

● MAY 2026

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Shine the Light
contest returns

Participate in Franklin REC's
community solar program

Beef burger recipes

Franklin REC is hosting a community Book Drive ► See Page 13

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EDITOR
Ann Foster Thelen

DESIGNERS
Megan Walters
Bree Glenn
Lorelai O'Hara

IAEC DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
Erin Campbell

IAEC ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST
Cherie Moen

IAEC EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Leslie Kaufman

IAEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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Kevin Wheeler, Access Energy Cooperative – NRECA Representative
Terry Sullivan, Corridor Energy Cooperative – Managers' Representative

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Alannah McKibben, a T.I.P. REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

WE ALL KNOW A LOCAL VOLUNTEER WORTH CELEBRATING

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



This is one of my favorite times of the year. While I enjoy the lovely weather and vibrant blooms, what makes it extra special is seeing your entries come in for our annual Shine the Light contest!

Celebrating volunteers across Iowa

Now in our sixth year, the Shine the Light contest is a statewide effort where Iowa's electric cooperatives celebrate our commitment to the communities we serve. During the month of June, member-consumers, employees and retirees of Iowa electric co-ops are encouraged to nominate volunteers in their communities who are making a positive difference. If you live in Iowa and receive electricity from an electric cooperative, you are eligible to enter our contest.

After the contest closes on June 30, our panel of judges will take on the difficult task of selecting three volunteers, and each will receive a \$3,000 donation to their local charity. We also feature each winning volunteer in the September issue of this magazine so our readers can learn more about the important work they do.

Who you can nominate

We are a few weeks away from accepting nominations but start thinking now about who you would like to recognize this year. You can nominate a friend, neighbor or relative for our Shine the Light contest starting June 1; nominees do not need to be electric cooperative member-consumers. Nonwinners who were nominated in previous years are welcome to be nominated again. Minors can be nominated as long as you have permission from their parents or



Nominate a local volunteer and they could win \$3,000 for their charity!

Contest entries accepted during June at www.IowaShineTheLight.com

legal guardians. Each co-op household can make one nomination per year.

How to submit a nomination

In the contest entry, we ask for some of your basic contact information (the nominator), contact information for the person you are nominating, and a summary (in 500 words or less) of how your nominee has made a difference in the community and how their local charity/nonprofit might use the \$3,000 donation. We try to keep the nomination process

simple while still providing essential details for our judges to consider.

This program is such a success because co-op members like you take time to celebrate those who go above and beyond in your community. Thank you for supporting our Shine the Light contest and consider making a nomination during the month of June at www.IowaShineTheLight.com!

Erin Campbell is the director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN \$100 IN BEEF CERTIFICATES

May is Beef Month in Iowa! To celebrate, we're giving away \$100 in beef certificates to use at a grocery store. You can select your favorite cuts to purchase, and then make mouthwatering meals at home.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than May 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 the pizza stone and cookbook from the March issue was **Bob Toms**, a **Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative** member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY MAY 31!

CELEBRATING 142 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP: FRANKLIN REC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At Franklin REC, our mission to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity is guided by a dedicated team of leaders – our board of directors. Collectively, they bring 142 years of service to the cooperative, a testament to their unwavering commitment to our members and our communities.

Many board members have witnessed Franklin REC's evolution firsthand – from manual meter reads to advanced 24/7 meter communication. They've seen the cooperative embrace power tools and equipment that help our line crews provide safe, reliable service to every member. Their guidance ensures that as technology advances, the cooperative continues to meet our members' needs while keeping safety at the forefront.

Our directors don't just attend meetings – they champion rural power at the state Capitol, advocate for members in the boardroom and ensure the cooperative's decisions always reflect the best interests of those they serve. Their expertise is built on years



Back row from left: David Keninger, Matthew Roelfs, Dale Schaefer and Donald Greimann.
Front row: Darwin Van Horn, Gordon Greimann and John Snyder.

of training, industry knowledge and experience, allowing them to actively shape the conversations and strategies that have made Franklin REC a trusted energy provider.

Through thoughtful leadership and careful oversight, the board helps Franklin REC navigate the challenges of the evolving electric utility industry while keeping our members at the heart of every decision.

From regulatory changes to technological advancements, their guidance ensures our cooperative continues to innovate and thrive.

As we celebrate 142 years of combined service, we recognize the dedication, vision and leadership of our directors. They keep our cooperative strong, accountable and focused on powering the lives of our members every day.



Office

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

Office Hours

Monday-Friday 6:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
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Telephone Number

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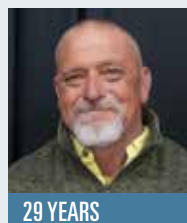
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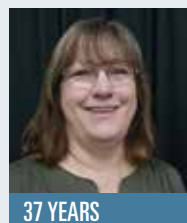
CELEBRATING YEARS OF SERVICE

Congratulations to our employees celebrating work anniversaries this month! Their dedication and commitment play a vital role in keeping our cooperative strong. Through their hard work, we continue to provide our members with safe, reliable electricity and dependable service every day.



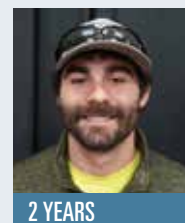
29 YEARS

Chad Foster
Member Service
Director



37 YEARS

Karen Ringleb
Office Manager



2 YEARS

Trey Swaney
Lineman



1 YEAR

Dawson Wikert
Groundsman

RELIABILITY ISN'T AN ACCIDENT: A LOOK AT YOUR CO-OP'S 2025 PERFORMANCE

BY GARRETT THOMPSON



When you flip a switch, you expect the lights to come on every time. Most of the time, you probably don't think twice about it. Honestly, that's the goal!

At Franklin REC, reliability doesn't happen by chance. It's the result of ongoing maintenance, system improvements and a team that's ready to respond when something goes wrong.

Throughout the year, our crews focus on the work most people never see, like trimming trees, inspecting lines, upgrading equipment and preparing for the unexpected. All that work is aimed at one simple outcome: keeping your power on and restoring it as quickly as possible when outages occur.

2025 by the numbers

Each year, we take a close look at how our system performed. In 2025, Franklin REC members experienced an average of 2.6 outages over the year, with total outage time averaging 276 minutes.

That's higher than our recent 5-year averages, but there's an important reason behind it.

In 2025, we completed more than 20 miles of backbone system upgrades, rebuilding key three-phase lines that strengthen the overall system and improve our ability to backfeed power during outages. These are long-term investments that make the grid more resilient and flexible.

To safely complete that work, we scheduled several planned outages throughout the year. While those outages do impact our reliability numbers in the short term, they are a critical part of building a stronger system for the future.

When unplanned outages occurred, our crews restored power in an average of 105 minutes, which is slightly better than our long-term performance during storm-impacted years.

What this means going forward

Reliability isn't just about how often the lights go out; it's about building a system that can withstand challenges and recover quickly when issues arise.

The work completed in 2025 means:

- Stronger mainline infrastructure
- Improved ability to reroute power (backfeeding)
- Faster restoration options during outages

In short, we're not just maintaining the system, we're actively improving it.

Looking ahead

As we move further into 2026 and prepare for the summer storm season, we expect these improvements to pay dividends in both reliability and restoration flexibility.

We'll continue to invest in targeted upgrades, proactive maintenance and long-term planning to ensure we're



delivering the level of service our members expect and deserve.

Reliability is something we work at every day, not just when the power goes out.

At the end of the day, our responsibility is simple: keep the lights on and be ready when they go out. We take that responsibility seriously, and we're committed to continuing to strengthen the system that serves you.

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

RELIABILITY STATS		
2025	5-Year Average (with storms)	5-Year Average (no storms)
SAIFI - 2.62606	SAIFI - 1.8331	SAIFI - 1.7191
SAIDI - 276.2048	SAIDI - 212.8238	SAIDI - 173.2072
CAIDI - 105.3982	CAIDI - 112.4298	CAIDI - 103.3958

SAIFI is the average number of interruptions per customer during the year. It is calculated by dividing the total annual number of customer interruptions by the total number of customers served during the year.

SAIDI is the average interruption duration per customer served during the year. It is calculated by dividing the sum of the customer interruption durations by the total number of customers served during the year. *Measured in minutes.*

CAIDI is the average interruption duration for those customers who experience interruptions during the year. It is calculated by dividing the annual sum of all customer interruption durations by the total number of customer interruptions. *Measured in minutes.*

ARE SMART APPLIANCES RIGHT FOR YOUR HOME?

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE



Smart technology is quickly becoming part of everyday life, and home appliances are no exception. From thermostats to refrigerators, connected devices promise greater convenience, improved energy efficiency and more control at your fingertips. But are these features truly worth it for every household? Before making the switch, it's important to understand how smart appliances work and whether they align with your lifestyle.

What makes an appliance “smart”?

Let's start by defining what “smart” means. Smart appliances – such as refrigerators, washers, ovens, thermostats and water heaters – connect to the internet. Typically, through Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, these appliances can be controlled using your smartphone, tablet or voice-assistant device. They are designed to optimize energy use and add convenience. Some smart devices can even learn your habits over time.

Are smart appliances right for your home? The answer depends on your preferences and types of appliances you already have. The better question might be: Are smart appliances right for you? Do you like the newest tech and typically keep your phone within arm's reach? Do you enjoy the convenience of calling out commands to Alexa? Or do you prefer less technology or something in between? Personally, I'm somewhere in the middle.

Where smart appliances can save energy

Many smart appliances allow you to see how much energy each device consumes. That information can be helpful to better understand your energy habits and identify where energy may be going to waste.

Smart thermostats are a popular choice for managing energy use and reducing energy waste. Heating and cooling systems are typically a home's biggest sources of energy

consumption. According to ENERGY STAR®, you can save an average of 8% on heating and cooling with a smart thermostat. Savings depend on your climate, the type of system you have and how you use it.

Most energy savings from a smart thermostat come from automating temperature adjustments while you are sleeping or away from home. If you are already good at manually adjusting your thermostat, you likely won't see big savings, but you might prefer the convenience of a programmable device you can control on an app.

Smart thermostats make it much easier to program your heating and cooling schedule. Some have geofencing features that automatically adjust settings based on how far your phone is from home.

Coming in with the second-highest energy user in most homes is the water heater. I like the smart controls on my heat pump water heater. Also called a hybrid water heater, it uses

heat pump technology to move heat instead of using energy to create heat. That makes it two to three times more efficient than a conventional electric resistance water heater. You can save even more energy with smart heat pump water heaters.

I can monitor energy use, change settings if we need more hot water and check how much hot water is available before I jump in the shower after my kids have used it. The app notifies me when it's time to clean the air filter on top of the unit. I can access that information without having to go down to the basement. I can even

set it to vacation mode after I've left the house for a trip. Not all heat pump water heaters have smart technology, so be sure to check before buying.

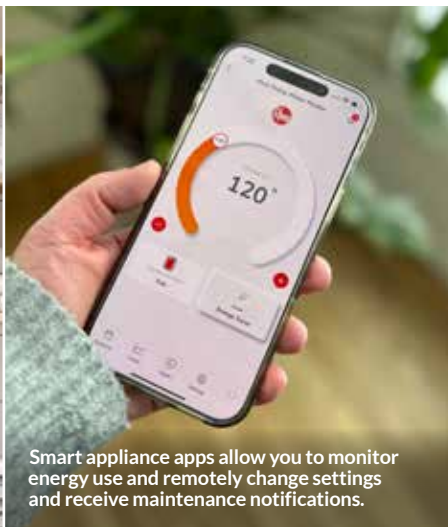
Balancing convenience with potential drawbacks

My refrigerator is a different story. I like the ability to monitor energy use, but it can be annoying to have my phone notify me that the door is open when I'm thousands of miles away at a work conference. There are certain features that can only be controlled through the app, which I find frustrating. The next thing I know, my husband texts me to make more ice

while he's standing right next to it, and I'm on the other side of the country.

Monitoring energy use and making it easier to control your household devices are benefits of smart appliances. Before upgrading, do your research to understand how the features work and whether they benefit your lifestyle. Smart technology can help lower your energy use. But, in some cases, you're better off improving your energy habits with the appliances already in your home.

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



Smart appliance apps allow you to monitor energy use and remotely change settings and receive maintenance notifications.



You can save an average of 8% on your heating and cooling costs with a smart thermostat, according to ENERGY STAR®.



Before buying new appliances, such as a smart dryer, research how the features work to understand whether they are beneficial to your lifestyle and help lower energy use.

COOL THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH SMART APPLIANCES

- Get an alert if your refrigerator door is open.
- Look inside your refrigerator without opening the door and wasting energy each time a family member wants a snack.
- Schedule your laundry or dishwasher to operate when your electricity rates are lowest.
- Have your dryer adjust cycle time automatically with incorporated sensors to help you reduce your dryer's energy use. This feature ensures that your dryer will automatically shut off when clothes are dry.
- Turn your room air conditioner off remotely from your smartphone if you forget before you leave home.



SMASH BURGERS

- 1 cup and 3 tablespoons ketchup, divided
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons dill relish
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 tablespoon green onion, diced
- 1½ teaspoons pepper, divided
- 1¼ teaspoons salt, divided
- 3 pounds ground beef
- 3 tablespoons white onion, grated
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- oil
- 16 slices cheese
- 8 buns
- toppings: onion, lettuce, tomato

In a small bowl, stir together 1 cup ketchup, mayonnaise, dill relish, mustard, green onion, ½ teaspoon pepper and ¼ teaspoon salt. Set smash sauce aside. Combine ground beef, grated onion, Worcestershire sauce, 3 tablespoons ketchup, 1 teaspoon pepper and 1 teaspoon salt. Divide mixture into 16 balls. Brush skillet or griddle with oil. Place ground beef balls in skillet and smash with a piece of parchment paper to create burgers. Cook 2 minutes on high. Flip and top with one slice of cheese. Cook another 2 minutes, or until done and cheese is melted. Brush additional mayonnaise inside bun halves and toast for 2-3 minutes. Assemble burgers in order: bottom bun, generous amount of smash sauce, two burger patties, onion, lettuce leaf, tomato slice, more smash sauce and top bun. Burgers can also be grilled and onions for topping can be sautéed. *Yield: 8 sandwiches*

Lauren Zollinger • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

BARBECUED BURGERS (SLOPPY JOES)

- 10 pounds ground beef
- 3 cups onion, finely chopped
- 9 teaspoons salt, optional
- ¾ teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups tomato juice
- 3 cups ketchup
- 1 cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup prepared mustard
- ¼ cup vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- ¾ cup rolled oats, to thicken

Brown ground beef, then add remaining ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes. Or, to make ahead, mix and cook all ingredients except ground beef. Divide sauce into 10 small freezer bags and freeze. When needed, brown ground beef. Then, add one portion of sauce per one pound of ground beef and simmer for 30 minutes. The sauce is also great for tacos, taco bowls and similar meals. *Entire recipe serves 30*

Sonya Colvin • Ames
Consumers Energy

BBQ SHREDDED BEEF

- 2 pounds beef
- 1½ cups BBQ sauce, warmed
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon dried onion

Cook beef and shred. Mix all ingredients together and serve. *Serves 6*

Rebecca Hancox • Plano
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

BACON-WRAPPED HAMBURGERS

- ½ cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ small onion, chopped
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon ketchup
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 6 slices bacon

In a bowl, combine all ingredients except bacon. Mix well, then shape into patties. Wrap each with a piece of bacon and secure with toothpicks. Grill patties until done. Serves 6

Tom DeVries • Maurice
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

GOOD OL' BURGER

- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- ¼ cup dry red wine or beef broth
- 1 tablespoon chili sauce
- ¼ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound ground beef buns

In a large bowl, combine egg, wine or broth, chili sauce, seasoning and pepper. Add beef and mix lightly but thoroughly. Shape into four ½-inch thick patties. Cover and grill burgers over medium heat 5-7 minutes on each side, or until 160 degrees F. Grill buns cut side down over medium heat 30-60 seconds, or until toasted. Serve burgers on buns with toppings of your choice. Yield: 4 servings

Joel Hartter • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

STUFFED BURGERS

- 2 pounds hamburger
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup rice
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 cup zesty Italian dressing
- 1 cup Miracle Whip
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- mozzarella cheese
- button mushrooms, sliced

Mix hamburger, eggs and rice well. Form into large, thin patties and place in an air-tight container. Whisk together ketchup, dressing, Miracle Whip and Worcestershire sauce. Add mixture to container with patties and marinate overnight. Take one patty and top with 1 tablespoon mozzarella and mushroom slices. Top with another patty and thoroughly seal edges together. Brown each side of patties, then place in slow cooker. Cover with marinade sauce and simmer on low for 3-4 hours. The burgers can also be grilled if you prefer.

Mary Roberts • Victor
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

CROWD CRUSHER BEEF BURGERS

- 10 pounds ground beef
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup ketchup
- ½ cup mustard
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup dried onions, chopped
- 1 cup sweet pickle juice

Brown ground beef with salt and pepper. Once cooked thoroughly, add the remaining ingredients. Keep tasting until desired flavor is obtained. Serve immediately or place in slow cooker to keep warm. Yield: 20 4-ounce sandwiches

Walter Mason • Hampton
Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative

MOCK FILET MIGNON

- 1½ pounds ground beef
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon dry onion flakes, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 small can mushroom bits and pieces
- bacon slices

Combine all ingredients except bacon and form into thick patties. Wrap each with a slice of bacon and secure with toothpicks. Broil or barbecue on a grill to desired doneness. Serves 6

Deb Peterson • Albia
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

WANTED:

CHICKEN DINNER RECIPES

THE REWARD:
\$25 BILL CREDIT FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is May 31

Winner, winner chicken dinner! Grilled, fried, breaded or in a casserole, we're looking for your favorite chicken recipes. Selected submission will appear in our September issue, just in time for Family Meals Month. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.

EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com

MAIL: Recipes

Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48
Des Moines, IA 50322



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



GEOHERMAL ENERGY BREAKTHROUGHS

BY JEFF GROENEWOLD

The strongest geothermal resources in the U.S. are often found in regions with active geology, such as areas near major tectonic plate boundaries. The mud pots shown here are located outside the John L. Featherstone Geothermal Plant in California.

Electric cooperatives focus on delivering safe, reliable and affordable electricity to the communities they serve – and they do that by utilizing a variety of energy generation resources, ranging from natural gas, coal, hydropower, nuclear, solar and wind. One energy source that is often overlooked is geothermal energy. Geothermal power has been used for many years and continues to improve as new technologies are developed.

Geothermal energy is a renewable source of power that comes from heat inside the Earth. Geothermal resources are natural or man-made pockets of hot water found at varying temperatures and depths below the ground. Wells, which can be just a few feet deep to several miles deep, are used to bring extremely hot water and steam to the surface for a variety of applications, such as heating and cooling, direct use in industrial processes and electricity generation.

The strongest geothermal resources in the U.S. are often found in regions with active geology, such as areas near major tectonic plate boundaries. These resources are not limited to one location but are spread across several western states. One well-known example is The Geysers in Northern California, the largest geothermal power complex in the country. Facilities like this use injected water to create steam from underground

heat, which spins turbines to generate reliable electricity for the power grid.

In 2023, geothermal generation accounted for approximately 17 billion kilowatt-hours, the equivalent of a year's worth of consumption for the city of Indianapolis.

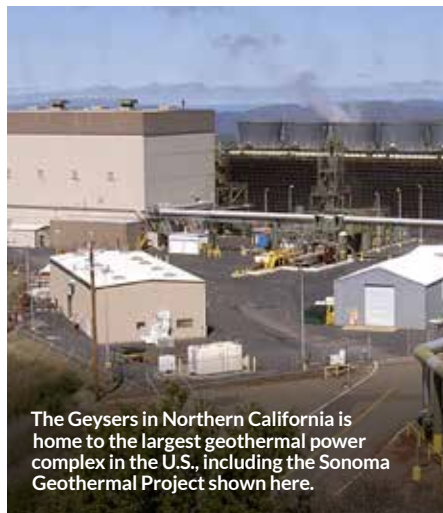
The U.S. has about 3.9 gigawatts of geothermal power capacity. Most of this power is produced in California and Nevada, which together generate the majority of U.S. geothermal electricity. Smaller amounts of geothermal power are also produced in Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah.

Technology advances and new projects

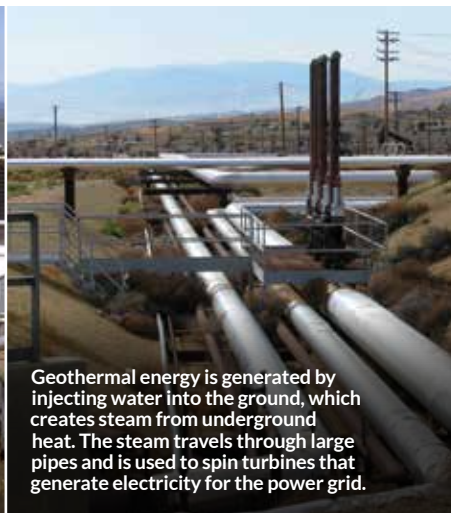
New ways of exploring geothermal energy, such as enhanced geothermal

systems (EGS) and superhot rock technology, are helping developers access heat sources that were not possible to use before. These new methods are making geothermal energy available in more places across the country.

In early 2025, investment in geothermal energy grew quickly, reaching \$1.7 billion. One example of this growth is Fervo Energy's Cape Station project in Utah. The project plans to produce 100 megawatts of power by the end of 2026 and increase to 500 megawatts by 2028. It already has approval to expand to up to 2 gigawatts. The project aims to produce electricity at a cost of \$79 per megawatt hour, even without government subsidies.



The Geysers in Northern California is home to the largest geothermal power complex in the U.S., including the Sonoma Geothermal Project shown here.



Geothermal energy is generated by injecting water into the ground, which creates steam from underground heat. The steam travels through large pipes and is used to spin turbines that generate electricity for the power grid.

Geothermal has a high capacity factor, near 90%, making it a strong source of around-the-clock power. Electric co-ops in the western U.S. can benefit from existing geothermal plants, while new technologies like EGS and hybrid designs are helping expand geothermal energy across the country. Continued federal support for tax credits, permitting and research lowers the cost and risk of new projects.

Growing investment and project development

Federal policy has helped drive recent growth in geothermal energy. The Geothermal Tax Parity Act (HR 6873), introduced in late 2025, aims to put geothermal projects on equal footing with oil and gas by extending important tax benefits, including exploration credits. Other proposed bills before the House

Natural Resources Committee focus on improving permitting, reducing exploration risk, clarifying land use and supporting lease sales.

Together, these efforts help create a stronger path for geothermal energy development in the U.S.

Jeff Groenewold writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

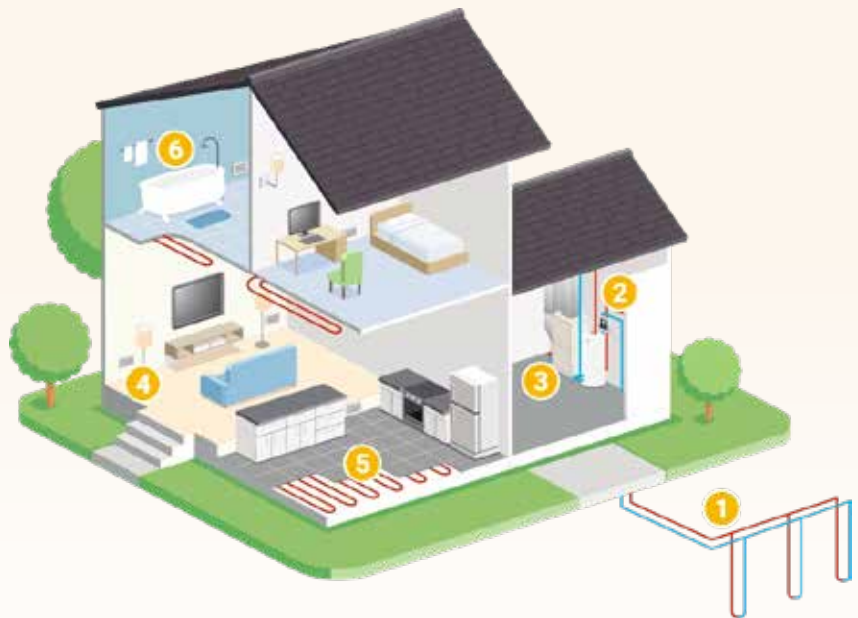
HOW GEOTHERMAL TECHNOLOGY WORKS IN HOMES

Beneath our feet, the Earth maintains a steady temperature year-round and geothermal systems use that stability to heat and cool homes efficiently. Also known as ground source heat pumps, these systems rely on a network of underground pipes, or “loops,” that circulate a water-based solution to transfer heat between your home and the ground.

In the winter, the system pulls heat from the Earth and brings it indoors. In the summer, the process reverses: excess heat from your home is transferred into the cooler ground. Because the Earth’s temperature remains relatively constant compared to outdoor air, geothermal systems operate far more efficiently than traditional heating and cooling systems.

Though the technology may sound cutting-edge, it’s been used by electric cooperatives for decades.

One of the biggest advantages is efficiency. Geothermal systems can be up to 400% efficient and typically reduce heating and cooling costs by 40% to 70%, saving homeowners around \$1,400 annually compared to older HVAC systems. While installation costs are higher – mainly due to the need for underground loop installation – many systems pay for themselves within five to seven years. Federal and state tax credits can also significantly offset upfront costs.



- 1 Ground loop.** The Earth absorbs and stores almost 50% of the sun’s solar energy. Because of this, the temperature 4 to 6 feet below ground is consistently between 45-70 degrees F. A geothermal system transfers heat from one place to another using a ground loop field buried in the yard. The loop field circulates a water-based solution through a series of pipes.
- 2 Flow center.** The flow center resides on your unit or a wall near the geothermal system. It pumps the water-based solution in the ground loop to the house or building unit to disperse heating or cooling.
- 3 Indoor heat pump.** The loop field transfers heat to the home through an indoor geothermal heat pump kept indoors through forced air and radiant heating and cooling.

- 4 Forced-air heating and cooling.** In a forced-air system, an air-handler disperses the ground’s heat to air in a home or building through ductwork and vents. In the cooling mode, the process is simply reversed.
- 5 Radiant heating (optional).** Known as the most comfortable type of heating, radiant heating uses a series of pipes under a home or building’s floor to circulate warm water, which heats the entire space evenly.
- 6 Hot water.** A hot water assist, known as a desuperheater, allows the system to capture excess heat to assist a water heater. This cuts hot water costs 25-40%. Geothermal systems can also provide 100% of the hot water needed for a home.


Beyond savings, geothermal systems offer durability and low maintenance, making them a long-term investment in both comfort and sustainability.

Unlike solar or wind, geothermal energy is available 24/7, using stored thermal energy from the Earth regardless of weather conditions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Starting Tuesday, May 26, we will transition to summer hours, operating from 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

If you experience a disruption in your electric service, please contact us at 641-456-2557.



The Franklin REC office will be closed on Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day.

FRANKLIN REC'S COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM

Are you interested in solar energy but don't have the space or resources to install panels at your home or business? Franklin REC's Community Solar Program makes it easy and cost-effective to enjoy the benefits of solar energy without the expense or maintenance of a personal system. With a simple, one-time payment, you can subscribe to our community solar array and start saving on your electric bill.

New, lower price

As of May 1, the price per solar subscription has **dropped to \$448 per module**, making it even more affordable to participate.

How it works

- **Location:** The Community Solar Field is located south of the Franklin REC office at 1560 HWY 65, Hampton, IA 50441.
- **System details:** The array consists of 508 solar modules, each 340 watts, producing approximately 380 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually.
- **No extra costs:** After your one-time subscription fee, Franklin REC handles all maintenance, insurance and repairs at no additional cost to you.
- **Monthly bill credits:** Receive a credit on your electric bill based on your subscription and the solar field's monthly energy production.
 - Credits are calculated using Franklin REC's kWh charge rate, offsetting your location's usage.
 - You can purchase up to 30 subscriptions, depending on your average energy usage over the past three years.
 - All subscriptions remain active through April 2042, giving decades of predictable savings.

Why join?

- In 2025, one panel generated a total credit of \$56.61.
- No maintenance, insurance or repair costs – just the benefits of clean energy.
- Support renewable energy and contribute to a cleaner environment.
- Enjoy long-term savings through April 2042.



Ready to join?

Take advantage of the new lower subscription price and start benefiting from solar energy today. For more information or to reserve your panel, contact Franklin REC at 641-456-2557.



FROM YOUR BOARDROOM

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

- Approved work orders and special equipment capitalization of \$10,289.72
- Approved addition to Franklin REC tariff language pertaining to Section 9
- Approved a donation request
- Approved voting delegates for Corn Belt Power Cooperative Annual Meeting
- Accepted the Reliability Report

FRANKLIN REC HOSTS COMMUNITY BOOK DRIVE TO STOCK FREE LENDING LIBRARIES

Franklin REC is excited to announce a community-wide Book Drive running through May 29! Our goal is to support access to books in rural communities and encourage reading for all ages throughout our service area.

As part of this initiative, Franklin REC has hand-built five new free community lending library houses to be placed in towns across our territory. These small wooden structures, filled with books of all genres, allow residents to borrow, read and return books at their convenience – and even contribute their own titles to share with neighbors.

The Book Drive will also restock several existing lending libraries in our area to ensure they are full and ready for summer reading. Once the new library houses are stocked, they will be donated to their respective towns, and each city will decide the best location to install the library for public use.

How you can help

Bring your lightly used books to any of our partnered drop-off locations and help fill these community libraries for the summer. Donated books will be

sorted and placed into both new and existing lending houses, making them accessible to readers of all ages.

By contributing, you help bring the joy of reading to your neighbors and strengthen the sense of community across Franklin REC’s service area.

For questions or more information, please contact Franklin REC at 641-456-2557.

Let’s fill these libraries and inspire a summer of reading in our rural towns!



DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

- Franklin REC**
 Location: 1560 HWY 65, Hampton
 Hours: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Chairish Life**
 Location: 626 Main St., Ackley
 Hours: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-4 p.m.,
 Sat. 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Block 10**
 Location: 309 Gilman St., Sheffield
 Hours: Tues.-Fri. 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Greater Franklin County Chamber of Commerce**
 Location: 5 1st St. SW, Hampton
 Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Franklin County Extension Office**
 Location: 6 2nd St. NW, Hampton
 Hours: Drop-off available 24/7 inside vestibule
- First Bank Hampton**
 Location: 211 1st Ave. NW, Hampton
 Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.,
 Sat. 8:30 a.m.-11 a.m.
- First Security Bank & Trust**
 Location: 100 1st St. NW, Hampton
 Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.,
 Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

MOVE OVER. SLOW DOWN. SAVE A LIFE.

Every mile of road you drive is a potential danger zone for someone working on the roadside. Franklin REC crews maintain over 800 miles of high-voltage power lines, powering thousands of homes – and every day, their biggest concern isn’t the lines they’re working on – it’s the vehicle approaching them from behind.

Iowa law is clear: when you see hazard lights or a vehicle parked along the road, you must slow down and, if safe, move over. This isn’t just about utility trucks – it applies to any roadside vehicle, from

emergency responders to a car pulled to the shoulder.

Those warning signs, hazard lights and pylons aren’t just for show; they’re your signal to protect life. Giving crews room to work safely can prevent a serious accident or worse.

Remember: it only takes a few seconds to slow down and steer clear, but those seconds can save a life. Whether it’s a Franklin REC truck or any vehicle on the side of the road, your actions behind the wheel matter.

Move over. Slow down. Protect lives – including your own.



HOME SAFE HOME: SPRING INTO ELECTRICAL SAFETY

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN

Spring is a season of fresh starts. As the weather warms across Iowa, “For Sale” signs pop up, moving trucks roll through neighborhoods and many families begin a new chapter in a new home. It’s also a time when home projects and outdoor activities ramp up – making it the perfect moment to think about safety.

That timing lines up with two important reminders: May is National Electrical Safety Month and June is National Homeownership Month. Together, they offer a simple but powerful message for Iowa’s electric cooperative member-consumers: whether you’re settling into a new house or simply refreshing your current one, taking a few minutes to check your home’s electrical safety can protect your family, your property and your peace of mind.



Get to know your electrical panel

Knowing your breaker box means understanding its parts, like the main breaker for the whole house, individual switches for circuit breakers and their functions.

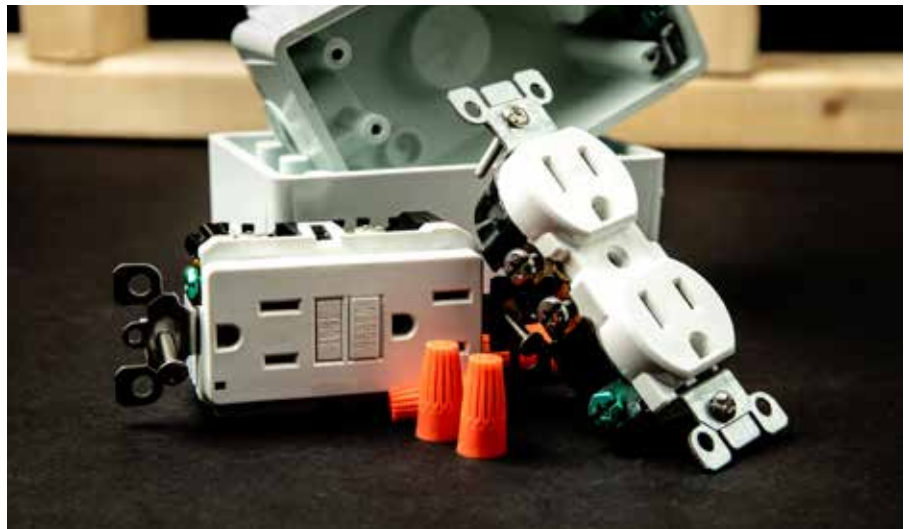
- Familiarize yourself with your electrical panel and label each breaker and panel by appliance or room.
- Test how to reset a tripped breaker.
- Find the main shut-off switch in case of an emergency.



Avoid electrical hazards

Identifying potential hazards can ensure your family’s safety, prevent fires and reduce costly repairs.

- Have only one heat-producing appliance, such as a coffee maker, microwave or space heater, plugged into an outlet at a time.



- Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extensions cords and outlet strips should not be used.
- Inspect cords for signs of fraying or damage and replace or repair them immediately.
- Only use extension cords temporarily. Don’t run cords under rugs, carpets, doorways or windows. Have a qualified electrician add more outlets if needed.
- Use surge protectors to safeguard devices such as computers, televisions and appliances from sudden power spikes.
- Always keep electrical devices away from water sources such as sinks, tubs and pools.
- Reduce risk of shock by using ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) around water sources such as kitchens, bathrooms, garages, basements and outdoors.
- Use outlet covers to prevent children (and pets) from inserting objects into unused outlets.
- Use light bulbs with the correct wattage – lamps and fixtures have a sticker to indicate the maximum wattage.

- Have a working smoke and carbon monoxide detector on every floor of your home and ensure there are units installed near your sleeping area.
- Keep outdoor ladders away from overhead power lines, including the electrical service into your home.



Call a professional if you notice these signs of an electrical problem

- Frequently blown fuses, tripped circuit breakers and unexplained power outages.
- A tingling feeling when touching an appliance.
- Discolored or warm outlets or switch plates.
- A burning or rubbery smell, or a buzzing or sizzling sound.
- Flickering or dimming lights.
- Sparks from an outlet.

As you enjoy Iowa’s warm weather, always keep electrical safety on your home checklist. Pair these habits with energy-saving steps, and you’ll reduce risk while lowering your utility bill. The little choices you make every day add up to a safer, more efficient household.

Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.

IT'S A GOOD THING THAT IT HURTS

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

His family described him as the calm in a storm. He had an endless curiosity about the world. He made the most of every opportunity to learn a new skill.

He was also good to his family's cat, Autumn.

Such simple details about Sgt. Declan Coady, 20, and yet they resonate with me, a cat lover with an insatiable curiosity.

I never knew Sgt. Coady, but I heard a lot about him after the West Des Moines native was killed in a March 1 airstrike in Kuwait. As soon as I heard the name Coady, my thoughts turned to my friend Becky Coady, whom I met in our 2017-2018 Leadership Iowa class.

Becky and her family are a military family. I hoped this loss wasn't someone they knew. But Sgt. Coady was a relative. My heart broke.

Sgt. Coady enlisted in the Army Reserve in 2023. He received the Army Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Ribbon and the Overseas Service Ribbon. He served his country with honor, courage and dedication, embodying the best of what it means to wear the uniform.

He died during in early-morning U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran. He and fellow Army reservists, including Maj. Jeffrey O'Brien of Indianola, were killed when a drone struck a port in Kuwait. These men and women were supporting Operation Epic Fury, a mission focused on destroying Iran's missile capabilities.

About a week after the deadly drone strike, family and friends gathered at Drake University to remember Sgt. Coady. "It's a good thing that it hurts," said Marty Martin, Drake's president, who is also a U.S. Air Force veteran and Air Force Reserve veteran. "Whether we knew Declan as a friend, as a member of our family, as a fellow student or one of our



students, we respected him and held him in esteem. And losing him hurts."

Honoring service and sacrifice

Too often in our hectic, fast-paced world, it's easy for losses like this to make news headlines and then quickly fade away. It's different, though, for the families, friends and communities closest to those who died.

Those memories can last a lifetime – and beyond. I'm reminded of this each Memorial Day when my family and I place flowers on the graves of our ancestors, including those who served in the U.S. Army more than a century ago.

Originally called Decoration Day, Memorial Day was first widely observed on May 30, 1868, to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers. I'm grateful this tradition lives on.

Protecting our freedom

Sacrifice is almost a foreign concept in our world today. Yet it's ingrained in our service members like Sgt. Coady and their families. Some pay the ultimate price.

I'm thankful we still have people who are willing to serve and protect our freedom, including soldiers like Sgt. Coady. Perhaps nothing reflects this spirit better than the Soldier's Creed from the U.S. Army.

SOLDIER'S CREED

I am an American soldier.

I am a warrior and a member of a team.

I serve the people of the United States and live the Army values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills.

I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert, and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy, the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American soldier.

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



Franklin REC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine
for members of
Iowa's electric
cooperatives

May 2026

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