in his head and then

communicating the steps involved to everyone on the job site. I've enjoyed getting to see Cole grow into the strong lineman that he is today.



### Austin Neff

The businessman of the bunch. Austin has a way of viewing things from the big picture and seeing how it all fits together.

Being able to see how a job or situation plays into the bigger picture is an extremely valuable trait.



### Trey Swaney

Trey was born with an innate quiet confidence. Trey is our glue guy that is down to do whatever it takes on the job. Need the

toilets scrubbed, inventory counted and a transformer exchanged all in one day? That's a normal day for Trey!



### Nick Nelson

The youngster of the group. Nick is one of the smartest people on the entire team who is eager to learn and get better. The

future is bright for him, and I'm excited to see him grow into the lineman we all know he can become.



### Jens Hovenga

Jens runs a tight ship in our warehouse! Whenever people that see other electric cooperatives across the state visit us, they

often remark that Franklin REC has the cleanest shop/warehouse in Iowa. That's all due to Jens and his ability to organize and communicate with our line crew when they prepare material for a job.

## OFFICE STAFF



### Emily Rush

Emily has "been there, done that" within every job in the office. She's worked her way up through customer service, billing, accounts

receivable and is now our work order accountant. She's very versatile and is willing to step up and do whatever is necessary to get the job done.



### Christy Mason

Anyone who has met Christy basically becomes her friend immediately. Her bubbly and fun personality allows her

to connect with coworkers and members in such a special way.



### Madison Alert

Madison's quick wit makes her a joy to be around! Her ability to think outside the box coupled with her artistic creativity makes

her a perfect fit as our communications specialist and key account representative.



### Tessa Haller

Tessa is the newbie of the office crew, but any outsider wouldn't be able to tell. Her ability to relate to others along with her eagerness to

learn has made her a great addition to our team.



**Office**  
1560 Highway 65 • P.O. Box 437  
Hampton, IA 50441

**Office Hours**  
Monday-Friday 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
Closed Saturdays, Sundays and holidays

**Telephone Number**  
641-456-2557  
Calls answered 24/7

**Secure Pay-by-Phone Number**  
1-855-940-3953

**Website**  
[www.franklinrec.coop](http://www.franklinrec.coop)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



## MANAGEMENT TEAM



### Karen Ringleb

Karen's knowledge of the history of Franklin REC, as well as her vast experience with RUS accounting

makes her an asset to our team. Over the last few years, she has also done a good job of recognizing strengths within others and allowing them to take on projects and make them their own.



### Chad Foster

Chad's the Swiss army knife of the entire crew. One day he is out in the field replacing a meter, the next he

is helping the line crew on a job site and the next will be discussing a member's options when it comes to solar. Chad will give you the shirt off his back and is willing to do whatever he can to make things easier for everyone else.



### Scott Hagenson

Scott came to Franklin REC with invaluable knowledge of the electric industry. Even though he has

only been here for two years, he's fit in so well and picked things up so fast that it feels like he's worked here for 20 years.

There you have it. I hope this has helped shed some light on the employees that are responsible for delivering your power. Next time you see them out and about, would you mind giving them a thank you? Your appreciation goes further than you will ever know!

*Garrett Thompson is the general manager/CEO for Franklin REC.*

## MATT ROELFS EARNS CREDENTIALLED COOPERATIVE DIRECTOR CERTIFICATION



Franklin REC congratulates Matt Roelfs, a co-op board member from Ackley, on recently earning

the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

In today's ever-changing business environment, electric cooperative directors face increasing demands. Staying informed about developments in the electric utility industry, strengthening governance skills, and upholding cooperative principles are essential for serving member-owners effectively. Franklin REC remains committed to advancing this knowledge to benefit the cooperative and its members.

The NRECA CCD program ensures directors gain a strong foundation in cooperative governance by requiring attendance and demonstrated understanding of five core courses:

- Director Duties and Liabilities
- Understanding the Electric Business
- Board Operations and Process
- Strategic Planning
- Financial Decision Making

Roelfs has served on Franklin REC's board for four years, embracing the challenges and learning opportunities that come with the role. His dedication to the cooperative and its members makes him a valuable asset to the board.

## THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING



We are grateful for our members' participation in this year's Franklin REC annual meeting. Your involvement highlights one of the most important benefits of being a cooperative member: the principle of democratic control.

As a member of Franklin REC, you're not just a customer – you're an owner. This means you have a voice in how our cooperative operates. By casting your vote, you play a vital role in shaping the future of our cooperative and ensuring it reflects the values and priorities of our membership.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who took the time to vote and engage in this year's meeting. Your involvement is what keeps Franklin REC strong, member-focused and responsive to the communities we serve.

As always, we are committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity while upholding the cooperative values of transparency, accountability and service. Thank you for being an integral part of our cooperative. Together, we can continue to build a brighter future.

## FRANKLIN REC ALTERNATIVE ENERGY FUND

Franklin REC's voluntary Alternative Energy Program allows members to support the development of renewable energy projects with contributions to the fund. The funding for the program, provided by our members, supports the development of alternative energy production facilities in Iowa. These contributions not only provide the opportunity for alternative energy to be purchased but also assist in the development of nontraditional energy generation in Iowa.

Members can make a one-time contribution or a monthly pledge that is automatically added to monthly bills in \$1 increments. To enroll in the Alternative Energy Program, complete the form below.



### ALTERNATIVE ENERGY FUND AUTHORIZATION FORM

One-time Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Payments made payable to Franklin REC.*

Monthly Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*This amount will be automatically applied to your monthly electric bill. You may opt-in or opt-out of the program at any time.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Clip this portion of the magazine and return to Franklin REC, PO Box 437, Hampton, IA 50441 or email franklin@franklinrec.coop.

## CREATE EVEN FUN WITH FRANKLIN REC'S GRAVITY BASKETBALL WAGON

Planning a town festival, school fundraiser or community event? Franklin REC is thrilled to offer our Gravity Basketball Wagon – a fun and interactive activity – for you to use at no cost!

Perfect for all ages, the Gravity Basketball Wagon brings energy and excitement to any gathering. Whether it is kids trying their first shots or adults enjoying a friendly challenge, it's sure to be a crowd favorite.

### What's included?

Franklin REC will handle all the logistics, delivering the wagon directly to your event within our service territory and picking it up afterward – all for free!



### How to reserve

Reserving is easy! Just visit our website and fill out the form.

At Franklin REC, we're proud to support our communities. Let us help make your event unforgettable with the Gravity Basketball Wagon!

## FROM YOUR BOARD ROOM

### During the January meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved work orders and special equipment capitalization of \$135,267.58
- Approved an adjustment to the Revolving Loan Fund interest rate and administrative rate
- Accepted the nominating committee reports

### During the February meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved work orders and special equipment capitalization of \$142,134.00
- Accepted a RECare program update
- Approved Idle Service Tariff language change

## PLANNING A SPRING PROJECT? CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG

Before starting any project that involves digging, be sure to contact 811! This free service helps locate underground public utilities, ensuring your safety and preventing damage. Whether you're planting trees, installing a fence or tackling a landscaping project, calling 811 before you dig is required by Iowa law. Safe digging starts with a simple call!

iStock  
Credit: Eerik

# U.S. FARMERS FEED THE WORLD; LET'S REMEMBER ELECTRICAL SAFETY THIS PLANTING SEASON

As planting season nears, here are some agriculture-related facts from the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF):

- Each year, one U.S. farm feeds 166 people domestically and abroad. The global population is expected to increase by 2.2 billion by 2050. This means that the world's farmers will have to grow approximately 70% more food than what they produce today.
- 2 million farms dot America's rural landscape, according to the AFBF, and 98% are operated by individuals, families and family-run partnerships or corporations.
- 86% of U.S. agricultural products are produced on family farms or ranches.
- Americans throw away approximately 25% of the food they buy to eat at home.
- Women make up 36% of the total number of farm operators in the U.S.; 56% of all farms have at least one female decision-maker.

As farmers return to fields this spring, Safe Electricity and Franklin REC urge all workers to be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines.

## Follow these safety tips:

- 1 Determine power line locations before going out into the fields and designate preplanned routes that avoid hazardous areas.
- 2 Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting



tractors on trailer beds. Be cognizant of tall antennas.

- 3 Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators or raising truck beds near power lines.
- 4 Do not attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- 5 Coming too close to a power line while working can be just as dangerous as contacting one since electricity can arc or "jump" to conducting material or objects.
- 6 Non-metallic materials, such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay, will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.
- 7 When grounded wires that stabilize poles, known as guy wires, are broken, they become hazardous. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Do not do it yourself.
- 8 When it comes to dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call the electric utility.

9 If your equipment contacts a power line, stay in the cab and call 911 or Franklin REC for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives.

10 If leaving the cab is necessary, as in the case of fire, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Hop away from the area as far as you can, keeping both feet together as you hop. If you are unable to hop, then shuffle with the insides of your feet touching. Do return to the equipment until the power has been deenergized.

Managers and owners should make sure family members and staff, including seasonal workers, are educated on these safety precautions. Dangerous areas need to be thoroughly identified and labeled.

Start each day with a safety meeting to alert everyone to potential hazards and how to avoid them.

For more electrical safety information, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

## JOIN THE ENERGY TRAIL TOUR

Enter for a chance to join fellow cooperative enthusiasts on a trip through the North Dakota Energy Loop this summer! Register for the Energy Trail Tour by scanning the QR code with your smart device or visiting [www.franklinrec.coop/energy-trail-tour](http://www.franklinrec.coop/energy-trail-tour).







IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine  
for members of  
Iowa's electric  
cooperatives

April 2025

Visit our website at [www.franklinrec.coop](http://www.franklinrec.coop)



# POWERING YOUR LIFE

It's good to know your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative is always there. For generations, we've powered the growth of our neighborhoods, businesses and everything in between. Today, our commitment is stronger than ever to provide affordable and reliable energy.

**YOUR SOURCE FOR POWER. AND INFORMATION.**  
VISIT US AT: [WWW.TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM](http://WWW.TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM)