

DECEMBER 2024

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**Defined electric service areas protect rural Iowans**

**Smart insights about smart appliances**

**Holiday party recipes**

**Learn more about being a Franklin REC director ▶ See Page 13**

# CONTENTS



VOLUME 77 • ISSUE 12

3

### STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE

Defined electric service areas protect Iowans

3

### EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

Win a temperature-controlled smart mug

14

### ENERGY MATTERS

Smart insights about smart appliances

15

### OUT BACK

'Tis the season for traditions

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### ON THE COVER

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

# DEFINED ELECTRIC SERVICE AREAS PROTECT RURAL IOWANS

BY LESLIE KAUFMAN



At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), we are constantly monitoring issues that could impact the people and rural communities served by Iowa's electric cooperatives. Our state's 2025 Legislative Session will begin on Jan. 13, and IAEC will prioritize efforts to ensure Iowa's law regarding defined service areas is not undermined. I'd like to explain why this law has been so crucial to our mission to serve co-op member-consumers.

## What are defined service areas?

In Iowa, your location determines which electric utility will serve you. This regulatory protection is called defined electric service territory, and the State of Iowa wrote Senate File 1258 into law almost 50 years ago to efficiently ensure that every square foot of our state has an electric utility obligated to provide service upon request.

## Why do Iowa's electric cooperatives support defined service areas?

Electric co-ops are committed to safeguarding defined service areas because they protect rural Iowans by supporting affordable electric rates, fostering a resilient electric grid and encouraging economic development.

Defined service areas provide a high degree of certainty to Iowa's electric cooperatives, which allows us to confidently make long-term investments in power generation to maintain affordable rates, finance major grid upgrades to ensure resiliency and utilize new technologies to enhance service. Electric co-ops can also be proactive in maintenance and vegetation management to

improve reliability for the homes, farms and businesses we serve every day. Additionally, defined service areas allow electric co-ops to robustly support economic development efforts in the communities we serve, which retain and create local jobs and provide needed services and tax revenue.

Any efforts to remove or weaken Iowa's defined service areas could result in higher electric bills and decreased reliability for Iowans. This issue is non-negotiable for Iowa's not-for-profit electric cooperatives, which are mission-driven to power lives and empower communities by providing electricity that is safe, reliable and affordable.

Since the 1990s, several states have deregulated their electric utilities, but the hopes that competition would result in lower rates and improved

reliability have not materialized. In fact, according to a 2023 *New York Times* investigation, "Deregulation has resulted in increased rates/fees in every state where it has been introduced." The report goes on to conclude that "On average, residents living in a deregulated market pay \$40 more per month for electricity..." This outcome is unacceptable for the Iowans we serve.

We invite you to learn more about this issue at [www.ProtectRuralIowa.com](http://www.ProtectRuralIowa.com) where you will also find links to research and studies on deregulation. Your locally owned electric cooperatives are working hard to safeguard defined service area protections that have benefited Iowans since 1976.

Leslie Kaufman is the executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Scan the QR code to learn more about why defined electric service territories are important to rural Iowans.



## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

### WIN A TEMPERATURE-CONTROLLED SMART MUG!

Discover a smarter way to drink coffee! Experience the comfort of consistently hot coffee (or tea) at your chosen temperature. The Ember Mug 2 offers up to 80 minutes of heat (120 to 145 degrees F) or all-day warmth on its charging coaster. Ideal for keeping drinks at the perfect temperature, the mug wakes up when hot liquid is poured and goes to sleep based on motion detection. Features like auto sleep and memory ensure your drink is always at the right temperature.



ENTER ONLINE BY DEC. 31!

#### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than Dec. 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 \$100 gift card to a local business from the October issue was **Daryl Geiken**, a **Grundy County REC** member-consumer.

# AN ALL-THE-ABOVE ENERGY STRATEGY AND WHY IT MATTERS

BY GARRETT THOMPSON



The culmination of our all-the-above series lies within this month's article. The key points have been shared throughout our series, but with this article, I am

concentrating on the specific reasons why Franklin REC subscribes to an all-the-above energy strategy.

The most important part of my job as CEO is ensuring each of our employees returns home safely. The second most important part of my job is to ensure a reliable and affordable flow of electricity to your home, farm or business.

Today, I am more concerned than ever about the future of our shared electric grid and our ability to provide the reliable and affordable service consumers expect. Our electric grid is amid extensive change. Changes in supply, demand and extreme weather conditions are stressing the limits of energy reliability.

Demand for electricity is outpacing supply from our generation fleet.

Residential and commercial energy use is expected to increase at an unprecedented pace as our nation becomes more electrified as large data centers are added and AI continues to grow. While a tremendous amount of renewable energy has been added in the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) region, which provides significant environmental benefits, renewable energy is not always available. Franklin REC works with Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Corn Belt Power), our power supplier, and SPP, our regional transmission organization, to ensure your lights stay on.

However, the reality is that we need more dispatchable generation for those times when the wind isn't blowing, and the sun isn't shining. Many of our current generators are aging or nearing retirement, and we also need to expand transmission to connect new generators to the grid. This expansion is crucial not only for enhancing grid security but also for ensuring that lower-cost energy reaches consumers.

## Grid alerts: Why do they happen?

In the past, there were only a few weeks during the hottest days of summer or coldest days of winter when SPP risked an energy shortfall. Now, SPP is issuing grid alerts throughout the summer and winter. Our risk of having inadequate supply to meet demand has greatly increased, and grid emergencies are likely to occur more frequently, last longer, and have a more significant impact on our lives and our communities.

Our region is increasingly reliant on variable resources. Variable resources are generation types, often renewable energy, that vary in how much power they can provide due to reliance on as-available fuel. While these resources provide environmental and cost benefits when available, they also pose a challenge for grid operators when they are not. Solar power is dependent on the time of day and year, and it is reduced by cloud cover or low sunlight. And, in

Iowa, snow and ice covering solar panels in the winter months decrease solar generation.

Wind power depends on weather patterns, which can shift wildly, and can be at risk when wind speeds are too high to operate safely. Hydropower is reduced during times of drought or in extreme freezing conditions.

Long story short, renewable energy output can vary widely. For instance, in just four hours, we have seen wind power go from providing over 16,000 megawatts (MW) of energy to less than 2,200 MW.

We also experienced a period in June 2023 when only 110 MW of the available 32,000 MW was available at that time in the SPP region. To put it in perspective, during that period in June 2023, 0.3% of the entire wind capacity in SPP's footprint was able to generate electricity.

While a wind farm may have a nameplate capacity of 250 MW, we can only consistently rely on about 30% of that output over time. Solar generation in our region performs similarly, typically achieving around 20% of its nameplate capacity on average. This percentage tends to be higher during the summer months but can drop significantly during the winter.

A coal or natural gas-fired power generation unit can be relied on approximately 90% of the time. I present these statistics not to diminish the value of wind and solar but to provide a realistic understanding of their current capabilities.

Unfortunately, we can't rely on wind and solar energy all the time. When we tap variable energy resources, such as wind and solar, we must have baseload generation sources in place as a backup. We need to ensure the lights, heating and cooling systems, businesses and farms have power. Simply put, many times on the hottest and coldest days of the year, we can't rely on wind or solar.



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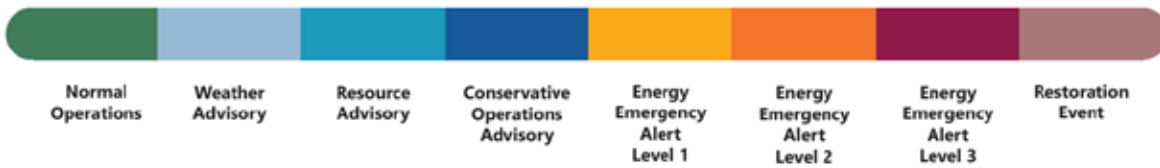
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### Website

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## OUR GOAL IS TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPP IS UNDER GRID ALERTS



Between 2019 and 2023, the SPP region experienced 3,234 hours of grid advisories and alerts due to tight operating conditions.

During these times, SPP relies most heavily on dispatchable generation: power sources that have available fuel and can be quickly adjusted to meet the needs of the power grid. Dispatchable power plants – coal and natural gas – can be turned on or off, or their power output can be increased or decreased on demand allowing them to provide more electricity when demand is high or less when demand is low.

### What are we doing to mitigate risk?

SPP, Corn Belt Power and Franklin REC must plan for times of extreme power use. We do that in the form of what we call reserve margins. Reserves are resources that are held back, standing by to provide additional energy when needed. Reserve margins are the amount of unused available generating capability of an electric power system (during

peak demand for a utility system) as a percentage of total capability needed to meet peak demand. These margins are shrinking in SPP and across the country.

Tighter reserve margins mean there's less room for error when we experience unexpected events or emergencies, increasing the risk of forced outages.

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-the-above strategy that includes renewable energy and dependable resources we have come to rely on such as coal, natural gas, nuclear and hydropower. This diverse energy mix is essential to meeting those expectations day in and day out.

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 general manager/ CEO of Franklin REC.*

## FRANKLIN REC PROUDLY SUPPORTS COMMUNITY EVENTS



As 2024 comes to a close, we want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible community we are honored to serve. This year, Franklin REC had the privilege of supporting our service territory in many ways, and we hope the positive impact has reached both our members and the broader community. From organizing safety demonstrations to hosting highway cleanups, blood drives and food drives, we have sought to make a meaningful difference.

Our involvement extended to volunteering at the Franklin County Fair and we also had the pleasure of partnering with local organizations to place park benches across Franklin County parks.

In November, we hosted our annual Light Up the Night event, where families enjoy the beautiful holiday lights at Band Shell Park until the new year. This tradition brings a festive spirit to our community, and we are grateful to all who join us in celebrating. Another tradition that holds a special place in our hearts is writing hundreds of Christmas cards for residents of assisted living and nursing homes within our service territory. This small gesture reminds us of the importance of connection, especially during the holiday season.

We sincerely appreciate the community we serve and are grateful for the opportunity to continue enhancing the lives of those around us. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your lives, and we look forward to another year of making a positive difference together.

## FROM YOUR BOARD ROOM

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

- Approved work orders and special equipment capitalization of \$73,287.70
- Accepted submission of Tax Forms 990, 990T and IA 1120
- Accepted Encompass IA1120 tax form
- Approved 2025 patronage estate discount rate
- Approved solar field maintenance change



# G&Ts ARE THE POWER BEHIND YOUR POWER

BY SCOTT FLOOD

Photo Source: Corn Belt Power Cooperative

You might be surprised to learn that your local electric cooperative doesn't generate the electricity you use in your home or business. In most cases, your co-op does not own a power plant but instead purchases electricity from an outside source and then routes the power to your community.

For more than 800 electric cooperatives across the country, the source of electricity is a different kind of cooperative. Referred to as G&Ts, these generation and transmission cooperatives exist to help electric co-ops serve their members as reliably and affordably as possible. Their only members are local electric co-ops, so G&Ts are actually cooperatives that serve – you guessed it – cooperatives.

## Providing at-cost power

Across the nation, 64 G&T cooperatives provide access to wholesale (at-cost) power at a better

price than each of their member co-ops could obtain on their own. Most G&Ts go beyond the delivery of power to provide sophisticated business resources that would typically be out of reach for local co-ops.

Like your local co-op, G&Ts are not-for-profit organizations that exist to serve the needs of their members. G&Ts generally serve all the co-ops in a specific geographic area.

In Iowa, electric co-ops are members of various G&T cooperatives (see map, top of Page 7). These G&Ts generate electricity at multiple sites using a diverse mix of fuels such as coal, natural gas, wind, solar, hydro and landfill gas.

G&Ts employ a leadership team of experts in data, finance, engineering, economic development, environmental management and other important specialties essential

for electric co-ops. The G&T operates behind the scenes to support the local co-op's teams, and although G&Ts may be largely unseen, they operate with complete transparency.

G&Ts are best known as the source for at-cost electricity that is generated elsewhere, then delivered to your local co-op over high-voltage transmission lines. Your co-op uses distribution power lines and transformers to then deliver that electricity to your home or business.

Most G&Ts maintain their own power plants, while others purchase power for their members on the wholesale market. Some G&Ts manage a combination of native power generation and purchases. Because a G&T buys enough power to supply all its member co-ops, it has the bargaining power to secure significantly lower prices than those co-ops could negotiate by themselves. Regardless of how

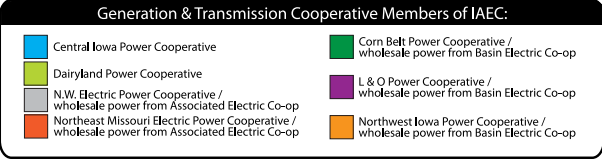
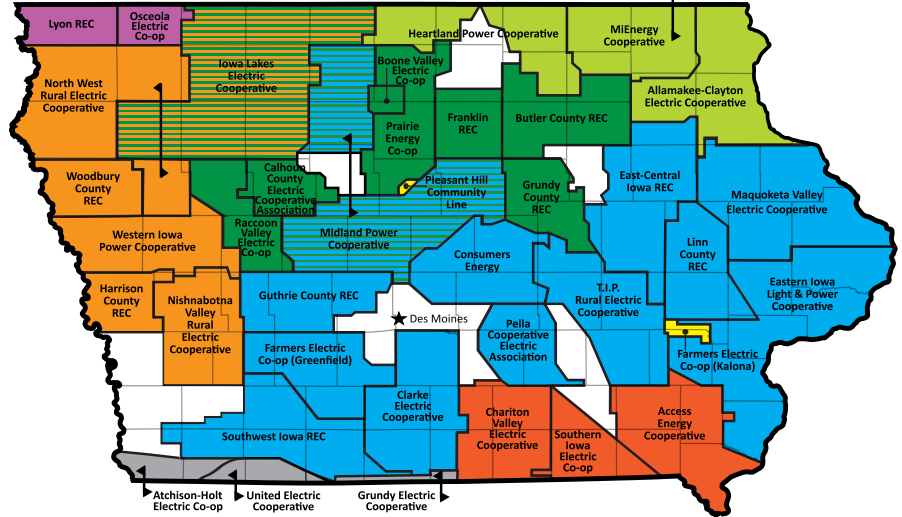
they're structured, G&Ts help keep your electric bill smaller.

**Energy reliability is paramount**

Just as important is the work G&Ts perform in planning. The nation's energy landscape is changing rapidly. G&Ts constantly work with local co-op staff to study and forecast power needs. They consider how growing communities might affect the demand for electricity in the future and work closely with local co-ops when power reliability is challenged, such as times when electricity demand outpaces supply or after a major weather event.

In addition to obtaining the electricity local co-ops need, G&Ts improve and maintain the reliability of the infrastructure co-ops and their communities depend upon. By working with local co-op staff to upgrade transmission lines and deploy substations, they make sure the power will be there for members like you when you need it. G&Ts also work closely with government agencies that monitor and manage the nation's electric grid.

Electric Distribution Cooperative Members of IAEC:



So, while your co-op may not own the power plant that generates the electricity you use every day, it's part of an even bigger not-for-profit cooperative whose mission is to make your service even more reliable and

affordable. As the power behind your power, just like your electric co-op, G&T cooperatives exist to serve you.

*Scott Flood writes on a variety of energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*



G&Ts employ a leadership team of experts across many career fields. Photo Sources: Central Iowa Power Cooperative, Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative.

# Holiday

PARTY  
RECIPES



## WHITE HOT CHOCOLATE

- 3 cups half and half, divided
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup white chocolate chips
- 1 3-inch cinnamon stick
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- whipped cream, for garnish
- cinnamon, for garnish

Combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup half and half, white chocolate chips, cinnamon stick and nutmeg. Stir over low heat until chips are melted. Discard cinnamon, add remaining half and half and stir until hot. Remove from heat and add vanilla. Pour into three or four mugs and garnish each with whipped cream and cinnamon.

Lauren Zollinger • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## EASY PARTY CHEESECAKE

- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 1 can Eagle brand milk (sweetened condensed milk)
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 9-inch graham cracker crust

Mix cream cheese and milk until smooth. Add lemon juice and vanilla. Mix, then pour into the graham cracker crust. Refrigerate 2 hours or overnight. *Serves 8*

Kary Blunk • Russell  
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## BAKED PARMESAN CRISPS

- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- optional toppings: garlic powder, paprika

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Put heaping teaspoons of Parmesan cheese on paper, spreading them to make neat circles about 2 inches in diameter. Sprinkle with optional toppings to taste. Bake at 400 degrees F for 5 minutes. Remove and let cool. The cheese makes a lacey disc, almost like a snowflake. Best served the day you make them. *Serves 12*

Patsy Vander Schaaf • Sheldon  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## CARAMEL MACCHIATO

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup instant coffee
- hot water
- 5 ounces caramel sauce
- 3 ounces vanilla syrup
- $6\frac{1}{4}$  cups milk
- whipped topping
- caramel drizzle

Dissolve coffee in a little bit of hot water. Meanwhile, froth caramel sauce, vanilla syrup and milk in a saucepan. Heat to 150 degrees F. Combine coffee with frothed ingredients. Serve with whipped topping and caramel drizzle. *Serves 6-8*

Clark DeSmet • Alvord  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative



## HOLIDAY SPREAD

- 1 package raw cranberries, chopped
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1-2 jalapeños, seeded and chopped
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 package cream cheese crackers or chips

Combine cranberries, cilantro, onions, jalapenos, sugar, cumin and lemon juice. Refrigerate overnight or at least 4 hours. Spread cream cheese on a tray or plate and cover with cranberry mixture. Serve with crackers or chips.

Hana Hartter • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## SPINACH TORTILLA ROLL-UPS

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 4 large spinach burrito tortillas
- ¾ cup raisins
- 3 tablespoons chives or green onions, chopped
- 12 ounces deli turkey slices
- 8 ounces Havarti cheese
- romaine lettuce, ribs removed

Spread cream cheese on tortillas. Layer remaining ingredients in the order listed, avoiding spreading layers all the way to the top as they will slide when you roll them. Roll tightly from bottom to top. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight or several hours. Cut into 1-inch slices and serve on plate or platter. These can also be made with deli ham and Swiss cheese. *Serves 10-12*

Sandra Lacey • Danbury  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

## SALMON LOG

- 1 16-ounce can salmon
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons onion, grated
- 1 teaspoon horseradish
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon liquid smoke
- ½ cup pecans, chopped
- 3 tablespoons parsley, snipped
- crackers

Drain and flake salmon. Combine salmon with cream cheese, lemon juice, onion, horseradish, salt and liquid smoke. Mix well and chill for several hours. Combine pecans and parsley, set aside. Shape salmon mixture into log and roll into parsley pecan mixture. Chill well. Serve with crackers. *Serves 6-8*

Denise Anderson • Ocheyedan  
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## CRAB-IN-A-ROUND

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 5-ounce jar Old English cheese spread
- ½ teaspoon seasoned salt
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1 6-ounce can crab meat, drained
- 1 package English muffins
- canned mushrooms, chopped
- parsley flakes

Combine softened butter and cheese spread, mix well. Add seasoned salt, garlic powder and mayonnaise. Add crab meat and mix well. Split English muffins into halves, add crab mixture and top with chopped mushrooms and garnish with parsley flakes. Bake at 400 degrees F for 10-15 minutes, until golden brown and bubbly. Cut into four pie-shaped pieces and serve with a toothpick in each wedge for a quick appetizer. *Serves 24*

Karen Segriff • Brooklyn  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

WANTED:

## RECIPES WITH AN INTERNATIONAL FLAIR

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

Deadline is Dec. 31

Submit your **favorite international-inspired recipes**. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.



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# POWERING LIVES EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

*Editor's Note: This article is Part 1 of a two-part series showcasing the impact of Iowa's electric cooperatives throughout all the state's 99 counties.*

Iowa's electric cooperatives are proud to be member-owned, serving our communities with a steadfast commitment to safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable power for over 85 years.

Covering more than two-thirds of Iowa's land area, our cooperatives maintain close to 62,000 miles of power lines - enough to circle the globe two and a half times! We deliver power to nearly 240,000 households, farms and businesses, reaching approximately 650,000 Iowans across every county.

Primarily serving rural areas, we are mission-driven to enhance the quality of life for our member-owners and are guided by seven core principles that define all cooperatives.

Iowa's electric co-ops serve **80%** of Iowa's land mass and maintain enough power lines to wrap around the equator **2.5X** (That's around 62,000 miles!)



Owned and governed by the members we serve, not-for-profit electric cooperatives power the lives of

**650,000 IOWANS** throughout all 99 counties.



Electric cooperatives directly support almost

# 2,000 JOBS IN IOWA



### Empowering communities

For over eight decades, Iowa's electric cooperatives have made significant contributions to the local communities we serve by creating stable jobs, paying taxes, returning surplus funds to members and investing in student programs.

Iowa's electric cooperatives directly support nearly 2,000 full-time jobs, providing Iowans with steady careers, competitive wages and benefits in a dynamic industry. Many co-op employees are rooted in small-town communities where they actively participate in local events and initiatives.

Collectively, Iowa's electric cooperatives contribute almost \$29 million annually in local and state taxes. These funds support essential services, including emergency

response, road maintenance, healthcare and public schools.

Being member-owned means electric co-ops build equity for members based on individual electric use, and surplus funds are returned to them over time.

The surplus capital is returned to members over time when local boards determine it is financially feasible. To date, Iowans have received more than \$300 million in retired capital credits from their electric cooperatives.

We are also deeply invested in Iowa's future, supporting various educational and leadership development programs for students. Over the past 65 years, Iowa's cooperatives have sent more than 2,500 high school students to Washington, D.C., for the annual Youth Tour, where students gain insights into citizenship and the cooperative business model. Co-ops further support students with college scholarships and internships.

### Economic engines of progress

Electric cooperatives do more than just provide power; we also invest heavily in economic development efforts throughout rural Iowa.

From 2018 to 2022, Iowa's electric cooperatives invested \$4.7 billion in economic development projects, supporting more than 7,300 jobs, both retained and created, across the state.

In that period, our cooperatives generated \$688 million in wages and salaries and produced \$232 million in self-employment income.

Iowa's cooperatives have a long history of partnership with the

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development and USDA's Rural Utilities Service, proudly serving as intermediaries for revolving loan funds and other programs. Several Iowa co-ops have also developed industrial speculative buildings to foster local business growth and attract new enterprises to rural communities.

Electric cooperatives are equally proud to work with the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) to bolster rural economic development. Established nearly 40 years ago, IADG provides crucial support for business and community projects on behalf of more than 150 Iowa

electric and telecommunications utilities. IADG has facilitated over 2,550 projects, creating or retaining at least 62,000 jobs statewide.

Investing in economic development is one of the key ways Iowa's electric cooperatives proudly contribute to the vitality of our communities.

Learn more at [www.iowarec.org/who-we-are/economic-progress](http://www.iowarec.org/who-we-are/economic-progress).

Part 2 of this feature will appear in the January 2025 issue of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living and focus on the impact of electric cooperatives in providing reliable and affordable power.



For the five years ending in 2022, Iowa electric co-ops had an impressive impact of

# \$4.7 BILLION

 IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

These investments supported more than

# 7,300 JOBS



(retained, attracted or expanded) DURING THAT SAME TIME PERIOD.

# FRANKLIN REC'S LINEMAN POWER PLAYER OF THE WEEK

This season, Franklin REC proudly highlighted outstanding local football players through its "Lineman Power Player of the Week" program. Each week, the program recognized a standout lineman who made big-impact plays and showcased remarkable strength and skill on the field.

These players, often the backbone of their teams, were celebrated for their power, determination and teamwork – the same qualities Franklin REC's linemen display in their daily work.

Throughout the season, Franklin REC honored these powerhouse athletes for their dedication and contributions to their teams. The program brought well-deserved attention to the vital role linemen play in football and within our local sports community.



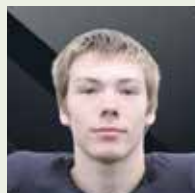
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**Braydon Smit**  
West Fork Warhawks



**Parker Sheriff**  
West Fork Warhawks

## CONGRATULATIONS, AUSTIN NEFF!



Lineman Austin Neff is celebrating three years of dedicated service with Franklin REC. Since joining

the team, Austin has played a key role in maintaining reliable power for members, demonstrating his strong work ethic and commitment to safety. His expertise and positive attitude have made him a valued member of the cooperative, and Franklin REC is proud to recognize his contributions.

## THANK YOU FOR MAKING LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SHINE BRIGHT



Franklin REC would like to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Light Up the Night a glowing success! From the festive atmosphere to the joyful spirit shared by all, we couldn't have done it without the incredible support and participation of the entire community. Your contributions and involvement brought the event to life, and we are truly grateful.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and invite you to continue enjoying the lighted display at the park, which will shine brightly until the new year. We look forward to celebrating with you again next year!

## MAY YOUR HOLIDAYS BE MERRY AND BRIGHT

Franklin REC office will be closed Dec. 24-25 to celebrate the Christmas holiday. If you experience an interruption in service, contact our office at 641-456-2557. To make a payment toward your electric bill, call 855-940-3953.

# FRANKLIN REC 2025 ANNUAL MEETING NOMINATING COMMITTEE NOTICE

It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than thirty (30) days nor more than one hundred twenty (120) days before the date of a meeting of the members at which Directors are to be elected, committees on nominations consisting of at least three (3) persons. At least one (1) nominating committee member

is to be selected from each district from which a director is to be elected. No officer or member of the Board shall be appointed a member of the committee. The committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Association at least thirty (30) days before the meeting a list of nominations for Directors.

Such nominations shall be made by districts as herein prescribed to succeed the Directors whose terms will expire at the meeting of members for which such nominations are made, and the members so nominated shall be bona fide residents of the district from which they are nominated. Any fifteen (15) or more members may take other nominations in writing over their signatures not less than twenty (20) days prior to the meeting and the secretary shall post the same at the place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted.

Nominees made by Petition must satisfy the same eligibility requirements as nominees selected by the committee on nominations. The secretary shall mail with the notice of meeting a statement of the number of directors to be elected and showing separately the list of nominations made by the committee on nominations and the nominations made by petition, if any.



**SAVE THE DATE!**

Your 2025 Franklin REC annual meeting will be held Tuesday, April 1, 2025.

## BECOME A VOICE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY: JOIN FRANKLIN REC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The success of Franklin REC rests on the leadership and commitment of its board of directors. These dedicated individuals serve as the backbone of our cooperative, making decisions that shape our future and ensure our members receive reliable, affordable energy. The role of a board director is challenging but deeply rewarding, providing an opportunity to represent the interests of your fellow members and play an active role in the growth and development of our community.

### What does a director do?

Directors are responsible for attending monthly meetings, where they discuss and vote on important issues that affect the cooperative. In addition, they are involved in long-term strategic planning, financial oversight, rate setting and policy formation. Directors must stay informed about industry

trends and challenges, often attending conferences and reading reports to gain a deeper understanding of the policies and issues the cooperative faces.

### Responsibilities include:

- **Risk mitigation:** Ensuring the cooperative navigates potential challenges effectively.
- **Financial oversight:** Setting budgets, monitoring financial health and making key financial decisions.
- **Strategic planning:** Shaping the future of the cooperative through careful, long-term planning.
- **Political advocacy:** Lobbying state and national leaders to represent the interests of our members.
- **Member representation:** Understanding and addressing member expectations and needs.

Being a director means being at the forefront of the cooperative movement, advocating for our members and promoting the values that make our organization strong.

### Why become a director?

Serving on the Franklin REC board of directors is not just about overseeing operations – it's about driving the cooperative forward. Directors play a critical role in the strategic vision, from planning infrastructure projects to ensuring the cooperative remains resilient in a constantly changing energy landscape.

You'll also have the unique opportunity to represent the voices of your neighbors and fellow members, ensuring their concerns are addressed at the highest level. It's a way to give back to the community, gain leadership experience and be part of something meaningful.

# SMART INSIGHTS ABOUT BUYING SMART APPLIANCES

BY SCOTT FLOOD

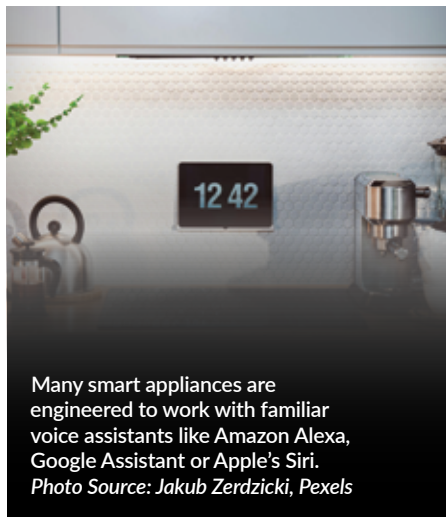
Santa isn't the only one who makes an appearance as the year nears its end. Retailers start trumpeting deep discounts on home appliances. That's great if you've considered replacing some of your home's appliances with one of today's "smart" models. Before deciding to buy a smart appliance, take some time to get smarter about what they offer – and what you really need.

## Start with an assessment

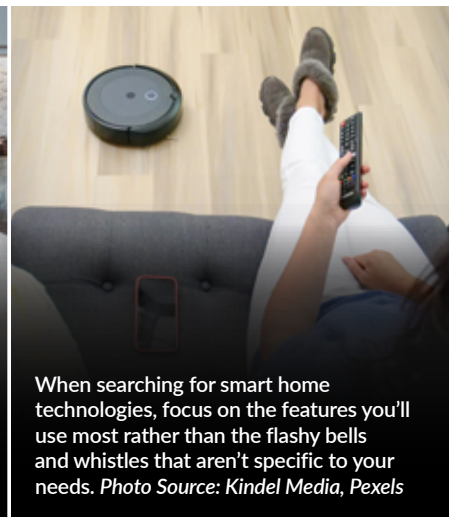
Begin with an honest look at how you live and consider the role your current appliances play in your daily routine. Would the capabilities of a smart appliance make your life easier? For example, if you frequently forget to start the laundry or your dishwasher, Wi-Fi-enabled appliances with remote start capabilities may save you time and trouble. But if you're thinking about stepping up to a smart appliance because it has a cool feature you might use once a year, ask yourself if it's worth the extra cost.

Next, think about any smart devices you already use in your home. Make sure they're compatible with the smart appliance's operating system so you can get all the benefits you expect. For example, many of these appliances are engineered to work with familiar voice assistants like Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant or Apple's Siri. Incompatible systems might limit your ability to use the features that are most important to you.

Is your home's infrastructure ready to handle the demands of a smart appliance? Depending upon the model you choose, it might require anything from a basic internet connection to a home Wi-Fi network to provide the operation you expect. Some smart appliances may require Bluetooth, Zigbee, Z-Wave or other systems for connectivity. Having access to the right technology



Many smart appliances are engineered to work with familiar voice assistants like Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant or Apple's Siri. Photo Source: Jakub Zerdzicki, Pexels



When searching for smart home technologies, focus on the features you'll use most rather than the flashy bells and whistles that aren't specific to your needs. Photo Source: Kindel Media, Pexels

ensures your system will function correctly and be able to handle updates as they become available.

## Consider energy efficiency and other factors

It's always important to consider energy efficiency when purchasing a new appliance. Most smart appliances are designed to reduce energy consumption, with operating modes that deliver the performance you want while making more efficient use of energy. Smart appliances that are ENERGY STAR®-certified meet or exceed federal energy efficiency standards and some may use only half as much energy as standard appliances.

Repairs to smart appliances can be expensive, so consider the warranty. Generous manufacturer warranties demonstrate the company's confidence in the quality of its products.

For most homeowners, the biggest downside to smart appliances is that they carry a higher price tag than their not-so-smart counterparts. However, price is just one factor in the cost of any appliance. When you

also consider the long-term value smart appliances deliver – whether in energy savings, helpful conveniences or improved reliability – most will save you money over their service life. In addition, smart appliances may be eligible for rebates and tax incentives, so ask your retailer what's available.

What's ahead for smart appliances in the foreseeable future? The marketplace is starting to see the integration of basic artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities that can make smart appliances provide better service, greater reliability and lower energy needs. As these AI-fueled systems become more common, your refrigerator might know your habits so well that it can generate a shopping list for you. Your dishwasher could adjust its operating cycle to better clean your family's uniquely dirty dishes.

There was a time when appliances changed little from decade to decade. Today, products advance more quickly than ever before, and we can expect to see more big changes ahead.

*Scott Flood writes on energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*

# 'TIS THE SEASON FOR TRADITIONS

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

We've officially entered the season of traditions. Can you recall a holiday tradition your family had when you were younger? What holiday traditions do you still enjoy today?

For me, these included homemade chili for supper and opening gifts on Christmas Eve. Baking Christmas cookies. Attending services at the country church in Webster County where generations of my mom's family worshipped.

It's always fun to hear about other families' traditions, as well. When I was visiting my second cousin Barb at her home near Coggon last winter, she mentioned the Hamilton Family Cook Off.

This family tradition (inspired by the "Iron Chef" cooking competition on the Food Network) started in 2006 with an M&Ms Challenge. The rules were simple. Any Hamilton family member (or date of a family member) could enter. Contestants just had to include M&Ms in their recipes. Everyone voted on their favorite dish when the family gathered for the Christmas holidays. (The winning entry was a cheesecake with M&Ms.)

This friendly competition was such a hit that it has endured. Each year, the featured ingredient is announced around Thanksgiving. Options have included cheese, apples, cranberries, beer, cinnamon, olives, bacon, peanut butter, ginger, chipotle peppers, oranges, corn, maple, lemon and honey.

After the judging is complete, the year's winner receives a traveling trophy (a kitschy, chef-themed ceramic pig), plus the winner gets to choose the "secret ingredient" for next year's Hamilton Family Cook Off.

## Decoding the power of traditions

This got me thinking about how traditions can enrich our lives. They are the glue that holds families,

communities and even countries together. They can be as diverse as a summer family vacation, tailgating at college football games each fall or celebrating America's independence on the Fourth of July.

Traditions hold the power to shape human history. "Tradition" comes from a Latin word that means "to hand over, to transmit." Psychologists tell us that traditions are important to our mental health since they strengthen shared values and provide a sense of stability.

Passing traditions from generation to generation also preserves our heritage and helps us reconnect with our roots. The results can be especially profound for children.

I'm fascinated by research conducted by Marshall Duke, a clinical psychologist and faculty member at Emory University in Atlanta. His studies have shown that the more children know about their family's history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives and the higher their self-esteem. These children prove to be more resilient and can cope more effectively with the stresses of life.

## Time won't wait

This lesson in resilience is something I need to remember. With my busy schedule, I've gotten away from some family traditions, like decorating homemade sugar cookies in the weeks leading up to Christmas and sending holiday cards.

Did all that busyness enrich my life? Not really. I can hardly remember what was so important that I

sacrificed some family traditions to slog through a never-ending to-do list.

The longer I live, the more I'm reminded that time won't wait. The country church where we used to gather for the Christmas service closed permanently in 2010. Some of my loved ones have passed away. Yet, I still cherish the traditions we shared and the priceless memories we created together.

During this holiday season and the year ahead, let's all make more time to enjoy the traditions that keep us connected. Maybe even create a new tradition. It's never too late to start something good.

If you have beloved traditions in your life, I'd love to hear about them. Email me at [yettergirl@yahoo.com](mailto:yettergirl@yahoo.com).

*Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at [www.darcymaulsby.com](http://www.darcymaulsby.com).*



This pig is a traveling trophy for the Hamilton family's holiday cooking competition.



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