Franklin REC
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

JULY 2025

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Summer reliability assessment

Energy efficiency tips for older homes

Recipes: Firecracker favorites

Show you care with RECare ▶ See Page 13

CONTENTS

VOLUME 78 • ISSUE 7

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ON THE COVER Special thanks to Peg Visser, a North West REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive $100!

TAKING STOCK OF IOWA'S 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BY HALEY MOON

The 2025 Iowa Legislative Session officially adjourned in the early morning hours of May 15, after lawmakers worked through the night to finalize a budget agreement. With a projected adjournment date of May 2, this session included nearly two weeks of "overtime."

Throughout the session, Iowa's electric cooperatives maintained a strong presence at the State Capitol, advocating for the interests of their member-consumers under the Golden Dome. With more than 1,800 bills introduced this year, many of which related to energy, a unified cooperative voice was more important than ever.

Co-op engagement took many forms, from large events to one-on-one meetings. Our Welcome Back Legislative Reception in January provided a valuable opportunity to meet with nearly 100 legislators at the start of session, while our REC Day on the Hill event in March brought around 200 rural electric co-op advocates to the Capitol. Individual visits, countless emails, phone calls and participation in local forums all helped reinforce the co-op message throughout Iowa's 2025 Legislative Session.

Defending service territory

This constant grassroots engagement resulted in several legislative successes for Iowa's electric co-ops. One major victory was the defense of Iowa's service territory law, a cornerstone that ensures cooperatives can continue to deliver reliable, affordable electricity to rural Iowans. One proposal would have changed how the Iowa Utilities Commission considers service territory changes, potentially disadvantaging co-ops and the rural Iowans we serve. Thanks to strong advocacy, these proposals were ultimately set aside by both House and Senate Commerce Committees.

Stopping a third-party solar program

Another key success was halting the advancement of a bill that would have created a third-party solar program in Iowa. While electric cooperatives support solar as part of a diversified energy portfolio, this bill raised serious concerns as it would have allowed third-party companies to operate as utilities without being held to the same regulatory standards. Additionally, the program's structure could have shifted costs to consumers who chose not to participate. Co-ops support solar solutions that are fair, cost-effective and strengthen the electric grid; criteria this bill did not meet.

Modernizing energy infrastructure

Gov. Kim Reynolds also introduced a comprehensive energy bill that included a right of first refusal provision for electric transmission projects, which Iowa's electric cooperatives supported. While this bill did not advance, we look forward to continued conversations about modernizing energy infrastructure to meet Iowa's future needs.

Though the 2025 session has ended, our advocacy work continues. Iowa's electric cooperatives are already preparing for the 2026 session, which will convene Jan. 12. Until then, we will remain actively engaged with lawmakers and those seeking political office to ensure the cooperative perspective continues to be heard. Keep up to date on these activities by following Iowa Rural Power on social media or at www.iaruralpower.org.

Haley Moon is the senior manager of policy and advocacy for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN A SOLO STOVE TABLETOP FIRE PIT!

The Solo Stove Runner tabletop fire pit captures the essence of gathering around a fire with friends and family. The Runner features a clean, smokeless flame that doesn't have to be vented, bringing the warmth and ambiance of a real fire without the mess or hassle. It's an effortless way to enjoy the glow of a flame, anywhere.

ENTER ONLINE BY JULY 31!

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than July 31. 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 $100 in beef certificates from the May issue was **Duane Adams,** a **Prairie Energy Cooperative** member-consumer.

FRANKLIN REC OFFICE CLOSURES

Please note the following office closures:

- **Friday, July 4:** Closed in observance of Independence Day.
- **Thursday, July 10:** Closed until 1 p.m. as staff will be serving breakfast at the Franklin County Fair 4-H Food Stand.

While you're at the county fair, don't forget to stop by Pleasant Hill to redeem your free homemade ice cream vouchers, courtesy of Franklin REC!

FROM YOUR BOARDROOM

During the May meeting, Franklin REC directors approved the following:

- Voting in favor of National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation bylaw amendments
- 2024 patronage allocation
- 2025 patronage retirement
- 2025/2026 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association dues
- A donation request

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RELIABILITY REPORT RELEASED AHEAD OF WARM SUMMER MONTHS

BY GARRETT THOMPSON

In early May, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) released a report outlining its 2025 Summer Reliability Assessment. The report raised concerns regarding several regional transmission organizations (RTOs) and their electric generation and transmission challenges this summer.

This month, I want to take this space to discuss what it all means and how Franklin REC is working with its industry partners to address these issues.

NERC's summer reliability assessment

NERC placed Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) in an "elevated risk" category for electric generation/capacity shortfalls this summer. Franklin REC is a part of the SPP footprint.

Despite the elevated risk category, SPP anticipates a high likelihood of meeting demand for electricity this summer.

SPP conducts an assessment each year to identify and mitigate threats to energy reliability during the summer season lasting from June to September. The analysis considers factors such as historical and predicted future electricity use, weather forecasts, the variability of available wind energy, drought conditions and generation and transmission outages.

Seasonal forecasts indicate a 40-60% chance of warmer-than-average temperatures this summer within the SPP footprint. There are similar chances for below-average rainfall for most of the area covered by SPP. Given these expected conditions, SPP's studies conclude there is high probability it will have sufficient native generation to meet the demand for electricity peak-usage hours over the summer season. This analysis does not consider the availability of energy imports from other regions, the impact of demand response programs that can automatically reduce demand in response to real-time conditions during peak hours, or the potential impact of voluntary conservation programs that incent consumers to reduce their electricity use when generating reserves are slim.

If extreme weather, unexpected outages or other circumstances affect the region, SPP has systems, tools and procedures ready to mitigate risks and maintain electric reliability. Under different scenarios, the grid operator may call on generating units to commit to run earlier or more often than usual, delay planned equipment outages, import energy from neighboring systems or tap into available reserves depending on the severity and duration of events affecting energy reliability.

What does this mean for Franklin REC?

The way we generate electricity is rapidly changing. More and more, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power are coming online, while traditional sources like coal, nuclear and natural gas are being retired. Franklin REC believes and advocates for an all-of-the-above energy approach. All-of-the-above promotes the idea that the U.S. depends on a reliable and sustainable fuel supply that includes developing and incorporating domestically produced renewable energy resources to supplement baseload generation that includes biofuels, natural gas, nuclear, hydropower and coal.

It's important to remember that the electric grid is made up of thousands of generating stations and millions of miles of line. A power plant outage or natural disaster could have an impact on SPP's projections. Franklin REC, Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative's primary power provider, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, are well-positioned to meet this summer's peak demand. And, as we have always done, we will communicate potential issues with you as they arise.

We continue to work with policymakers and regulators on a state and federal level for a sensible all-of-the-above generation approach.

The ongoing energy transition must recognize the need for time, and technology development, while including all energy sources to maintain reliability and affordability. A resilient and reliable electric grid that affordably keeps the lights on is the cornerstone of our rural economy.

Electric cooperative families and businesses rightfully expect the lights to stay on at a price they can afford. To maintain the reliability of your power supply, we must adopt an all-of-the-above strategy that includes renewable energy as well as dependable resources we have come to rely on like coal, natural gas, nuclear and hydropower. This diverse energy mix is essential to meeting those expectations day in and day out.

We are keenly aware that the sun doesn't always shine, and the wind doesn't always blow. While we support and encourage the development and use of renewable energy, the intermittent nature of renewables means there may be times when there simply isn't enough of it to keep the lights on all the time. Its place is to supplement a reliable and affordable baseload generation mix. That's why we must continue to recognize the value of and operate baseload generation plants now and into the future.

Our mission remains the same. We are here to provide you with safe, reliable and affordable electricity that is also environmentally responsible. We will continue to advocate on your behalf and do everything we can to continue to live up to that mission.

Garrett Thompson is the CEO/general manager of Franklin REC.

GET TO KNOW YOUR CO-OP

In this edition of our "Get to Know Us" series, we're featuring three outstanding members of our Franklin REC team: Chad Foster, Nicholas Nelson and Dave Keninger. Each shares what they love about working at the cooperative, the projects they're most proud of and how they see Franklin REC making a difference in the community. They'll also reflect on the evolution of the cooperative and offer advice for those starting their careers. Read on to learn more about Chad, Nicholas and Dave and their contributions to Franklin REC!

CHAD FOSTER
Member Service Advisor

Q: What is your favorite part of working at Franklin REC? Working with a great team and helping members with problems or concerns. Getting the power back on.

Q: How would you describe Franklin REC's impact on the community? I think we are a respected business; we are willing to go the extra mile to help out where we can.

Q: What is one thing you wish more members knew about Franklin REC? How the financials operate as a not-for-profit organization.

Q: If you had to sum up Franklin REC in three words, what would they be? Trustworthy, dependable, committed.

Q: What is one piece of advice you would give to someone just starting their career? Hang in there, you will have a better understanding with time.

DAVE KENINGER
Board Director

Q: What's your favorite part of being involved with Franklin REC? Working with fellow board members, cooperative staff, members and outside sources to solve problems to benefit our members.

Q: How has Franklin REC changed since you started? The industry is continuously evolving, making it more complicated to stay ahead of change.

Q: What's one thing you wish more members knew about Franklin REC? How co-ops work and the benefits of a cooperative.

Q: What's a project or initiative at Franklin REC that you're especially proud of? Implementing our four solar fields and the savings they will generate for our members over the next 17 years.

Q: If you had to sum up Franklin REC in three words, what would they be? Family working together.

NICHOLAS NELSON
Lineman

Q: What is your favorite part of working at Franklin REC? The people.

Q: How would you describe Franklin REC's impact on the community? Helping wherever we can.

Q: If you had to sum up Franklin REC in three words, what would they be? Caring, dedication, commitment.

Q: What is one piece of advice you would give to someone just starting their career? Jump in with both feet.

EFFICIENCY TIPS FOR OLDER HOMES

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

I love old homes. I've always been drawn to the details and craftsmanship. The features of older homes can make them less efficient than modern construction, but it doesn't have to be a trade-off. You can keep the charm and make your home more efficient.

Start by prioritizing the invisible upgrades that make your home more comfortable and efficient. When we were kids, I don't think any of us thought, "When I grow up, I want to spend my hard-earned money on insulation." It's not as exciting as new countertops or a remodeled bathroom, but air sealing and insulation can save you money every month. Then you can apply the savings to aesthetic improvements.

Addressing your home's envelope

Many older homes are not properly insulated. Insulation has several benefits beyond sealing your home and keeping outdoor air from seeping in. It reduces outdoor noise, makes your home quieter and improves your overall comfort.

Always properly air seal before you insulate. Older homes with pocket doors, coved ceilings, dumbwaiters, doors to attic spaces and laundry chutes allow indoor air to escape through the cavities, gaps and cracks around these classic features. Sealing off open cavities around those features often requires plywood, rigid foam or drywall fastened into place and then caulked around the edges.

Keep an eye out for framing features that cause drafts. Balloon framing is a type of construction where wall studs run all the way from the foundation to the roof, allowing air to flow freely through those spaces. Second floors with knee wall attics on both sides are notorious for air leakage. Open cavities allow air to flow horizontally between the attic spaces, making the home uncomfortable and inefficient. Seal off the open cavities in the floor framing and insulate attic spaces.

Dense-packed cellulose or closed cell foam insulation can be sprayed into exterior walls. Skilled contractors can remove pieces of siding and drill holes to fill the wall cavities from the outside of the home. For brick or stone homes, holes can be drilled from the

inside and then patched and painted. Insulating walls from the inside of the home requires more time and effort in preparation and cleanup, but having well-insulated walls is worth it.

Knob and tube wiring – commonly used from the early 1880s to the 1930s with no grounding wire – should be replaced prior to insulating walls and attics for safety purposes. Contact between insulation and knob and tube wiring can create a fire hazard.

People often think new windows are the best way to improve a home's efficiency. Considering the cost of replacing windows, I recommend investing in air sealing and insulation first. Then, consider storm windows to keep the charm of the original windows, such as leaded glass and stained glass windows in good condition. Choose from interior or exterior options that are operable and inoperable.

Appliance improvements

Once you've addressed the envelope of your home, consider appliance improvements. Replace your old electric water heater with a heat pump water heater. This upgrade can save a family of four an estimated $550 per year and more than $5,600 over the lifetime of the water heater, according to ENERGY STAR®.

Invest in high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment. A mini-split heat pump, also known as a ductless heat pump, is a more efficient option than electric baseboard heating and provides the benefit of air conditioning.

Older homes don't have to be inefficient. Show your home some love and invest in energy efficient upgrades.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

ALWAYS CONSIDER AN ENERGY AUDIT

An energy audit is a comprehensive assessment of your home or business designed to identify ways to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs. It's an important first step when considering energy efficiency improvements. Contact your local electric cooperative for more information.

There are many ways to keep the charm of an older home and improve its efficiency. *Photo Source: Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources*

The first step to improving an older home's energy efficiency is air sealing and adding insulation to attic spaces. *Photo Source: Bonneville Power Administration*

Prioritize the invisible upgrades that make your home more comfortable and efficient, such as adding blown-in insulation to your attic. *Photo Source: Bonneville Power Administration*

Firecracker Favorites

MEXICAN STREET CORN

- 6 medium ears sweet corn
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon lime zest, grated
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 6 tablespoons cotija cheese
- 2-3 teaspoons chili powder

Carefully peel back corn husks to within 1 inch of bottom, remove silk. Rewrap corn in husks and secure with butcher's twine. Place in Dutch oven, cover with cold water. Soak corn for 20 minutes, then drain. Grill corn over medium heat 25-30 minutes until tender, turning often. Meanwhile, in a small bowl combine sour cream, mayonnaise, cilantro, garlic, lime zest and lime juice. Peel back husks, spread sour cream mixture over corn. Sprinkle with cotija cheese and chili powder. Serve immediately. *Serves 6*

Denise Anderson • Ocheyedan
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.

ALCINDA'S JALAPEÑO SPAGHETTI DIP

- 2 pounds spaghetti noodles
- 1 12-ounce jar jalapeño slices
- 1 32-ounce jar mayonnaise
- corn chips

Break spaghetti into 2 to 3-inch pieces, boil and drain. Chop jalapeños with juice into small pieces. Stir together jalapeños, noodles and mayonnaise. Refrigerate overnight. Serve with corn chips for dipping.

Andrea Mosbach • Webster City
Prairie Energy Cooperative

CHEESE STUFFED JALAPEÑOS

- 25 fresh jalapeño peppers
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese
- 3 cups cheddar cheese, finely shredded
- 1½ teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 4 strips bacon, fried and crumbled

With gloved hands, cut peppers in half and remove seeds and membrane. Mix the remaining ingredients and spoon into pepper halves. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees F for 10 minutes. *Serves 15*

Laura DeSmet • Larchwood
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

JALAPEÑO POPPERS

- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1½ cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1½ teaspoons garlic powder
- 16 fresh whole jalapeño peppers
- 8 pieces bacon, thinly sliced, cut in half crosswise

Mix together cream cheese, cheddar cheese, Parmesan cheese and garlic powder until thoroughly blended. Lay a jalapeño pepper on a work surface and cut a lengthwise sliver from the side, exposing seeds and white membrane. With the handle of a teaspoon, scrape out seeds and membrane, leaving the pepper hollow. Repeat for all peppers. Chop the removed pepper slivers and mix into cheese stuffing. Stuff each pepper with cheese mixture and wrap in a half bacon slice. Secure with toothpicks. Grill stuffed jalapeños on a less hot part of a grill for about 30 minutes, until peppers are hot and juicy and bacon is browned. *Yields 16 pieces*

Marilyn Obrien • Geneva
Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative

DAL (RED LENTIL) SOUP

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons ginger, grated
- ½ teaspoon Hot Madra curry
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- pinch cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 cups dried red lentils
- 6 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- fresh cilantro for topping, chopped

In a large pot, heat oil for 1 minute. Add onions and cook for 5 minutes until soft and clear. Stir in garlic, ginger, curry, cumin, turmeric, cayenne and salt. Cook for 1 minute then add lentils and broth. Turn up heat to bring mixture to a boil. Once boiling, lower heat and add coconut milk. Simmer soup for 20 minutes. Add tomatoes and continue simmering for another 5 minutes or until lentils are soft. Remove from heat. Stir in lemon juice and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot in bowls, topped with cilantro. *Serves 4*

Jacqueline Minikus • Pisgah
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative

CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

- 2 cans cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cheddar cheese soup
- or 4 ounces Velveeta cheese
- 1 can spicy nacho cheese soup
- 2 cans milk
- 1 4-ounce can green chiles
- 1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1½ cups chicken, diced
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- optional: nacho chips, sour cream

Mix ingredients and heat through. Serve with nacho chips, sour cream and more shredded cheese, if desired. *Serves 8*

Carla Jansma • Hudson
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

FIRE CRACKERS

- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons crushed red peppers
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- 2 tablespoons dry ranch seasoning powder
- 1 box saltine crackers (4 sleeves)

Mix oil, red peppers, garlic powder, onion powder and ranch seasoning together. Microwave for 1 minute to infuse flavors. Pour over crackers and stir gently. Let stand 15 minutes before eating. These are great with meat or cheese, crushed onto a salad, or just as a snack.

Carol DeJong • Sibley
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Visit www.ieclmagazine.com and search our online archive of hundreds of recipes in various categories.

CHICKEN JALAPEÑO LASAGNA

- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 cup jalapeño peppers, chopped
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 8 ounces cream cheese, cubed
- 2 cups chicken, cooked and cubed
- 1 cup chicken broth, divided
- ⅛ teaspoon hot sauce, optional
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 8 ounces lasagna noodles, cooked
- 8 ounces pepper jack cheese, shredded
- 8 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

In a large skillet, sauté garlic, onion and jalapeños in butter until tender. Add cream cheese. Cook and stir until melted. Stir in chicken and ⅔ cup chicken broth. Add hot sauce if desired and season to taste. Combine the pepper jack and cheddar cheese. Pour the remaining ⅓ cup broth into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Layer three noodles, half the chicken mixture and half the cheese mixture. Repeat layers. Cover and bake at 350 degrees F for 30-45 minutes, until bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes before slicing.

Sue Warner • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

PEPPER JACK CHICKEN DIP

- 8 ounces pepper jack cheese
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 large can chunk chicken
- 1 can jalapeños, optional
- chips or crackers

Mix first four ingredients together and heat in a slow cooker or microwave. Serve with chips or crackers.

Stephanie Messner • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

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A DIVERSE FUEL MIX IS ESSENTIAL FOR RELIABLE POWER

BY MICHAEL LEITMAN

Our electric grid is most reliable when a wide range of technologies, including traditional and renewable energy sources, is available.

Providing members with safe, reliable and affordable power is the mantra for electric cooperatives across the nation. Co-op members can see the work necessary to maintain reliable electricity at the local level, such as co-op lineworkers maintaining utility poles and wires and repairing them after major storms. At the regional and national levels, a diverse mix of power generation resources, transmission lines and pipeline infrastructure are essential cornerstones of maintaining reliable electricity.

The U.S. electric grid has undergone major changes over the last decade. The share of electricity generated from coal plants has declined significantly, while the share from natural gas and intermittent wind and solar generation has grown. Fuel diversity means that your electricity is supplied by a variety of generation technologies, each with their own characteristics and performance capabilities over different weather and seasonal conditions.

Common types of generation

Dispatchable technologies can be turned on and off as needed. Large steam generation plants (most commonly using coal or nuclear fuels) are generally considered "baseload," meaning that they are designed to run efficiently 24/7 to serve as the base of the electricity mix. However, steam plants are less capable of ramping output up or down to meet the various peaks and dips as grid conditions change.

Natural gas is the most versatile fuel, powering large combined-cycle plants that can operate as baseload but are also more flexible with ramping up and down. These capabilities are essential for meeting demand on the hottest and coldest days and for balancing intermittent renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind.

Most hydroelectric power comes from generators inside large dams, which can be dispatched when needed – as long as there is enough water available.

Over the last decade, the share of electricity generated from wind and solar plants has increased. These plants can deliver renewable energy – but they only generate electricity when the wind blows and the sun shines. The production patterns of solar and wind technologies are complementary to one another. Solar energy is generated during the day, and wind tends to generate more at night. Across seasons, wind output is typically higher during the colder months when there is less sunshine. Deployed together, wind and solar technologies can help balance each other.

Battery storage

While battery energy storage technology is growing, allowing some control over when renewable energy sources can be dispatched, natural gas plants remain the primary method for "firming" renewable generation resources. There are also barriers to battery storage such as the significant cost and physical size of battery systems.

Ultimately, our electric grid is most reliable when a wide range of technologies is available. When conditions lead to lower generation from one type of source, others can help compensate for the shortfall. When there is an imbalance, such as a major winter storm that causes electricity use to skyrocket, grid operators are forced to rely on purposefully reducing demand and occasionally plan rolling outages to keep the grid operating.

While there is variation across regions in what types of power plants can be built based on weather and infrastructure, electric cooperatives work diligently to ensure a diverse and reliable power supply for the communities they serve.

Michael Leitman writes for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

WATT'S THE BIG FISSION? THE RESURGENCE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

From electric cooperatives to tech giants, nuclear energy is witnessing a comeback after nearly a decade with no new activity. Over the last year, there have been major nuclear energy announcements, from recommissioning power plants to purchasing deals by hyper-scalers like Meta, Google and Microsoft.

The nuclear comeback has already impacted cooperatives. With U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) financing, Holtec International is restarting the Palisades Power Plant in Michigan with Wolverine Power Cooperative and Hoosier Energy as the main offtake customers. In addition, Constellation Energy is restarting Three Mile Island Unit 1 in Pennsylvania.

"The rise of artificial intelligence and need for stronger computing power and data centers has led technology firms to pursue reliable and carbon-free electricity from nuclear power," CFC Senior Energy Industry Analyst Alisha Pinto said. "The main players in the tech and data center world – Meta, Google, Amazon, Equinix and Oracle – are signing letters of intent and investing in advanced nuclear reactors and small modular reactors (SMRs)."

Across the U.S., there are 54 commercially operating nuclear power plants in 28 states with a total of 94 reactors. Nuclear energy accounts for more than 18% of the U.S. electricity generation mix. The latest reactor to come online was the Vogtle Unit 4 in Georgia, serving electric cooperative members through Oglethorpe Power.

"Nuclear energy is viewed as a stable and reliable source that provides almost 24-hour electricity," Pinto says. "The capacity factor (the utilization rate) is very high at 92.3%. In comparison, the capacity factor of natural gas plants is about 55%, while wind and solar are between 25% to 35%."

The fuel supply chain is a key part of the puzzle in the expansion and resurgence of nuclear energy. The U.S. has mining and production operations for uranium in the western parts of the country. Of the five production facilities that are running, three are in Wyoming and two are in Texas. However, most of the uranium used in the U.S. is imported from other countries.

"Limited domestic production capacity has resulted in the U.S. importing 99% of the uranium needed to fuel its nuclear power plants," Pinto says. "In 2023, the main trading partners for uranium were Canada, Australia, Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Most recently, Uranium Energy Corporation and Radiant Energy announced an agreement to collaborate on enhancing the nuclear fuel value chain. Securing the domestic supply chain will support U.S. energy security needs."

The policy landscape will also help to shape the future of nuclear energy. Both the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provided financing for nuclear technology and supply chain development. Under the IRA, which is currently under review, DOE is expected to finalize contracts with 10 companies to enhance domestic uranium production. Additionally, the Trump administration announced funding for the deployment of SMRs.

"The main challenges to deploying new nuclear energy are the high investment costs and the long timelines for approvals, construction and commercial operation," Pinto said. "Long-term growth in the sector will be determined by how quickly and efficiently it can develop and meet new electricity demands."

Source: CFC Solutions News Bulletin, published by the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation

Renewable energy sources like solar and wind provide many benefits, but they only generate electricity when the sun shines or the wind blows.

The U.S. electric grid has undergone major changes over the last decade. The share of electricity generated from coal plants has declined significantly, while the share from natural gas and intermittent wind and solar generation has grown.

The Palisades Nuclear Power Plant. *Photo Source: Holtec International*

UNDERSTANDING WHICH POLES POWER YOU

Have you ever driven down the road and wondered which power poles are delivering electricity to your home or business? In Franklin REC's service territory, electricity flows through a network that starts with regional generation sources, is transported through transmission lines by Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Corn Belt Power) and is finally delivered to you by Franklin REC's distribution lines.

Corn Belt Power's transmission system carries electricity at high voltages (69kV or 69,000 volts) into Franklin REC distribution substations using tall, 70 to 80-foot utility poles. Once the power reaches these substations, the voltage is reduced to a safer level suitable for for proceeding through the distribution process.

Once the electricity leaves the substation, it travels along Franklin REC's distribution lines, typically supported by utility poles ranging from 30 to 50 feet in height. Depending on the energy needs of a particular area, these poles may carry one or multiple power lines, including several phases in regions with higher demand. When electricity reaches its destination, it passes through a transformer, where the voltage is once again reduced to a safe level for use in homes, farms and businesses.

Whose lines are they, anyway?

In Iowa, electric service territories are clearly defined. That means the electric utility that serves your property is based on location – not personal preference. It's why your neighbor a mile away might be served by a different utility altogether.

This structure benefits everyone. It ensures that each utility, like Franklin REC, can plan for future demand, maintain their system efficiently, and provide high levels of reliability through proactive maintenance and vegetation management.

Special thanks to Franklin REC Lineman Cole Marzen for contributing to this article.

H-structures and staggering structures
Corn Belt Power maintains the 69kV transmission lines that bring high-voltage electricity into Franklin REC's service territory. These lines are supported by two main types of structures. H-structures consist of two tall poles connected by a horizontal crossarm, forming the familiar "H" shape commonly seen across open areas. Staggering structures, on the other hand, use a single tall pole with zigzag stacked arms, designed for locations where space or terrain requires a more compact setup.

Three-phase distribution lines
You'll recognize these poles by their wide "T" shaped crossarms and three wires across the top. These lines are used in areas that require higher electricity demand, such as commercial sites, farms or neighborhoods with high demand. The three top wires represent phases A, B and C, while the lower wire is the neutral. Even if only one or two phases are needed at a location, they often travel together to serve other locations farther down the line.

Single-phase distribution lines
The most common type of pole in Franklin REC's territory, single-phase distribution lines, serve homes and smaller businesses. These poles have one energized wire at the top and a neutral wire below it. Simple and effective, this structure efficiently delivers the power you need for everyday life.

CO-OP SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to First Class Lineman **Cole Marzen** on five years with Franklin REC! Cole's dedication and leadership in the field help ensure our members receive safe, reliable service.

We also recognize Consumer Accountant **Tessa Haller** for reaching her one-year milestone. Tessa has become a valuable part of our office team, supporting essential billing and payment operations.

Thank you both for your hard work and commitment to our cooperative!

FRANKLIN REC WELCOMES SUMMER HELP EMPLOYEE DAWSON WIKERT

Franklin REC is pleased to welcome **Dawson Wikert** as our summer help employee for 2025. Dawson is a recent graduate of Hampton-Dumont CAL High School and will be working alongside our experienced line crew throughout the summer.

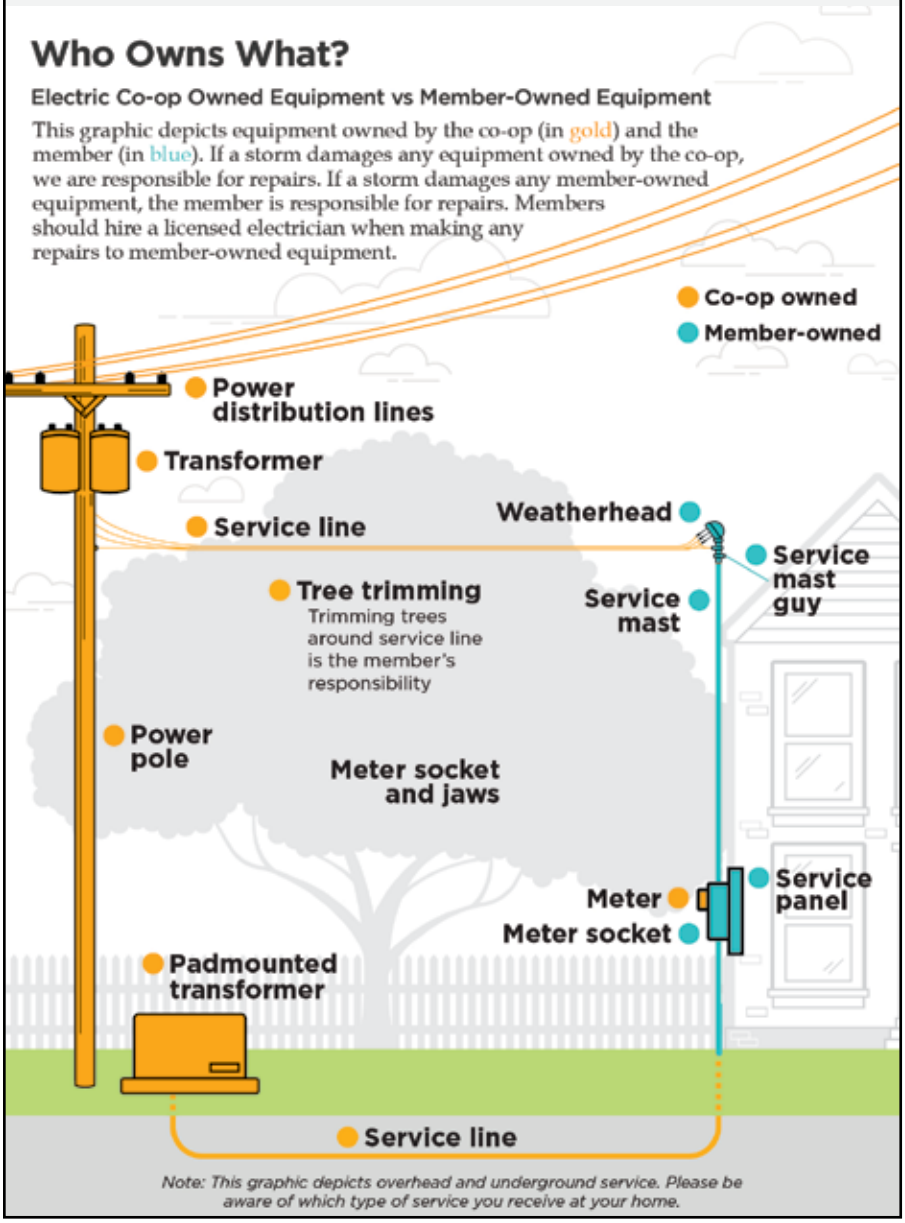
Dawson plans to continue his education at Northwest Iowa Community College, where he will pursue a degree in powerline technology. His interest in the electric industry and passion for hands-on work makes the summer help program a natural fit.

"I'm most excited for the experience and the opportunity to gain knowledge about the industry," Dawson shares.

We're excited to have Dawson on board this summer and look forward to seeing where his future takes him!

WHAT DOES MY FACILITY CHARGE ENTAIL?

The monthly facility charge is associated with the fixed cost at the specific service location including maintenance, equipment and necessary upgrades to provide the location, with reliable and quality electric service. The set amount of the facility charge varies depending on the necessary size of the service at the exact location.



TOUCHSTONE ENERGY® VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH OF MAY 2025 RECIPIENT: MADISON ALERT

We're proud to recognize **Madison Alert** as the May 2025 Touchstone Energy® Volunteer of the Month for her dedication to giving back to her community.

As part of this honor, Madison has chosen to donate her award to Revitalize Dumont, a nonprofit organization working to transform Dumont's former school building into a functional, welcoming space for the community. Her thoughtful contribution will help support ongoing efforts to breathe new life into a meaningful piece of the town's history.

RECare
You Care, We Care, RECare

SHOW YOU CARE WITH RECARE

As an electric cooperative, Franklin REC is invested in helping our communities thrive, and that means supporting our low-income member-owners, too. RECare is a nationwide program exclusive to rural electric cooperatives encouraging fellow members to make a one-time or monthly donation to potentially help alleviate the stress for other members straining to pay their electric bills.

Funds may also be used to weatherize the recipient's home to make electricity use more efficient. And don't worry; your donation is directed to a local community action agency for distribution to low-income families on Franklin REC lines. You can feel good that the dollars you donate are helping your friends and neighbors.

YES **I want to help my neighbor by contributing to RECare.**

☐ I will make a one-time contribution to Franklin REC's RECare program. My check is enclosed.

☐ I will contribute $_____ per month to Franklin REC's RECare program. I understand this amount is automatically added to my monthly electric bill.

Name: _____

Account #: _____

Address: _____

_____

City: _____

State/Zip Code: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

CHOOSE IOWA PASSPORT OFFERS AGRITOURISM EXPERIENCES

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig recently announced the launch of the Choose Iowa Passport. The free, interactive digital platform is designed to help Iowans and visitors find farms and farm stands, orchards, you-pick opportunities, farm-to-table dining and restaurants, farmers markets, and even boutique shops featuring locally sourced Iowa products, including Iowa-raised meats. This innovative marketing initiative, a collaboration between Choose Iowa and Travel Iowa, promotes unique agritourism experiences and encourages visitors to enjoy food, beverages and agricultural products that are grown, raised and made in Iowa.

Users of the Choose Iowa Passport can check in at participating locations via their smartphones to earn points, which can be redeemed for prizes.

"This partnership between Travel Iowa and Choose Iowa offers authentic agritourism experiences that celebrate and elevate Iowa's agricultural prominence and heritage," said Secretary Naig. "The Choose Iowa Passport is free to sign up for, easy to navigate, and users can support local farmers and businesses while earning rewards featuring products from Choose Iowa members. I encourage everyone to set out on their own adventure and use the Choose Iowa Passport to make memories with friends and family."

Find Choose Iowa products

Beyond visiting Choose Iowa Passport locations, consumers looking to support and purchase local Iowa products can look for the Choose Iowa logo and know these items are grown, raised or made in Iowa. Farms and businesses that join the Choose Iowa branding and marketing program can add the Choose Iowa logo on their products, which meet or exceed established criteria and standards.

Choose Iowa's membership is climbing steadily, with many of the 264 current members offering on-farm retail. This collaboration between Travel Iowa, the state's official tourism office within the Iowa Economic Development Authority, and Choose Iowa supports rural communities while connecting travelers with agritourism, farm-to-table dining and unique agricultural experiences.

"Agritourism is one of Iowa's greatest competitive advantages," said Amy Zeigler, tourism manager at the Iowa Tourism Office. "The Choose Iowa passport offers a way to educate visitors about the vital role agriculture plays in our economy and serves as an invitation to experience the unmatched hospitality of rural Iowa. We're excited to draw visitors from across the state and country to explore our farms, markets and small towns in a way that's uniquely Iowa."

KEY FEATURES OF THE CHOOSE IOWA PASSPORT

- **Free and easy to use:** The Choose Iowa Passport is free and mobile-friendly with no apps to download. It is accessible anytime via smartphone.
- **Earn rewards:** Choose Iowa Passport users can check in at each stop to earn points and redeem them for prizes, including Iowa products.
- **Explore authentic Iowa destinations:** Discover farms with on-site retail, agritourism experiences, farm-to-table restaurants, and retailers offering Iowa products and farmers markets showcasing local products.
- **Support local:** Connect with Iowa farmers, businesses and restaurants committed to selling and sourcing Iowa products.

Visit www.chooseiowa.com to learn more.

Photo Sources: Choose Iowa and Travel Iowa

107 YEARS OF LIFE, WISDOM AND WIT

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

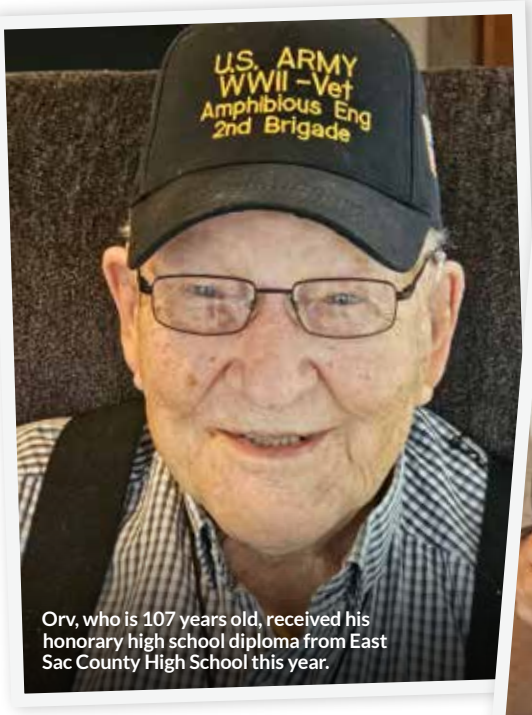
Did you hear about the 107-year-old World War II veteran from Sac City who joined the graduating class of East Sac County High School this past May to get his honorary diploma?

News articles that went around the globe noted how Orville "Orv" Von Ehwegen graduated from eighth grade during the Great Depression. Then his father informed the 14-year-old he'd have to stay home and work on the family farm. Orv would never attend high school.

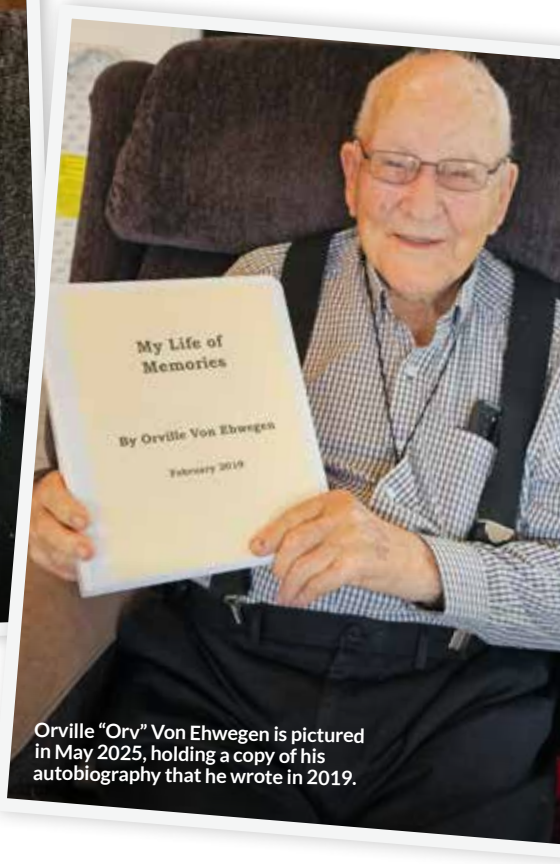
I knew I had to meet Orv. A friend in Sac City connected me with Orv's daughter, Pat, who was visiting her dad around Memorial Day weekend. Orv and Pat graciously invited me to stop by that Friday afternoon. We had a delightful visit on his sun porch, overlooking the backyard bird feeders.

We chatted a bit about how Sen. Chuck Grassley and others had been calling to congratulate Orv. "It's getting kind of old!" he joked. We also chuckled about how Orv was 89 when most of his fellow 2025 East Sac graduates were born.

While he received a standing ovation at graduation, I hope everyone there truly grasped what a treasure was in their midst.



Orv, who is 107 years old, received his honorary high school diploma from East Sac County High School this year.



Orville "Orv" Von Ehwegen is pictured in May 2025, holding a copy of his autobiography that he wrote in 2019.

Remembering rural electrification

Orv, who was born Aug. 21, 1917, grew up on a farm southwest of Sac City in Wall Lake Township. I rarely get to interview people with this much life experience, so I didn't waste any time in my quest to gather information about his life history. I asked him about rural electricity on the farm.

His father, Karl, had installed a Delco battery plant on the farm. "There were a whole bunch of batteries – I mean a whole bunch of 'em," Orv said. The Delco plant was anchored to a cement block and had an exhaust system and a muffler. The 32-volt system could power one light in each room of the farmhouse, along with a couple lights in the barn, but you couldn't have too many lights on at once, Orv noted.

When rural electrification came to the area, farm families could get a free yard light if they hooked up to the electric line. "I was glad we got 110-volt rural electricity," Orv said. "That meant I didn't have to carry that darn lantern out to the barn anymore. That was such a fire risk."

Even with electricity, farming meant lots of hard, physical labor, especially for a young teenage boy like Orv who was required to do a man's work.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going

Things didn't get any easier when Orv was drafted into the Army during World War II. He was seconds from death when a Japanese bomber blew up the truck he was driving in New Guinea.

Orv served in the military from 1942-1945. After returning home to Sac County, he and his wife Ruth ran an appliance store in Sac City. The couple enjoyed 56 years together before Ruth died in 2003.

Through it all, Orv's Christian faith is stronger than ever. "God's still got a reason for keeping me here," he said.

Orv's friends will tell you life hasn't always been easy for him, yet he keeps smiling and remains positive. It makes me think of these words of wisdom I saw online:

"Some of the kindest souls I know have lived in a world that was not so kind to them. Some of the best human beings I know have been through so much at the hands of others, and they still love deeply, they still care. If that isn't something to be in awe of, I don't know what is."

Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at www.darcymaulsby.com.

Franklin REC
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IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine for members of Iowa's electric cooperatives

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