



The room was occupied in this home on Linn County REC lines when the 2x4s flew into the house.



A roof torn from a barn on Maquoketa Valley REC lines.



Line workers restoring power for Maquoketa Valley REC members.

Franklin REC linemen help with derecho recovery

The derecho that blew through Iowa on Monday, August 10, was a hurricane on land. With wind speeds up to 140 mph, it would have registered as a category 4 hurricane, which has sustained winds of 130-156 mph.

The storm killed three people, and more than a half million people were without power immediately following, including more than 58,000 electric cooperative homes and businesses due to extensive damage to electric transmission and distribution systems throughout several counties.

Franklin REC had 27 members in the southern part of our system without power for about an hour and a half that day due to the storm. After our members' power was restored, three of our linemen were sent to help our cooperative neighbors.

Tom Demro, crew chief and first-class lineman, has been with Franklin REC since March of 2014. He traveled to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative in Anamosa from Tuesday,

August 11, through Friday, August 14, and then he was sent to Linn County REC, Marion, from Friday, August 14, through Wednesday, August 19. Joining Tom at Maquoketa Valley was Justin Wenzel, apprentice lineman, who has been with the cooperative since May of 2019. Shayler Beadle, also an apprentice lineman, joined Tom at Linn County REC. Shayler has been an REC employee since December of 2019. The men averaged 16-18 hour days during the massive restoration effort.

When commenting about the derecho's devastation, Demro said, "I will never forget looking at all the destruction and then seeing one barn with absolutely nothing wrong with it—right in the middle of it all!"

As part of our commitment to community and cooperation among cooperatives, it is important that we are there for others. As Wenzel stated, "It was great helping other communities and cooperatives."

During the 2007 ice storm neigh-

boring cooperatives helped Franklin REC restore power. As much as we don't like to think about a widespread outage in the future, it is a possibility that we may need assistance again. Demro said, "When it comes down to it, Iowans take care of each other."

The cooperative effort for storm mutual aid is coordinated by our statewide association, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. Almost 200 linemen with vehicles and equipment were deployed to assist the nine Iowa electric cooperatives affected by the derecho. "It was a great experience, and I learned a lot. It was interesting to see how different cooperatives work differently, even though we are building the same thing," said Beadle.

In the coming weeks, crews will be strengthening the repairs. This means there will be more utility workers and trucks on the side of the road. Please remember to move over and slow down so that everyone can go home safely to their families.



Manage your controlled burn

It's called a controlled burn for a reason. If you don't plan your controlled burn and keep it in check, it can quickly spread.

If you are considering implementing a controlled burn (also known as a prescribed fire) to address vegetation or weed management, be sure to follow several precautions to stay safe:

1. Plan your burn.
2. Check with your city hall; notify your local fire department; let your neighbors know your plans.
3. Obtain all necessary permits.
4. Check the weather conditions, such as wind direction, speed, and humidity (relative humidity should be 40 percent or higher).
5. Clear all vegetation and weeds at least four feet around the base of any nearby power poles.
6. Wet the base of poles with water before beginning your burn.

Proper planning can decrease the chances of burning a utility pole.

Fire damage to a power pole is usually evident by blackening and scorch marks, but even slight discoloration can cause serious problems. Sometimes the poles burn from the inside out, and the damage is not immediately apparent.

If you don't take the time to plan ahead, your controlled burn could get expensive. The person who causes damage to a utility pole is responsible for the fees associated with replacing it.

To inquire about controlled burns near power lines and poles, contact your electric cooperative.

FARM SAFETY

EQUIPMENT REACH

Make sure EVERYONE is trained on safe practices around electricity. Utilize these safety tips for you, your employees, seasonal workers, family members, and anyone else accessing your farm.

- Know the dimensions of any far-reaching equipment, such as chemical sprayers, tillage equipment, other extensions or augers.
- Machinery extension dimensions include length when extended horizontally and upright for transport.
- Always use the lowest (shortest) setting for extensions when moving loads.
- These power-line safety principles also apply to arms, booms, truck beds, ladders and other items or mechanisms that extend, lift, or are far reaching.

If your equipment does hit a power line, pole, or guy wire, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.



Safe
Electricity.org



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR HUNTERS

This hunting season, we encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and take necessary precautions while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.



Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.



Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.



Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.



Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.



Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.



Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazards to our line crews.

Make your voice heard

Did you know that if you don't vote, you're not only missing the opportunity to support a candidate that shares your views and concerns, but you're allowing others to chart a course that impacts your future? That's why we're encouraging all members to recognize National Voter Registration Day on September 22, 2020.

Your vision, your vote

All elections are critical. While a presidential election impacts our nation, local elections have a direct impact on your community and on your quality of life.

At every level, elections represent who we are as a community, and more importantly, where we want to go. Your vision for the community is tied to your vote.

This includes cooperative board elections. Your board members provide strategic guidance on the direction of the co-op and how it serves the community. Local board members embody the voice and identity of the community.

Staying in sync with the community

The co-op board's role is governance. While day-to-day decisions are made by our employees, bigger decisions are made by the board.

We depend on you and your neighbors to vote in board elections so that we can stay on course and ensure that we are in sync with the members that we serve.

A strong voter turnout shows investment in the community and ensures that a diverse number of views are represented. The whole community benefits when more people participate in the process.

The act of voting demonstrates your support for the community and helps officials chart a course for the future. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Research candidates, learn about issues that are on the ballot, and get out and vote! To learn more about National Voter Registration Day, visit nationalvoterregistrationday.org.



September 22, 2020

Converting your home to a smart one: Is it worth it?

A "smart home," or even a semi-smart one, can help make our chores less time consuming and more fun.

Smart houses boast a number of interconnected devices and home appliances, and performance is often more efficient than the owner-operated type. This can save money.

Smart home automation allows you to program a variety of items. If all your devices are interconnected, you can orchestrate them from one place, such as on your tablet or cell phone. And if you have voice-assisted technology, you can just use your words.

There are ways to increase a home's "smartness." Examples include installing smart thermostats; gadgets that track energy use such as individual smart plugs or whole-house monitoring trackers; and smart lighting that includes motion sensors, many with phone app controls.

Smart appliances and devices can save money because in many cases they allow you to use less energy. They're also convenient, fun to use, and can give you peace of mind. In short, some may be worth it in the long run.



Options for converting

- **Smart thermostats** usually cost in the \$200 to \$300 range. With an estimated energy cost savings of around 10 percent, this smart device could pay for itself in just a year or two.
- **Smart plugs** allow you to plug in an appliance and track its energy use. They cost around \$30 to \$50 and let you remotely control an appliance or gadget.
- **Smart lighting** allows you to take advantage of higher tech motion sensors and dimmers, which means using less energy to light your home.
- **Smart bulbs** help save money because they are internet-capable LED bulbs, allowing lighting to be controlled remotely. This enables you to turn them off from your phone, if you are away and realize they are on.

How to save money in the laundry room

What appliances in your home use the most energy? The hot water heater is the appliance that costs the most to run. Right behind it is the washer and dryer's combined energy use. (Although not considered appliances by many, heating/cooling tops the list, followed by the hot water heater.)

A dryer requires more energy to run than a washer, but there are ways to reduce your washing costs, too. To save money in your laundry room, consider these tips:

- When using your washing machine, select the right amount of water for the load. Or wait until you have full loads.
- Use cold water to save the money you spend heating water.
- Use dryer balls, which help separate clothes and get more air to them, cutting drying time.
- Use lower settings when you use the dryer. Even if your dryer runs longer, you'll use less energy and be less likely to over-dry your clothes.
- Clean the lint out of your dryer between loads and scrub the filter once a month to remove buildup.
- Put like items together because lighter-weight clothes take less time to dry.
- Use the moisture sensor on your dryer, if it is equipped with this option.
- Consider wearing clothes more than once between laundering them.
- When purchasing a dryer, consider an Energy Star version, which uses 20 percent less energy than a conventional model.
- Energy Star-certified washers use about 25 percent less energy and 33 percent less water than regular clothes washers.
- Thoroughly clean your dryer's vents and duct system at least twice a year.

To learn more about how much you are spending to run your washer and dryer each year, refer to energy.gov's appliance energy use calculator at energy.gov/energysaver/maps/appliance-energy-calculator.



Source: [Energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)

About 90% of the energy used by washing machines goes to heating the water.

Save on energy costs by using cold or warm water.



The cooperative advantage

- Electric co-ops are **community-focused organizations** that deliver safe, reliable, and affordable energy.
- Our electric co-op is unique because we **belong to the communities we serve**. The co-op is **led by its members**, which gives us an understanding of the needs of our communities.
- We answer to local members (that's you!) rather than far-away shareholders, so we're **able to respond quickly to the changing needs of our community**.
- We share excess revenue with our members through patronage refunds because we're **not-for-profit**.
- Even though we're locally owned and operated, we **cooperate with other electric cooperatives** across the country to develop new technologies, invest in equipment and infrastructure that benefit multiple co-ops in a region, and assist with major outages.

*Our electric co-op was built by the community, belongs to the community, and continues to be led by the community—
that's the cooperative difference!*

SPARKS of news

Board room highlights

At their most recent meeting, Franklin REC directors discussed:

- Mailing a letter to update members about the annual meeting.
- The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' District 6 meeting.
- Rural high-speed broadband.
- The search for a new general manager.
- The Payroll Protection Plan.
- COVID-19 precautions.



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