

OCTOBER 2024

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Powering a brighter
future in Guatemala

Compassion Flights:
Where hope grows wings

Family dinner recipes

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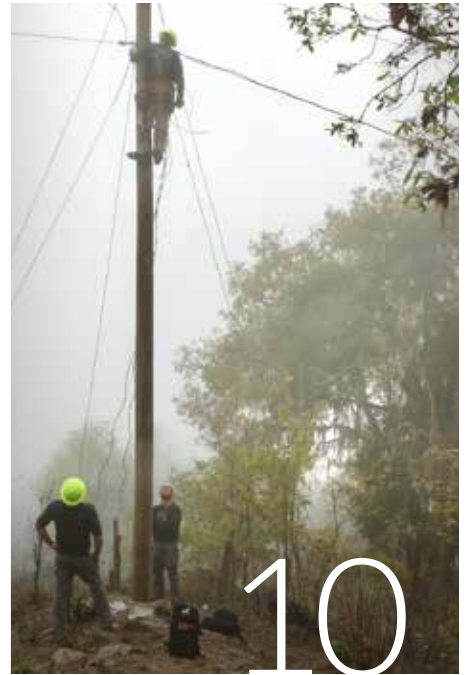
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Come back to silence

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ON THE COVER

The village of Las Peñas, Guatemala, where linemen from Iowa and Minnesota electric cooperatives worked to bring electricity to the community for the first time. Read more beginning on Page 10 of this issue.

REFLECTING ON OUR COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

BY LESLIE KAUFMAN



October is National Co-op Month, making it an opportune time to reflect on our cooperative principles. As I look back on my first few weeks

at the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, the co-op principles of *cooperation among cooperatives* and *concern for community* really stand out to me for the following reasons.

Rebuilding after the Greenfield tornado

On May 21, severe storms rolled across Iowa, including a strong tornado that tore through Greenfield. We cover this story in more detail on Pages 6-7 and share how it affected employees of Farmers Electric Cooperative, which is based in Greenfield. In the aftermath of the storm, employees of Farmers Electric immediately headed out to help those in need, and neighboring electric cooperatives provided mutual aid to repair damage and restore power in impacted areas.

Powering a brighter future in Guatemala

Also in this issue, you'll read about how linemen from Iowa and Minnesota electric cooperatives worked together to bring electricity to a remote village in the Guatemalan mountains. We understand how essential electricity is to powering opportunities and improving quality of life. Electric cooperatives across the country volunteer their time and resources to help those less fortunate in developing countries because it connects us to our legacy and mission back home.

Shining the light on community volunteers

In the August and September issues of this magazine, you read about our Shine the Light contest, which celebrates our cooperative

commitment to community. Thank you for nominating deserving volunteers who make a positive difference in Iowa's communities! Learn more about our 2024 winners at www.IowaShineTheLight.com and make plans to nominate a local hero in June 2025.

October is co-op month

Once again, Iowa's electric cooperatives are teaming up with the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and the Iowa Credit Union League to raise awareness about the many advantages of the cooperative business model. This month, we'll post videos about the seven cooperative principles and other co-op facts on social media. Visit www.IowaCooperatives.com for more information on how cooperative ownership works and why the co-op business model is effective.

Celebrating cooperative careers

Finally, we will commemorate Careers in Energy Week beginning Oct. 21. Iowa's electric cooperatives are proud to provide nearly 2,000 stable careers with excellent benefits in an exciting and fulfilling industry. Many electric co-op employees choose to raise their families in small towns and are actively engaged in their communities. Along with lineworkers, engineers and operations staff, electric co-ops also employ accountants, customer service representatives, IT professionals, human resources staff, communicators, energy advisors, economic development specialists and more. View our latest co-op job openings at www.iowarec.org.

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

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN A \$100 GIFT CARD!

To celebrate National Co-op Month, we're giving away a \$100 gift card to your choice of a hometown business. Your selection can be a restaurant, hardware store, gift shop, grocery store, beauty salon or other local business that's vital to your community.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than Oct. 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 pressure washer from the August issue was **Dwayne Seeck**, a Guthrie County REC member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY OCT. 31!

NATURAL GAS POWER PLANTS

BY GARRETT THOMPSON



You made it! The final generation asset in our “all-the-above” series is natural gas. Natural gas plants are interesting assets with unique

attributes that we will cover in this month’s article.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), natural gas-fired power plants

produced 43% of electricity in the U.S. in 2023. Also, during 2023, natural gas plants were the second fastest-growing generation asset, only trailing solar. The reasons for the rapid build-out of these plants can be credited to a variety of factors, including dispatchability, efficiency, broad regional coverage, advancements in technology and increased domestic supply of natural gas, which equates to competitive pricing.

How natural gas plants work

There are two main designs for natural gas plants: simple cycle and combined cycle.

Simple cycle

During 2023, simple-cycle natural gas plants made up 1,756 megawatts (MW) of new electricity built within the U.S., according to the EIA. To develop that electricity, the power plant uses a gas turbine to mix air and natural gas to cause combustion, thus creating gases that turn blades connected to a generator. This technology operates similarly to a jet engine on a Boeing 737 airplane. One of the main advantages of a simple-cycle gas plant is that it is easier to build, which makes it economical. However, compared to a combined-cycle power plant they are much less efficient in their electricity production.

Combined cycle

Combined-cycle plants are set up similarly to a simple cycle. However, the combined cycle adds a heat recovery steam generator (HRSG). The HRSG captures exhaust heat from the turbine that would otherwise escape through the exhaust stack. Thanks to the captured heat, the combined-cycle plant uses it to create steam to generate even more electricity. In 2023, combined-cycle plants added 7,376 MW of capacity. The efficiencies gained from this technology make it an attractive asset for electricity generation. One of the

downsides is the cost, complexity and build times compared to a simple-cycle plant.

Baseload versus peaking

A major competitive advantage of natural gas plants compared to all other generation assets is the flexibility to be a baseload asset or a peaking asset. Simply put, a baseload generation plant runs almost all day every day to generate the minimum electricity that is used by consumers each day. A peaking plant asset can ramp up production very quickly to meet spikes or surges in electricity demands, such as the evening rush, when most people get home from work and turn on ovens, dishwashers, air conditioners and washing machines/dryers.

You can think of peaking plants similarly to how you think of your car. You don’t leave your car running all night because you need it to be available to go to work the next morning. They are designed to start right up whenever you need to use them to get to your destination.

In the coming months, we will begin to wrap up our “all-the-above” series, focusing on all the generation plants and diving deeper into baseload versus intermediary versus peaking plants and why those differences matter.

Thank you

Thank you to those who have interacted with us throughout this series. Interacting with you, our member-owners, on your comments and questions is one of the more rewarding parts of the job. If there was a generation asset we didn’t cover that you would like to know more about, please let us know, and we will be happy to share more information with you.

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

FROM YOUR BOARD ROOM

During the August meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved work orders and special equipment capitalization of \$69,688.75
- Approved employee benefit plans for 2025
- Approved legal counsel retainer fee



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COMPASSION FLIGHTS: WHERE HOPE GROWS WINGS

Congratulations to Franklin REC's Shine the Light 2024 winner – Doug Pralle with Compassion Flights in Hampton. Compassion Flights received a combined total donation of \$4,000 from Franklin REC, the Iowa Association Electric Cooperative's Shine the Light contest and CoBank's Sharing Success program.

Founded by Pralle and his wife Robyn in 2017, Compassion Flights is a nonprofit organization providing free air transportation for Iowans traveling extreme distances for necessary medical treatment. Health care costs can be daunting, and hours on the road can be a burden. Pairing his aviation skills and passion to help others, Pralle created a beacon of hope for northern Iowa families. Many major medical facilities are an average of a 4-hour

drive, but Compassion Flights turns a half day of travel into two short flights. The short flight is a saving grace for those unable to stay seated for long periods.

Getting Compassion Flights off the ground and into the air, Pralle opened his heart and aircraft to assist with medical journeys for Iowa families, operating at no cost to the patient and family. His dedication to flights and generosity have infectiously spread into our community and throughout Iowa.

Today, Compassion Flights operates with a volunteer team filled with pilots, friends and others who come together to serve Iowans with free air travel for medical treatment. Pilots volunteer their skills and



Garrett Thompson, Franklin REC general manager/CEO (left) presents a check to Doug Pralle.

aircraft, while individuals volunteer their time to assist with logistics. It is an all-hands-on-deck team that collaborates to provide flawless, steadfast travel for passengers. Pralle stands by his principle of never charging a fee for services, and any donation toward Compassion Flights directly finances an individual's flight.

As Compassion Flights continues to grow, it stands as a shining example of how one person's idea, combined with community support and volunteerism, can create a powerful force for good.

EXPANSION OF LATIMER INDUSTRIAL PARK

In late August, Franklin REC, Franklin County Development Association (FCDA) and Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Corn Belt Power) closed loans with the Latimer Development Corporation (LDC) for the expansion of the Latimer Industrial Park. To assist LDC with purchasing land adjacent to the existing industrial park, Franklin REC and Corn Belt Power each closed initial Revolving Loan Funds for \$176,850, while FCDA closed on an initial loan for \$26,850.

The Latimer Industrial Park sits approximately 1 mile east of Interstate 35 on Highway 3. The City of Latimer, LDC, Franklin REC, FCDA and Corn Belt Power are partnering with a vision of economic and community growth within the community, county and region.

Pictured from left to right: Mark Johansen, mayor of Latimer; Doug Peters, Latimer Development Corporation president; Wayne Pralle, Latimer Development Corporation treasurer; Garrett Thompson, Franklin REC general manager/CEO; Brittany Dickey, Corn Belt Power Cooperative; Mary Amsbaugh, Franklin County Development Association executive director; and Stacy Cirks, Corn Belt Power Cooperative.



CELEBRATING CO-OP WORKIVERSARIES

This month, we celebrate the work anniversaries of two cooperative staff members.



General Manager/CEO **Garrett Thompson** marks four years with Franklin REC. His analytical

and member-oriented leadership has been pivotal in guiding our cooperative toward success and innovation.



Communications/Key Account Representative **Madison Alert** reaches five years of service with the cooperative.

GRIT AND DETERMINATION BRING AN IOWA CO-OP AND A COMMUNITY BACK FROM DISASTER

BY STEVEN JOHNSON

Sometimes the seventh cooperative principle of concern for community is more than an affirmation. It's a matter of life and death.

When a devastating EF-4 tornado swept through the tightly knit Iowa community of Greenfield on the afternoon of May 21, lineworkers and employees of Farmers Electric Cooperative left their secure, concrete-walled shelter about a mile away as soon as it was safe to do so.

As they entered Greenfield, population about 2,100, they shoved aside debris, pulled survivors from the rubble and tended to the wounded in a community that resembled a war zone.

"We talk about the cooperative principles and how we're like a family," says Holi Weston, CEO of Farmers Electric, whose family lost its century-old home to the tornado. "Tragedy just makes it real. I couldn't be prouder of this group."

The pain from one of the most violent tornadoes on record – peak internal winds topped 300 mph – is still being felt. It left five dead, destroyed or damaged more than 150 homes in Greenfield, ended the school year prematurely and rendered the city fire station and hospital unusable.

But Farmers Electric, with about 5,100 members spread across parts of six counties, is part of a community-wide effort bringing a new sense of normalcy to the spirited city.

"System-wise, we've had more damage from ice storms," says Dave Shike, a lifelong area resident and operations superintendent at Farmers Electric. "But that's a matter of going out and fixing things. The tornado had an impact beyond just the poles and the wires. You're talking about people's lives."



Silos remain twisted and torn and buildings remain damaged weeks after a tornado hit Greenfield. Support for the community has come from near and far. Photos: Steven Johnson



First rumblings

Tuesday, May 21, began with warnings of volatile weather in Adair County. Weston elected to keep her daughter Maddie, a high school junior and avid track competitor, at home, just in case. Schools released students early because of the tornado threat, the first time that longtime residents can recall such a precaution.

At Farmers Electric, which has 21 full-time employees, the co-op staff gathered as it does before any storm to monitor the potential course of severe weather and review plans for power restoration. Around 3:30 p.m., alarms went off on everyone's phones, a simultaneous cacophony of beeps and buzzes. According to

plan, the staff headed for the co-op "vault," the building's secure zone.

"We had a roll call list in the vault that we've never used before, but we did that day," says Weston, who has been at Farmers Electric since 2009 and CEO since December 2022. "You could just tell it was different."

Different indeed. The staff was in the vault for a couple of minutes at most, but in that time, Weston's husband messaged her that their street was gone. Lineworker Trey Eddy reached his wife, huddled with their two children in the basement of their damaged house. Their neighborhood was wiped out, she told him. Another call and Weston learned her father, Dennis Pickrell, was trapped with a fallen wall on his chest.

No one had time to think

Shike knew the tornado had wreaked havoc on the co-op system, but power restoration would have to wait. A group of lineworkers jumped into trucks and headed toward what was left of Southeast First and Second Streets, among them Eddy, also Weston’s neighbor. Weston followed them with Marisa Pickrell, Farmers Electric work order accountant and wife of a cousin of Weston.

“When we were driving for town, I don’t know that we were prepared for what the town was going to look like,” Pickrell shares. “We were running over stuff but at that point, we didn’t care. Let’s just get there. I just kept saying, ‘Oh, my God. Where is all this stuff from?’”

Gas was leaking from the hospital and homes. Residences were ripped from their foundations and scattered everywhere. The tornado had lifted Eddy’s car and hurled it 100 feet away. He and other lineworkers pulled Weston’s father from the caved cinder block wall to safety; he was treated for his injuries and said he could not have sustained his position much longer.

“Then the linemen just took off running,” Weston says. “At that point, they weren’t worried about outages. Our line superintendent wasn’t worried about outages. They were worried about the people, pulling people out of basements. One of our linemen took off his sweatshirt and used it as a tourniquet on a lady’s leg. They took doors and used them as gurneys. A new apprentice was sitting with a challenged adult, just sitting with him until he could get help for a head wound.”

She adds, “I don’t think anybody had time to think. It was just unbelievable.”

The recovery process begins

After about 90 minutes, Shike made the call – crews needed to get back into the field and restore power.

“It was just a mess. We were cutting our way through lines. We had 40 poles on the ground,” he says.

Mutual aid came from Clarke Electric Cooperative in Osceola as several lineworkers helped Farmers Electric clear debris and rebuild lines. A small municipal electric utility serves Greenfield, and Farmers Electric reached out to it with support and materials.

Shike says service was restored to members who could safely receive it on Friday, May 24.

“We left a lot of things on the ground to be cleaned up later,” he adds. “We’re still waiting on some members to decide whether they want to rebuild or go in another direction.”

Weston says power restoration had practical and psychological value. “It’s one thing to cross off the list. The power is on. Now we can start cleaning. Now we start cooking meals.”

Shike also gained a new neighbor, as Weston’s family took up residence in a cabin on his property for about two months. The north side of her house was destroyed, though her daughter’s track medals remained untouched on a desk. She and her family are in a rental home until they figure out their

next move. Pickrell and her family, including two daughters, have been living with a brother, while the Eddy family lives in an empty farmhouse owned by the uncle of an electric cooperative foreman.

Relief contributions have been flowing in to deal with an estimated \$30 million in repairs, and the hashtag #greenfieldstrong has been prominent on social media. In late July, the Register’s Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI), passed through Greenfield. Farmers Electric closed its office for the day to help with the event, with riders donating about \$10,000 to the Greenfield cause.

“It’s been the longest and shortest few months of my life,” Weston says. “I have always said that I am super thankful for this team we have. We’re a pretty close team, but after the tornado, seeing how everyone supported everyone else shows you that the co-op is a family in good times and bad.”

Steven Johnson is a contributing writer for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Family Dinner FAVORITES

ITALIAN CASSEROLE

- ½ pound ground pork
- ½ pound ground beef
- ⅓ cup onion, chopped
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- 1 can tomato soup
- ⅓ cup water
- 2 cups wide noodles, cooked
- ½ pound Velveeta cheese
- 4 ounces cheddar cheese, shredded (or more cheese if desired)

Brown pork, beef and onion together. Drain. Add seasonings to the mixture. In a large bowl, combine meat mixture with soup, water, noodles and Velveeta cheese. Place in a 9x12-inch casserole dish or a round casserole dish. Sprinkle shredded cheddar cheese around the edges of the casserole (or over the entire casserole). Bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes. You can also freeze prior to baking and bake later. Casserole is great served with bread sticks and a lettuce salad. *Serves 6*

Dianne Riley • Osceola
Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.

BBQ SANDWICHES

- 3 pounds hamburger
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 cup ketchup
- ¼ teaspoon chili powder
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- 3 teaspoons salt
- buns

Brown hamburger with onion, drain. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 20 minutes. Serve on buns. *Serves 30*

Bethany Van Wyhe • Lester
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

LOADED BAKED POTATO CASSEROLE

- 1 pound chicken breast, cubed
- 6-8 red-skinned potatoes, cubed
- ⅓ cup olive oil
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons hot sauce, plus more, if desired
- 2 cups cheese, shredded
- 1 cup bacon, crumbled
- 1 cup green onion, diced

Mix the first eight ingredients and bake at 400 degrees F for 55-60 minutes. Top with cheese, bacon and green onion for the last 5 minutes of baking. *Serves 8*

Nancy Hemann • Parkersburg
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative



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

CHEESY CHICKEN SPAGHETTI

- 16 ounces dry spaghetti, cooked
- 1 pound Velveeta cheese, cubed
- 2 cups chicken, cooked and chopped
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can RO-TEL tomatoes, undrained
- 1 can mushrooms, drained
- ½ cup water
- 1 small onion, diced
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Spray slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Combine all ingredients in slow cooker and stir to mix well. Cook on low for 2-3 hours. Stir before serving. *Serves 6-8*

**Arie Schiller • Donnellson
Access Energy Cooperative**

HEARTY HAM CASSEROLE

- 4 cups ham, cubed
- 2 cans corn, drained
- 4 cups potatoes, cooked and diced
- 2 tablespoons onion, chopped
- ½ cup butter
- ⅔ cup flour
- 3½ cups milk
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded

In a large bowl, combine ham, corn and potatoes, set aside. Sauté onion and butter for 2 minutes. Stir in flour and blend. Add milk and pepper, then bring mixture to boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Add to the ham mixture and stir. Transfer to a 9x13-inch baking dish. Cover and bake at 350 degrees F for 45 minutes. Uncover and sprinkle with cheese. Bake 5 to 10 minutes longer.

**Bonnie Boot • Pella
Pella Cooperative Electric Association**

BACHELOR'S PIE

- 2 pounds hamburger
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cans tomato soup
- 2 cans green beans or mixed vegetables, drained
- 6 cups mashed potatoes
- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Brown hamburger and onion in large skillet, drain. Combine with soup and green beans or mixed vegetables. Add salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a 9x13-inch baking pan. Spread mashed potatoes on top (like frosting a cake) and sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees F for about an hour or until cheese melts. *Serves 16*

**Joanne Fox • Sioux City
North West Rural Electric Cooperative**

DEVILED SWISS STEAK

- 1 3-pound beef round steak, 1-inch thick
- 2 teaspoons dry mustard
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 4-ounce can mushroom stems and pieces water
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

Cut meat in half for easier handling. Mix mustard, salt and pepper together, then sprinkle over meat. Pound seasonings into both sides of meat. In skillet, quickly brown meat on both sides in hot oil. Drain excess fat. Drain mushrooms, reserving liquid and setting mushrooms aside. Add water to liquid to make ½ cup. Add Worcestershire sauce, then pour liquid mixture over meat. Cover and simmer 1¼ to 1½ hours on low heat or until meat is tender. Add mushrooms and heat through. Transfer meat to platter and pour remaining liquid and mushrooms over meat. *Serves 8*

**Danice Zern • Conrad
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative**

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POWERING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THE PEOPLE OF LAS PEÑAS, GUATEMALA

BY ERIN CAMPBELL

Have you ever considered how different your life would be without daily access to electricity? Simple tasks like making coffee, taking a hot shower, washing clothes, refrigerating food, cooking meals or lighting a room would become nearly impossible without safe, reliable electric service.

Living without electricity was common in rural America before electric cooperatives were formed in the 1930s and 1940s, even though most people in cities and towns benefitted from the conveniences of power. Many of us are a generation or two removed from those times; however, 14 linemen from Iowa and Minnesota electric co-ops were able to experience the fulfillment of powering a brighter future for the rural village of Las Peñas, Guatemala, in June.

Through their respective statewide associations, several electric cooperatives from Iowa and

Minnesota teamed up for a rural electrification project through NRECA International, which is affiliated with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Since 1962, NRECA International has brought electricity to more than 220 million people throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Working in a mountainous terrain

The team's mission was to build primary and secondary electric distribution infrastructure and wire more than 30 homes in the village of Las Peñas, nestled in mountainous terrain at an elevation of 6,000 feet above sea level.

The daily journey from Jalapa, where the linemen stayed in a hotel, to Las

Peñas took over an hour by vehicle via primitive, narrow dirt roads and switchbacks. During the rainy season, the dirt roads quickly become washed out and impassable by vehicles. Near the end of the project, they had to hike the arduous final mile on foot every day.

Las Peñas is only about 15 miles from the bustling city of Jalapa as the crow flies, but lifestyles in these two locations are vastly different.

"Close your eyes for a moment and imagine you're at a campground with the smell of wood burning. Now add the smell of the livestock barns from the county fairgrounds and the smell of tortillas cooking – that's what it was like to be in Las Peñas,"



A villager checks out electrical equipment, which will power her home.



Linemen worked on steep areas to string wire and place power equipment.

Follow the linemen's journey on our public Facebook group: **2024 Powering a Brighter Future in Guatemala**

explains Scott Meinecke, director of safety and loss control for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, who traveled to the village near the completion of the project.

Electricity will allow girls to attend school

Most of the families of Las Peñas farm corn, coffee beans and other crops by hand and raise pigs and chickens. The women and girls stay close to home, cooking food and tending to household chores.

“Without electricity or reliable refrigeration, girls don’t have time to go to school; they are needed at home to help grind corn and cook every day. Bringing electricity to these rural villages is especially transformative for girls because they can now complete food prep chores on the weekends and store a week’s supply of food in a refrigerator, which means they can go to school and receive an education,” Meinecke says.

Building infrastructure by hand

Before the linemen arrived, no power lines were serving the village. Villagers helped the local municipal utility set poles for the team, and they got to work immediately stringing primary wire across 3.5 miles of distribution infrastructure. Without modern equipment like bucket trucks, all the work had to be completed by hand.

Mike Berkenpas of North West REC says many of the spans in the mountains were 1,000 feet or more between poles because of the unbelievably steep terrain. For context, spans between poles in Iowa are set to a standard of approximately 200 feet. Bailey Bautsch of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative was impressed with how the villagers helped the linemen pull up the wire and carried tools during the project.

The rain was challenging throughout the project, prompting the team to be thankful for the maintained roads back home.

“When it rains, you can’t get to the village without walking. The road is only built for tractors, horses and mules, and it was built 3 weeks before we got here,” explains Hunter Venz of Prairie Energy Cooperative.



Linemen from Iowa and Minnesota pose with Las Peñas villagers.

The following **Iowa electric cooperatives** and **linemen** participated in this year’s effort. Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative, **Jason Donnelly**; East-Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative, **Brian Reidy**; Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative, **Andy Koopmann**; Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, **Bailey Bautsch**; Midland Power Cooperative, **Tanner Dreier**; North West Rural Electric Cooperative, **Mike Berkenpas**; Prairie Energy Cooperative, **Hunter Venz**.

When the linemen finished wiring more than 30 homes for electricity, it was time to celebrate.

“June 18 was supposed to be the inauguration and lighting ceremony; however, we finished a few days early, so we loaded up water filters and the things we bought for the villagers to help make their lives easier. We met them about halfway down the mountain since driving on the road was still too dangerous. We had a small ceremony on the road and thanked them for all their help over the past days we were onsite,” shares Brian Reidy of East-Central Iowa REC.

“Their mayor gave a speech, thanking all who were involved in the long process to get power to the village over the past several years. We handed out the things we brought and said our goodbyes, loaded the remaining gear and headed back up and off the mountain for the last time. What a memorable and humbling experience – I’m not sure words could ever articulate what we experienced.”

Electricity is a doorway to opportunity

As the linemen shared photos of the project and the village, a young boy standing outside the doorway of his home as a lineman wires it for electricity is a metaphor for how electricity provides a doorway to new opportunities for the next generation.

Electrification transformed rural America over 80 years ago, and today, it’s happening in remote Guatemalan villages as they gain access to electricity. Electricity provides access to safer cooking and lighting, easier chores, safer food and water, higher-quality education, better healthcare and more. Participating in these international electrification projects connects us even more to our cooperative mission of powering lives and empowering communities.

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



A young boy stands outside as his home is wired for electricity.



Scan the QR code to watch the project video.

DEMONSTRATING ELECTRICAL SAFETY

In August, Franklin REC hosted multiple high-voltage demonstrations across our service territory. The traveling high-voltage trailer is a benefit provided by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. The trailer is shared between all Iowa rural electric cooperatives intended to educate the public on the dangers of electricity.



Partnering with Franklin County Emergency Management Services and the Franklin County Sheriff's Department, Franklin REC participated in National Night Out on Aug. 6 at Hampton-Dumont High School.

Franklin REC linemen Tom Demro and Austin Neff showcased the dangers of electricity, while Line Superintendent Scott Hagenson provided insights to attendees. Member Service Representative Chad Foster explained the protective gear and equipment linemen use on the job. Franklin REC office staff added to the event with a photo booth, education packets and information about the cooperative.

Following National Night Out, Franklin REC partnered with Corn Belt Power

Cooperative to host a high-voltage electrical safety demonstration for local first responders. The event sparked valuable discussions on safety and the proper procedures to follow when responding to electrical incidents. Linemen Cole Marzen, Trey Swaney and Nick Nelson conducted the demonstration, with Hagenson offering detailed explanations and scenarios. Nearly 40 participants from various agencies engaged in an open discussion about electrical hazards and safety protocols.

These training and educational opportunities allow Franklin REC to connect with the community and raise awareness about electrical safety.

SAVE THE DATE FOR LIGHT UP THE NIGHT 2024

Light Up the Night is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 30, in downtown Hampton. Enjoy a day full of family-friendly activities, a meet and greet with Santa and Mrs. Claus, a dazzling parade and lighting the park for the holiday season!

Thanks to the Fareway store in Hampton for assisting in this year's BBQ fundraiser and the Franklin County Cattlemen for grilling! The community came together to support a wonderful cause that lights up our town during the holiday season. More than \$1,200 was raised for this year's event.



Pictured from left to right: Walt Mason, Fareway meat manager; Garrett Thompson, Franklin REC CEO/general manager; and Rick Schall, Fareway grocery manager.

MAINTAIN CLEAR ACCESS TO FRANKLIN REC EQUIPMENT

Franklin REC reminds you to please keep a clear path to all Franklin REC equipment at your service location. Per Franklin REC's tariff, it is the duty of the member-owner to allow and maintain proper access to all Franklin REC equipment year-round. Obstructing the pathways to any pole or electrical equipment prevents our linemen from performing routine maintenance work necessary to ensure reliable service.

If your service location is impacted by a power outage and Franklin REC linemen are dispatched, Franklin REC may not be able to make the necessary repairs, until a pathway is clear and safe. Section 6.2.2 of the Franklin REC tariff provides that ***“Electric service may be disconnected for failure of the member-consumer to permit the Cooperative reasonable access to the Cooperative's equipment.”*** We would prefer not to have to exercise this right.

To ensure the safety of our linemen and provide you, our member, with the best service possible, Franklin REC respectfully requests that you remove any and all items attached to or located near any Franklin REC equipment installed on your property. If you have any questions about this request, please contact our office at 641-456-2557.



Franklin County houses the first power plant to generate electricity west of the Mississippi River. The REA Power Plant became operational in 1938 and provided electricity to rural areas.

POWERING LIVES, EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES: THE IMPACT OF IOWA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

One hundred years ago, before electric cooperatives existed, there was an electric divide in America. Nine out of 10 city and town dwellers had access to electricity in the 1920s, while nine out of 10 rural citizens were left in the dark.

Life on the farm was difficult without electricity; there was no indoor plumbing or reliable refrigeration. Cooking, lighting and heating homes without electricity was dangerous and inefficient. Household chores and farm work were laborious and time-consuming.

The investor-owned utilities at that time didn't see the return on investment to build out miles of power lines and infrastructure to only reach a few farms. But a bright light was coming.

Out of the darkness

President Franklin D. Roosevelt believed that if private enterprise could not supply electricity to the people,

then it was the duty of the government to do so. He created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in 1935 as part of the New Deal and the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, which provided official status to the REA as a lending agency to serve rural areas.

With federal financing ready, REA representatives traveled across the country to help rural citizens band together to form not-for-profit electric cooperatives to bring affordable, reliable electricity to their homesteads. By 1950, 80% of farms in America had access to electricity, and the percentage increased to 99% by 1960. Truth be told, nothing has improved the lives of rural Americans like electrification.

Iowa's electric cooperatives have a proud legacy that goes back generations. We have been owned by our members since the beginning, making us truly democratic organizations that are locally owned and governed.



SHOW YOU CARE WITH RECare

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

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



YES I care and want to contribute

- I will make a one-time contribution to Franklin REC's RECare. My check is enclosed.
- I will contribute \$_____ per month to Franklin REC's RECare program. I understand that this amount is automatically added to my monthly electric bill.

Name: _____

Account #: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip Code: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

LED LIGHTING PROGRAM

The days are getting shorter, but you don't have to be in the dark on long winter nights. Illuminate your property for only \$9.50 per month! By joining the program, Franklin REC will install a brand-new LED light and provide year-round maintenance. The location must be an overhead service.

If you are interested in the program, contact our office at 641-456-2557.

The \$9.50 monthly fee includes the light's kilowatt usage.

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DETAILS RELEASED FOR IOWA HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



The 2024-2025 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel and type of housing.

Besides meeting the income guidelines, you must furnish the Social Security numbers of all household members and a copy of recent heating and electric bills. You also must show proof of income for all household members age 18 and older. If you receive alimony or child support, it will need to be verified too.

If you're a wage earner, you should bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period before the date of application or a copy of your federal income tax return. If you're self-employed or a farmer, provide a copy of your most recent federal income tax return. And if you're on a fixed income – Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program (FIP), Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance and pensions – take copies of check stubs from the last 30 days. For FIP recipients, bring your current DHS

Notice of Decision or contact your local office for acceptable document information.

In Iowa, applications for the program will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis from Nov. 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025. The start date is Oct. 1, 2024, for elderly (60 and over) and/or disabled applicants. If you're not sure where to apply, visit hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/liheap. To contact your local community action agency, call 211 or write: LIHEAP, Iowa Department of Health & Human Services, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, IA 50319.

Income Maximums	
Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$30,120
2	\$40,880
3	\$51,640
4	\$62,400
5	\$73,160
6	\$83,920
7	\$94,680
8	\$105,440

Note: For households with more than eight members, add \$10,760 for each additional member.

COME BACK TO SILENCE

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

Here on the farm, harvest is one of the busiest times of the year. Days are short, to-do lists are long, and it's always a race against time and the weather to get the corn and soybeans in the bin.

Machines provide a constant soundtrack to all this activity. Everywhere you turn, the roar of combines, tractors, semi-trucks and grain dryers never wanes. As much as I love this exciting time of year, my thoughts turn to something I heard a speaker address this past summer.

That young man is a pastor and an avid outdoor enthusiast who cherishes his annual summer trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). Located in northern Minnesota, this massive area contains more than 1,200 miles of canoe routes, 12 hiking trails and 2,000 campsites.

"This wilderness offers freedom to those who wish to pursue an experience of expansive solitude," proclaims the U.S. Forest Service on its website.

Hmmmm, expansive solitude. What an intriguing concept.

The young man noted it's illegal to have a motor running in the BWCAW. What a stark contrast to daily life. Nearly everywhere you go, there's a motor running, from the car engine to the hum of the refrigerator or the whirl of a fan.

"For most of human history, people weren't overwhelmed with noise," the young man added. "Our souls aren't designed to be inundated with noise. We need to withdraw from the world periodically and seek more silence."

Turn down the volume

Consider the remarkable phenomenon that transforms people when they spend time in the BWCAW. The newbies seem agitated

for the first few days without all the electronic distractions that dominate modern life. After a couple of days, however, a "wilderness detox" kicks in.

The young man noted that his buddies who go with him to the BWCAW start enjoying life at a slower pace. It's not unusual to see them sitting by the campfire, just watching the flames, mindlessly poking the ashes with a stick. They are content.

"When we learn how to be quiet and listen, something deep inside us awakens," the young man said. "Our spirit is alert and paying attention."

The true power of silence emerges in the space it creates for reflection and understanding. Silence becomes a source of great strength.

Commit to listening

Silence can be uncomfortable, however, because we don't practice it.

Valuing silence also requires you to answer some key questions. Whose voice is the loudest in my life? What voices do I need to turn down? How can I listen for those gentle whispers that matter most?

It's possible to carve out silence, even in our chaotic, noisy world. The young man who savors the silence of the

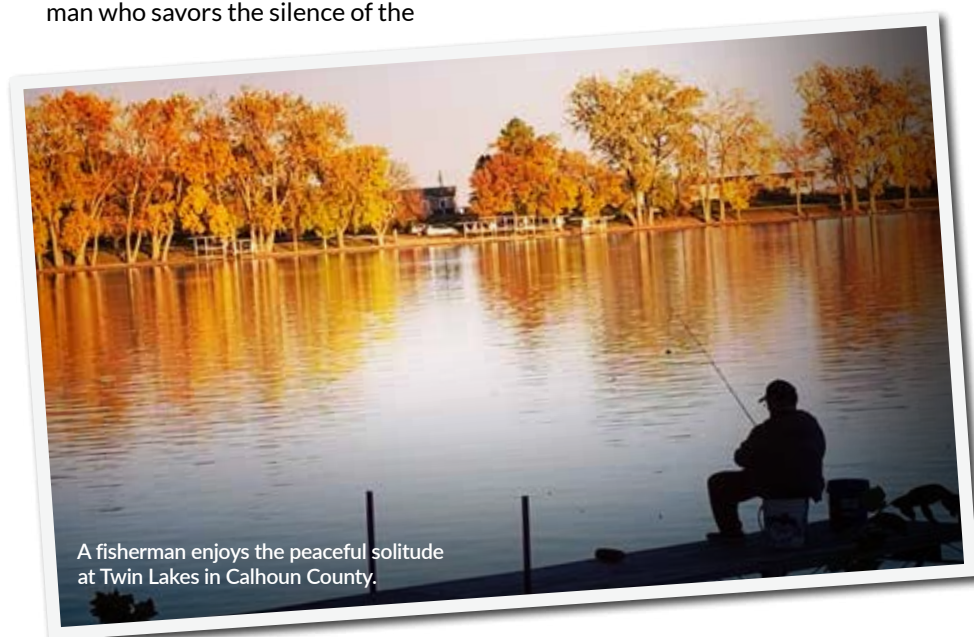
BWCAW urges us to accept one of these three challenges this week:

- 1 Enjoy silence next time you're traveling in your vehicle.** That means no music, phone calls, talk radio or podcasts.
- 2 Seek silence under the stars.** Go outside, and gaze at the night sky. Marvel at the beauty and grandeur of the heavens.
- 3 Carve out 5 minutes for silence each day.** Sit quietly in the morning before your day begins or take 5 minutes in the evening just to breathe, calm down and experience the silence. Set a timer on your phone so you don't have to watch the clock.

While these might seem challenging at first, pick one and give it a try. Once you do, seeking silence will become like water or air – essential to your very existence.

Silence allows us to channel our energies, provides the clarity we need to face challenges and calms our soul. That's a bountiful harvest indeed.

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



A fisherman enjoys the peaceful solitude at Twin Lakes in Calhoun County.



IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

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Iowa's electric
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Visit our website at www.franklinrec.coop

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