

FEBRUARY 2025

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**Forces shaping the rural
economy in 2025**

**Keep safety in mind when
clearing snow**

Cherry recipes to love

Deadlines approaching for Youth Tour and scholarship applications ▶ See Page 13

FROM YOUR BOARD ROOM

During the December meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved work orders and special equipment capitalization of \$83,801.64
- Approved nominating committee appointments
- Approved write-off of uncollectible accounts
- Approved union contract as presented
- Approved handbook changes for sections 4.14, 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 as presented
- Approved renewal of 2024/2025 FCDA partnership
- Approved estate patronage retirements
- Approved 2025 budget as presented
- Approved changes to the January 2025 board meeting

DOING MORE WITH LESS

Iowa's electric cooperatives play a vital role in powering rural communities, often in areas where homes, farms and businesses are widely spaced apart. Serving these sparsely populated areas comes with unique challenges. Unlike utilities in urban areas that benefit from dense populations and shorter service distances, Iowa's electric co-ops literally cover more ground – both in physical infrastructure and in responsibilities.

The numbers tell the story. On average, Iowa's electric cooperatives serve far fewer members per mile of line compared to other types of utilities. This means cooperatives must maintain extensive networks of poles, wires, substations and equipment, often across rugged and remote terrain. All of this must be done with significantly less revenue per mile, requiring a balance of

operational excellence and financial responsibility.

While the challenges are significant, so is the commitment of Iowa's electric cooperatives to their members. Unlike investor-owned utilities driven by profit, co-ops exist to serve their communities. Decisions are made locally, with input from the members who own and operate the co-op. This grassroots approach ensures the unique needs of Iowa's rural communities are always the top priority.

By pooling resources, embracing innovation and staying true to their mission, Iowa's electric cooperatives exemplify the cooperative spirit. They prove that with determination and ingenuity, it's possible to do more with less while continuing to deliver safe, affordable and reliable energy to the communities they serve.



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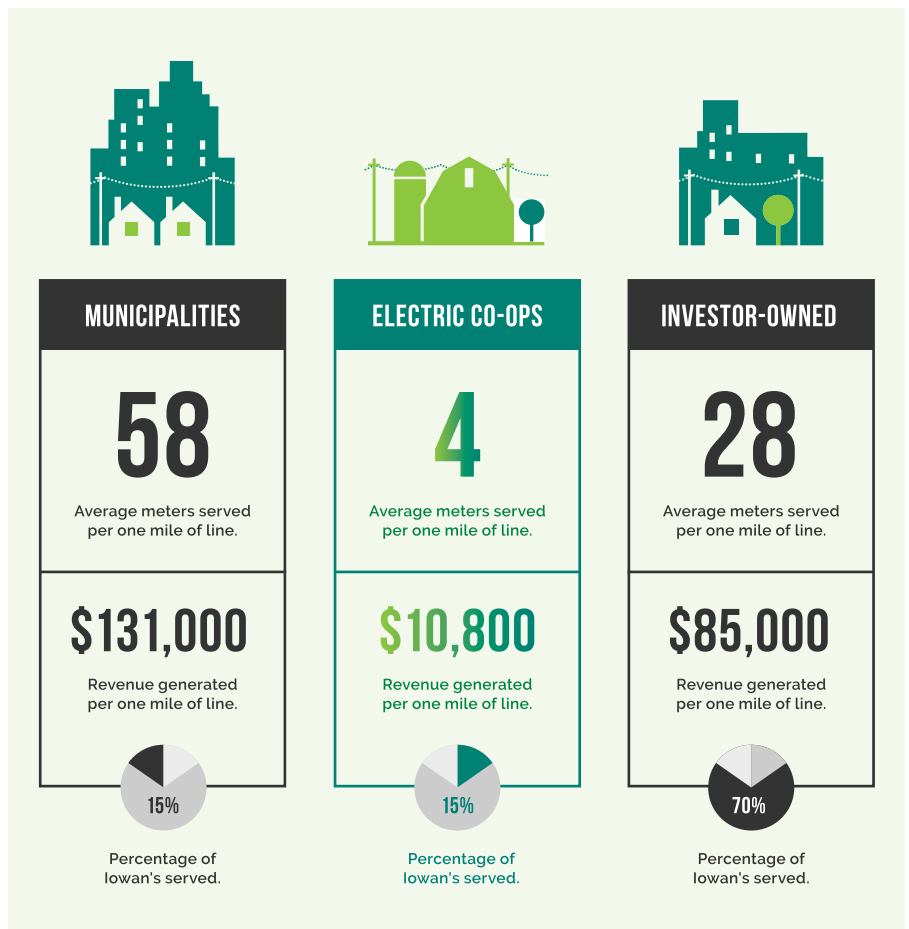
Office Hours
Monday-Friday 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Closed Saturdays, Sundays and holidays

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

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

Website
www.franklinrec.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENERGY BILL

Have you ever wondered what the different charges on your bill mean? Here's a quick guide to help you understand each item better:

- **Facility charge:** This is a fixed monthly fee that helps cover the cost of the equipment to power your service, including maintaining equipment, performing upgrades and ensuring reliable electric service at your location. The facility charge amount depends on the size of your service needs.
- **Energy charge:** This is the cost of the electricity you use each month. It's calculated based on the number

of kilowatts your location uses during the month's billing cycle. *Remember, your bill shows the usage from the previous month – so a bill received in February reflects January's usage.*

- **Energy cost adjustment:** This adjusts your bill to reflect the actual cost of electricity purchased by Franklin REC from its energy supplier, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. This adjustment ensures fair and accurate pricing based on current energy costs.

By understanding these charges, you can better manage your energy use.

Another great tool for monitoring your usage is Franklin REC's SmartHub app, available for your smart device. With SmartHub, you can view your location's energy usage in one-hour intervals, giving you detailed insights into your usage patterns and trends. This can help you make informed decisions about your energy consumption.



Scan the QR code for the SmartHub login.

KEEP SAFETY IN MIND WHEN CLEARING SNOW

If the snow piles up this winter, Franklin REC wants to remind all member-owners to prioritize safety and maintain clear access to all power equipment at your service location. Snow-covered electrical equipment not only poses safety hazards but also affects electric service reliability for homes and businesses.

Before removing snow, please take note of the locations of pad-mounted transformers, meters, regulators, cabinets, poles and overhead wires. Snow piled on or around this equipment can impede Franklin REC crews' ability to perform maintenance or make emergency repairs. Maintain at least 10 feet of clearance in front of power equipment and 3 feet on the sides and back to ensure proper access for lineworkers.

When clearing snow from roofs or using large tractor-mounted snowblowers, be mindful of overhead power lines. Blowing snow directly at power lines can knock high-voltage fuses out of

their holders or cause rocks in the snow stream to chip or break porcelain insulators, leading to outages. Restoring power during winter conditions can take longer due to the challenges posed by cold weather.

In addition to safety considerations, Franklin REC highlights the responsibility of member-owners to keep a clear path to all equipment year-round. Per Section 6.2.2 of the Franklin REC tariff, "Electric service may be disconnected for failure of the member-consumer to permit the Cooperative reasonable access to the Cooperative's equipment." Obstructing access prevents our

linemen from performing routine maintenance and addressing outages promptly.

To ensure uninterrupted service and safety for all members, Franklin REC respectfully requests the removal of any items attached to or located near cooperative equipment. If your service location is impacted by an outage, repairs may be delayed until the pathways are cleared and safe for crews.

For questions or concerns, contact the Franklin REC office at 641-456-2557. Thank you for helping us provide reliable and safe service this winter.



CELEBRATING SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Join us in congratulating two of Franklin REC's crew chiefs on their milestones with Franklin REC.

Their dedication and commitment have been vital to our success. Thank you, Chace and Tom, for your years of service and the expertise you bring to our team!



CHACE KLEIN

8 YEARS OF SERVICE



TOM DEMRO

11 YEARS OF SERVICE

CHILI COOK-OFF HEATS UP AT FRANKLIN REC

December marked the return of Franklin REC's cherished Chili Cook-Off, when employees and board members showcased their culinary talents in a friendly competition for the title of Chili Cook-Off Master. Scott Hagenson, line superintendent and the 2023 Chili Cook-Off Master, wowed the panel of judges with a delicious pork-based recipe. However, Administrative Assistant Christy Mason, the co-op's kitchen guru, swept the competition with her unique chili creation to be crowned the 2024 Chili Cook-Off Master.

The Chili Cook-Off has become a beloved tradition at Franklin REC, bringing together creativity and camaraderie during the holiday season. The event continues to build excitement each year, and anticipation is already growing for the next competition and the new flavors it will bring!

Congratulations to this year's winners:

First place: Christy Mason, administrative assistant

Second place: Cole Marzen, chief lineman

Third place: Scott Hagenson, line superintendent



This year's Chili Cook-Off winners (pictured from left to right) Scott Hagenson, Christy Mason and Cole Marzen.



IS 2025 THE YEAR TO INVEST IN YOUR HOME?



If your New Year's resolution was to enhance your home, Franklin REC is here to help! We've revamped our rebate program to focus on energy-saving opportunities, making it easier for you to save while improving your home.

Whether you're upgrading to a new ENERGY STAR®-rated appliance or planning to install a heat pump, our rebates could be just what you need. Have you already weatherized or insulated your home this winter? Gather your receipts – you might qualify for a rebate!

Approved rebates will appear as credits on your electric bill, making energy savings even more rewarding. For more information about Franklin REC's rebate program, call our office at 641-456-2557.

Let us help you make 2025 a year of smart home investments!

NOTICE: RATE ADJUSTMENT EFFECTIVE FEB. 1

Franklin REC's rates have been updated as of Feb. 1, in accordance with the new rate summary. These changes will appear on your March bill statement.

If you have any questions about the new rate structure, please contact our office at 641-456-2557. Thank you for being a valued member of Franklin REC.

DEADLINES APPROACHING FOR YOUTH TOUR AND SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There's still time to apply for this year's Youth Tour in June! Franklin REC is seeking a high school sophomore or junior, or home school equivalent, within our service area to represent the cooperative. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a student to experience an all-expenses-paid trip to our nation's capital, visiting historical sites, and learning about electric cooperatives and their impact on policymaking.

How to apply: Visit the Franklin REC website and navigate to the "Community Tab." Select "Iowa Youth Tour" to access the application form and all necessary details for the selection process. The deadline to apply is Monday, Feb. 24.

For more information, contact the cooperative at 641-456-2557 or email contact-frec@franklinrec.coop.

FRANKLIN REC OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS

Franklin REC is proud to offer three \$500 academic scholarships to qualifying high school seniors or home-schooled students who demonstrate a strong commitment to our community through volunteer work with local organizations, events, church and other community-centered initiatives.

Qualifications

- Applicant must be a dependent of an active Franklin REC member at the time of the application period.
**Children and grandchildren of Franklin REC employees and board members are not eligible.*
- Applicant must be a graduating high school senior or home-school

equivalent in the 2024-2025 academic year.

- Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time undergraduate program or trade school within 12 months of graduation.

Requirements

A completed Commitment to Community scholarship application form.

- A personal accomplishment letter outlining your educational goals, work and personal experiences, extracurricular activities, community involvement, scholastic achievements, and any additional information that

you feel is important to your application.

- Three Character Evaluation and Recommendation forms from the following individuals:
 - One recommendation from a high school superintendent, principal, guidance counselor, teacher or advisor.
 - One recommendation from a community member with whom you have worked in conjunction with on community projects.
 - The third recommendation is at your discretion. Cannot be a family member.



The completed application, personal accomplishment letter, and three references must be received no later than **Monday, Feb. 24.**





IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine
for members of
Iowa's electric
cooperatives

February 2025

Visit our website at www.franklinrec.coop

A man with a beard, wearing a white button-down shirt with a "Touchstone Energy Cooperative" logo, is looking towards another person whose back is to the camera. They are in a control room with blue and green digital displays in the background.

ENERGY WHEN YOU NEED IT

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