

● OCTOBER 2026

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**Remembering the
Halloween ice storm**

**Protect yourself from
AI-powered scams**

Comfort food classics

Save the date: Celebrate the season in Hampton ► See Page 12

BIG ENERGY DEMANDS

BY GARRETT THOMPSON



At Franklin REC, our responsibility remains clear. We have an obligation to serve, and it is an obligation we take seriously. We want to support responsible growth and new opportunities in the communities we serve, but never at the expense of the families, farms and businesses that rely on us every day.

That is why Franklin REC, in partnership with our power suppliers, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative, has developed a Large Load Program designed to protect our existing members from the costs and risks associated with serving new, energy-intensive operations.

Large loads are fundamentally different from traditional growth. A single data center or cryptocurrency operation can require as much electricity as thousands of homes. Meeting that level of demand often requires additional generation resources, transmission upgrades and long-term infrastructure investment. Without proper safeguards in place, those costs could ultimately

be spread across all cooperative members through higher electric rates.

Our Large Load Program is designed to prevent that from happening. Under the program, those requesting service for large, nontraditional loads are responsible for the financial investment required to serve them. Simply put, the costs associated with these projects are assigned to the large load member, not shifted onto all Franklin REC member-owners.

Why is this important?

These types of projects can sometimes be unpredictable. Markets change, technologies evolve and facilities can reduce operations or shut down much faster than traditional businesses. Without careful planning, utilities can be left with stranded infrastructure investments that still must be paid for, even if the original member is no longer operating. This program helps ensure our member-owners are protected from that risk.

At the same time, the program does not close the door on growth. In fact, it creates a responsible framework that

allows Franklin REC to evaluate and serve large load opportunities while maintaining system reliability, financial strength and fairness for all member-owners.

The program also provides transparency and consistency by ensuring every large load request is reviewed through the same disciplined process, one that prioritizes reliability, affordability and the long-term interests of the cooperative membership.

Franklin REC's mission has not changed. We are here to provide safe, reliable and cost-effective power to our member-owners, not just today, but for generations to come. As new industries and technologies emerge, we will continue to adapt and plan for the future while keeping our commitment to place our member-owners at the center of every decision we make.

Growth is coming, and Franklin REC is prepared for it. Most importantly, we are making sure our member-owners remain protected every step of the way.

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



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

CELEBRATING MILESTONES AT FRANKLIN REC

Please join us in celebrating our team members as they reach milestone anniversaries with Franklin REC. Each year of service represents dedication, teamwork and a commitment to serving our members and communities.

Garrett Thompson and Madison Alert each bring valuable experience, passion and a strong commitment to the cooperative's mission. We are grateful for their contributions, the positive impact they make each day and the role they play in helping Franklin REC continue to provide reliable service and meaningful connections with our members.



GARRETT THOMPSON

General manager/CEO

6 YEARS



MADISON ALERT

Communications and key accounts representative

7 YEARS

THE POWER OF HISTORY: REMEMBERING WHERE WE BEGAN

October is National Cooperative Month – a time to celebrate what makes cooperatives unique and reflect on the people, values and stories that have shaped who we are today.

As Franklin REC celebrates 90 years of service, we are reflecting on where our story began and the vision of the people who helped bring electricity to rural Iowa.

While electricity was becoming common in cities in 1936, rural communities faced challenges getting power extended to their homes. Nearly a century ago, a group of farmers and community members believed their neighbors deserved the same opportunities and quality of life that electricity provided to people living in towns.

Through determination, innovation and cooperation, those individuals worked together to bring electricity to rural communities. Their efforts helped lead to the formation of Federated Rural Electric Association and the development of the Reeve Power Plant – a highly important part of the rural electrification movement.

A symbol of rural electric history

The Reeve Power Plant represents more than pieces of equipment or a building, it represents the cooperative spirit of neighbors coming together to solve a challenge and create something beneficial for generations to come.

Today, the REA Power Plant Museum preserves this important chapter of Franklin REC's history. Located in our own backyard, the museum is a National Historic Landmark that allows visitors to step back in time and experience the story of rural electrification. Through preserved equipment, historical displays and stories from the past, visitors can gain insight about the dedication and teamwork that helped bring electricity to rural communities.

Cooperative values remain

While the technology powering our communities has changed over the years, the values behind it remain the same. Franklin REC continues to be guided by the same cooperative principles that shaped our beginnings – commitment to our members, service to our communities and the belief that we are stronger when we work together.



The history of Franklin REC is not just a story about electricity. It is a story about people. It is a story about neighbors who saw a need, worked together and created a lasting impact.

The past powers our future

As we celebrate 90 years, we are grateful for the members, employees and community leaders who built the foundation we stand on today. Their vision continues to inspire the work we do and the service we provide every day.

Want to explore Franklin REC's history?

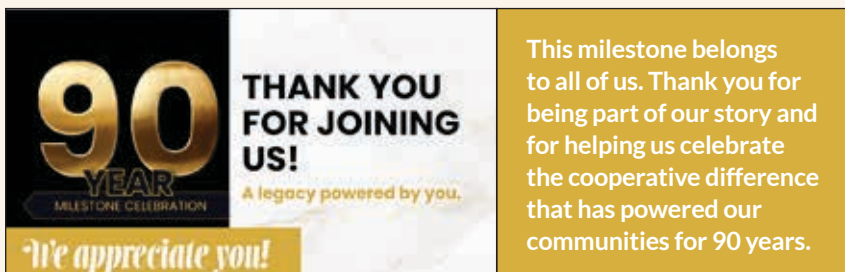
Learn more about the Reeve Power Plant and its role in rural electrification by visiting our website at www.franklinrec.coop.

Interested in experiencing this history firsthand?

The Franklin County Historical Society coordinates tours of the REA Power Plant Museum. You can reach their office at 641-456-5777.

THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING 90 YEARS WITH US

Thank you to those who joined Franklin REC for our Anniversary Celebration in September! We enjoyed celebrating the 90-year milestone of cooperative service. It was wonderful to gather with our members, families and community partners to celebrate the history, people and cooperative spirit that has shaped Franklin REC since 1936.



This milestone belongs to all of us. Thank you for being part of our story and for helping us celebrate the cooperative difference that has powered our communities for 90 years.

FROM YOUR BOARDROOM

During the August meeting, Franklin REC directors considered the following:

- Approved work orders and special equipment capitalization of \$923,618.85
- Appointed CFC District 5 voting delegate
- Approved 2027 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association director insurance
- Approved Federated Insurance workers' compensation insurance
- Approved a Community Solar Agreement amendment

FALL FIRE SAFETY: PREPARE BEFORE YOU BURN

As the seasons change and cooler weather arrives, many of us begin preparing for winter. Leaves are falling, harvest is underway, and outdoor cleanup projects are taking place across our communities. For many rural residents, this time of year may also include ditch and field burns or burning yard debris.

While these activities are common in the fall season, they also require careful planning and attention to safety. Dry conditions, changing winds and nearby materials can cause a small fire to spread quickly. Taking a few extra precautions before, during and after a burn can help protect your family, property and neighbors.

Before the burn

Before starting any burn, take time to prepare:

- 🔥 Check local burning requirements and weather conditions.
- 🔥 Avoid burning on dry or windy days when fires can spread more easily.
- 🔥 Choose a safe location away from buildings, equipment, power lines and other combustible materials.
- 🔥 Have water, fire extinguishers or other fire suppression equipment nearby.
- 🔥 Let others know when and where you plan to burn.

A few minutes of preparation can make a significant difference in preventing a fire from getting out of control.



FIRE PLUS UTILITY POLE EQUALS DISASTER

DO NOT BURN NEAR POWER POLES

During the burn

Once a fire is started, continue monitoring conditions and stay alert.

- 🔥 Never leave a fire unattended.
- 🔥 Keep children and pets a safe distance away.
- 🔥 Watch for changing wind conditions and be prepared to extinguish the fire if conditions become unsafe.
- 🔥 Keep equipment and vehicles a safe distance from overhead power lines.

During harvest season, farmers and equipment operators should always be aware of their surroundings when working near electrical infrastructure. Maintaining a safe distance from power lines helps protect both you and the electric system.

After the burn

A fire is not finished when the flames are gone. Before leaving the area:

- 🔥 Make sure the fire is completely extinguished.
- 🔥 Check the area again later to ensure embers have not reignited.

- 🔥 Properly dispose of remaining ashes and debris.

Remember, hot ashes or hidden embers can remain a fire hazard long after a burn appears to be complete.

Equipment and electrical safety

If equipment or a vehicle comes into contact with a power line, stay inside unless there is an immediate danger such as fire. Call 911 and wait for emergency responders or utility personnel to arrive.

Never attempt to exit the equipment while touching the ground at the same time, as the ground around the equipment may be energized. If you must exit because of fire, jump away from the equipment without touching it and land with both feet together. Then shuffle away with your feet touching until you are safely away.

Fall is a busy and beautiful time of year in our communities. By planning ahead, staying aware and putting safety first, we can help prevent fires and keep our neighbors safe. At Franklin REC, your safety is our priority.

SAVE THE DATE: CELEBRATE THE SEASON IN HAMPTON

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, Nov. 28**, and make plans to celebrate the season at Franklin REC's annual Light Up the Night celebration in Hampton!

As the holiday season begins, downtown Hampton comes alive with festive lights, family activities and the spirit of community. Light Up the Night

has become a beloved tradition, welcoming friends, families and visitors from across the area to enjoy a day filled with holiday cheer.

Spend the day taking in a movie matinee, enjoying a firehouse lunch, visiting Santa, browsing local shops and gathering downtown before

the evening concludes with the dazzling Light Up the Night parade.

Whether you're continuing a family tradition or experiencing the event for the first time, we invite you to join us as we celebrate the season together. We look forward to seeing you in Hampton on Nov. 28!

SHINING THE LIGHT ON OUR LOCAL VOLUNTEERS

Two local volunteers were nominated for this year's Shine the Light contest led by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa and Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. While these nominees weren't ultimately selected as contest winners, we wanted to share their stories with fellow Franklin REC members.



Michael Bridwell, Hampton Senior Citizens Center

Franklin REC member Vicki Claypool nominated Michael Bridwell for his work with Hampton Senior Citizens Center. She shared the following letter as part of the nomination:

“ In every rural community, there are quiet heroes whose steady hands hold the fabric of daily life together. In Franklin County, one of those heroes is Michael Bridwell. A U.S. Marine Corps veteran (1974-1977), Michael learned early what service, discipline, and loyalty mean. After his military years, he spent nearly four decades on an Arkansas farm – raising goats and chickens, tending gardens, canning food, and caring for the people around him. That instinct to nurture others never left him. Fortunately for Iowans, he found a new home in Hampton.

Michael first came here to visit an elderly couple he had known for 36 years. Through them, he discovered the Hampton Senior Citizens Center – its home-cooked meals, its card tables full of laughter, its sense of belonging. When the couple's health declined,

Michael stepped in without hesitation, providing daily care until their passing. By then, Hampton was more than a stop on a map. It had become his home. With this full-time caregiving behind him, Michael poured his energy into community service. Michael joined the American Legion Honor Guard and began presenting arms at funerals and on Memorial Day; raising the flag at the Franklin County fair and Tuesdays on the Town. He drives elderly and disabled veterans to medical appointments across the state. Simultaneously, Michael's circle of Hampton Senior Citizens Center friends widened. He became a regular at congregate meals and card games, but he didn't stop there. His volunteerism blossomed. He began cooking and serving food at Center fundraisers, making homemade ice cream for Ice Cream Socials, baking for bake sales, hosting potlucks, organizing cribbage tournaments, and cashiering at events. He pops and bags popcorn at the city park, greeting neighbors with the easy warmth of someone who truly enjoys people.

In 2024, he joined the Senior Center board, later becoming Vice President, and evermore indispensable contracting repairs, maintaining equipment, and conducting general facility upkeep. In 2025 he stepped in as Co Site

Manager, helping reorganize files, answer phones, schedule meals, and coordinate transit rides. Most importantly, Michael helps deliver the Center's essential nutrition program – bringing meals to homebound, sick, and elderly residents and helping serve hundreds more in the dining room each month. His hands carry not just food, but also kindness and compassion.

A \$3,000 Touchstone Energy Cooperatives donation would strengthen the very program into which Michael pours his heart. The funds would support the Center's long-term goal of maintaining and expanding a dependable meal service for older adults across Hampton and rural Franklin County. Specifically, the donation would help purchase food, supplies, and kitchen essentials that keep the program running smoothly; support volunteer driven home delivery routes; and ensure that every senior – regardless of income, mobility, or location – has access to healthy, affordable meals and daily human contact. Touchstone Energy Cooperatives would not just be funding nourishing congregate and home-delivered meals, they would be fueling the spirit of service embodied by people like Michael Bridwell – and strengthening the heart of Franklin County.”

Patrick Palmer, Closet Clean Up – United Methodist Church

Franklin REC employee member Christy Mason nominated Patrick Palmer and his charity of choice Closet Clean Up – United Methodist Church. She shared the following letter as part of the nomination:

“ One social media post, one graphic, and one personal story were enough to bring the Hampton community together. Patrick Palmer is a long-time Hampton resident, local business owner, and former city council member who has always believed in giving back to the community he calls home. This spring, when the Hampton-Dumont CAL School District shared that it had approximately \$24,000 in outstanding student lunch balances, Patrick knew he wanted to help.

Growing up on the free and reduced lunch program himself, Patrick understood this wasn't just about unpaid balances. It was about making sure students had access to meals without worrying about the financial burden placed on their families. He shared his story on social media and asked the community to join him in paying off the outstanding lunch debt. The response was immediate. Donations arrived online, checks in the mail, and people shared stories of their own experiences with school lunch programs. Thanks to the generosity of the community, every outstanding lunch balance was paid in full, and additional donations created a fund to help students facing future financial hardships.

While the balances have been paid, Patrick believes the work isn't finished. He has continued attending school board meetings, speaking with local media outlets, and encouraging others to stay engaged in the conversation. He is now taking the initiative to begin conversations with school officials,

local representatives, and community leaders about how awareness of assistance programs can be improved, how communication with families can be strengthened, and what more can be done to better support local youth.

If selected as the recipient of the 2026 Iowa Shine the Light award, Patrick would donate the funds to the United Methodist Church's Clean Up Closet project. On the first Saturday of every month, volunteers provide free of charge, everyday necessities such as hygiene products, diapers, wipes, and household essentials to individuals and families throughout Hampton and Franklin County. Supporting this program would help ensure another valuable community resource can continue serving those who need it most.

Patrick didn't set out looking for recognition. He simply saw a need, shared his story, and inspired others to help. His willingness to keep the conversation going and continue to look for ways to support local families is what makes his impact extend far beyond a single social media post.”

Visit our website at www.franklinrec.coop



“ THE COOPERATIVE ADVANTAGE ”

We're creating real connections to opportunities, meaningful careers
and a stronger future for our communities.

*We build reliable services, create local jobs
and help our communities grow stronger,
teaming with trusted partners along the way.*