

in touch

WITH MEMBERS OF  FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Franklin REC open house held

Franklin REC employees and directors hosted an open house on Dec. 3 for members. Approximately 150 people enjoyed visiting with other members, as well as with your cooperative employees and directors. Those in attendance were gifted with either a stocking hat or headband.

During the meal, a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for our newest solar arrays. Members were then given the opportunity to visit one of the arrays and the REA Power Plant Museum. At both stops, guides were available to show members around, as well as answer questions.

Winners of the four drawings were: Instant Pot—Mel Koenigberg, air fryer—Scott Wosepka, Echo Show 8—Darwin Van Horn, and \$100 Fareway meat gift card—Giles Varrelman. Congratulations!

Franklin REC general manager Becky Bradburn commented, “It was great to see so many of our members and share a little of our past and our future with them!”

Thank you to all who attended! We hope you enjoyed the open house as much as we did.



Three 2020 DIY efficiency projects

A New Year brings new opportunities to save energy—and money. Let's take a look at three inexpensive efficiency upgrades that can help you save.

Trim dryer vent *Level of difficulty: easy. Supplies needed: tin snips, gloves, measuring tape, and masking tape. Estimated cost: about \$25.*

The vent hose should be long enough for you to pull the dryer out a couple feet from the wall, but the shape of the hose should form a line. If it doesn't, measure, mark, and trim the hose to the desired length, then reattach the hose to your dryer and exterior vent.

Seal air leaks *Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed: caulk and caulk gun, weather stripping, gloves, putty knife, paper towels. Estimated cost: \$25 to \$50.*

Sealing air leaks in your home can help you save 10 to 20 percent on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring, and plumbing to seal in conditioned air. You should also weather strip exterior doors.

Insulate attic stairs opening *Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed (if you build the box yourself): rigid foam board, faced blanket insulation, tape for foam board, measuring tape, utility knife, caulk and caulk gun, plywood. Estimated cost: \$50 to \$100.*

A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home. But even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the stair opening.

You can build an insulated cover box or purchase a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store for about \$60. If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions from the Department of Energy: <https://bit.ly/36YNCYQ>. If your attic opening is located in a garage that you do not heat and cool, this upgrade will not be as effective.

Saving energy doesn't have to be hard. With a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, be sure to contact us.



Make the most of your clothes dryer by ensuring an appropriate vent hose length. A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the efficiency of your dryer, dries clothing faster and reduces lint buildup.



Image by Jan Vašek from Pixabay

We want to hear from you

We live in a device-driven world, constantly bombarded with one-way communication. But is anyone listening?

At your cooperative, we are not only listening, we are eager to hear from you. Connecting with you helps us keep pace with your priorities and needs.

We exist to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy to you. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of our members. We hope you will consider us more than your energy provider, but also as a local business that supports and powers economic development and prosperity for your community.

From our annual meeting of the members to conducting surveys, we want to interact with you and hear your thoughts.

We are in the midst of significant changes, as technology and interest in renewables and a more balanced energy mix are impacting long-term planning. This is why it's so important that we hear from you and other community members as we plot our course.

We work to continually learn from our members about your priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community. But we can only improve, adapt, and effectively plan for the future if we have two-way communication.

Connect with us and let us know your perspective.

On average, how much will it cost to run two 1,500-watt space heaters this winter?

Number of Space Heaters

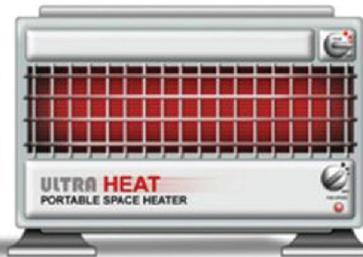


Hours per day



Cents Per kWh

\$0.110



Cost per month

\$79.20

Why is my power out?

We don't like it when the power goes out just as much as you don't like it. When there is an outage, we work hard to resume service as safely and quickly as possible.

Many times, the reasons for outages are beyond our control. Here are the main reasons the power goes out:

1. *Storms*—High winds, ice, and lightning can interrupt service. Lightning can strike trees and cause branches or even whole trees to fall on distribution lines. Lightning can also cause a problem if it strikes substation equipment, such as a large transformer.
2. *Trees and vegetation*—Branches, limbs, or trunks can fall on lines, and vegetation (such as vines) can grow around poles, lines, or other equipment. This is why we work so hard to keep power lines and equipment clear.
3. *Animals*—An estimated 11 percent of outages are caused by squirrels. They love to chew on the weatherproof coating around lines. Turkeys and snakes can interfere with service too.
4. *Accidents*—Cars, trucks, and farm equipment that have a run-in with a utility pole can cause an outage.
5. *Public damage*—Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism, or theft can cause interruptions.
6. *Overload*—This can happen when demand spikes, such as when too many air conditioners run on a hot summer day, causing blackouts or brownouts.
7. *Equipment*—We maintain and inspect all of our lines and equipment regularly; however, sometimes equipment malfunctions. We strive to address any problem as soon as it happens.

Please contact us with questions about outages or to learn more about the steps we take to provide reliable service. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Ice that accumulates on lines and strong, high winds can impact distribution.

LED holiday lighting rebate:
Up to \$2 per item. Contact us for details!



We have information about scholarship opportunities for those planning to attend college or technical school next year. **Contact us soon for details and deadlines!**

How warm should I keep my home?



If you have a gas or electric furnace and/or central air, you could save as much as 10 percent a year on heating and air conditioning by turning your thermostats back by 7 to 10 degrees.

The U.S. Department of Energy says lowering the heat in the winter for eight hours a day will do the trick. The same goes for raising the temperature a few degrees for eight hours on summer days.

If you turn the heat down a bit before bedtime, for example, you could see those savings. Then, turn it up to take the chill off when you get up and then back down just as everyone leaves the house for school and work in the morning.

Or as an alternative, you can invest in a programmable thermostat, which will automatically turn the heat up and down at the times you set. Then, you won't have to worry about forgetting to change the temperature several times a day.

2020 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 nomination 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.

Plan to join us April 7 for Franklin REC's annual meeting!

Rebate changes on the horizon

On April 1, 2020, we will be adjusting the following rebates:

- **Central Air:** < SEER 15 \$50/unit; > SEER 16 \$100/unit
- **Lighting:** We will no longer rebate CFL bulbs. We will rebate LED bulbs fixtures for retrofit only, not new homes or structures.
- **Water Heaters:** We will no longer rebate solar water heaters.

Remember that we have added an electric vehicle (EV) charger rebate and an additional \$100/ton to the air source rebate if you install automatic gas backup (subject to future load control).

Take a look at our website, franklinrec.coop, for more information or give us a call at 800-750-3557 or 641-456-2557.

SPARKS of news

Board room highlights

At their most recent meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved submitting \$174,091.78 of construction costs to RUS for reimbursement.
- Accepted the proposal from CliftonLarsenAllen to perform audit and tax services for the next three years.
- Amended the interest rate on electric deposits to 0% to reflect the current interest rate environment and decrease costs.
- Donated \$850 from Operation Round-up to Park Place to help with their operations.

Students: Remember these approaching deadlines

Youth Tour—High school sophomores and juniors: Apply to win a FREE week-long trip to Washington D.C., June 18-25, 2020. Application deadline is March 2, 2020. The quiz and interview will be March 11, 2020, at 2:00 p.m.

Scholarships—High school seniors: Don't miss the opportunity to be considered for the following:

- Three \$500 Franklin REC "Commitment to Community" scholarships. Deadline is March 16, 2020.* Recipients must attend Franklin REC's annual meeting April 7, 2020.
- Two \$1,000 Basin Scholarships. Deadline is February 17.*
- Four \$500 Corn Belt Power Cooperative scholarships to Northwest Iowa Community College for Electrical Technology, Powerline, or Powerline Technology programs. Deadline is March 2, 2020.
- One \$500 Corn Belt Power Scholarship to Iowa Lakes Community College for the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program. Deadline to apply is April 1, 2020.

**Applicant must be dependent of a Franklin REC member.*

For more information, visit franklinrec.coop or call us at 800-750-3557 or 641-456-2557.

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smart choices

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