

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF

FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

May 2021



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## A successful 2021 annual meeting

A part of what made this year's annual meeting such a success was the record number of ballots we received. The voting process is extremely important because it helps us adhere to one of our seven cooperative principals, "Democratic Member Control." Since Franklin REC is controlled by you, you help us set policies and make decisions by electing representatives to work on your behalf.

Through this election process our members elected a new director in 2021, Matt Roelfs. Matt replaces Marvin Janssen who, after 50 years of service, decided to retire from the board. Marvin did a lot for this cooperative to advance us to our currently strong position. We wish nothing but the best for Marvin and his upcoming retirement. Thank you for everything you have done over those 50 years Marvin!

Matt Roelfs currently lives near Ackley and began his own business, Iowa Steel Masters, in 2014. Matt is also actively involved in his church, as well as the Ackley Development Commission. The Franklin board and staff look forward to working with, and getting to

know, Matt at our meetings.

I also want to thank Brenton Schwab for running on this year's ballot. He ran a very respectable race and came just shy of the needed votes to be on the board. I would encourage him, as well as other members, to consider running for the 2022 board seat(s). If you love to be intellectually challenged, have fun, and collaborate with peers from the area, as well as the entire state, this position is for you.

We appreciate all those who participated in our 2021 annual meeting whether that was by driving thru, mailing your ballot back, or both! If you have any ideas for next year's annual meeting, please do not hesitate to reach out to your director, myself, or an REC employee. The annual meeting is for our members, and we want you to get the most out of it. If you have ideas for future annual meetings, as well, please let us know.

Thank you again Franklin REC members for a successful annual meeting. We look forward to another year of serving you!

A WORD FROM



**Garrett Thompson**  
Chief Executive Officer

Due to the current pandemic, the Franklin REC board of directors made the tough decision to forgo a traditional in-person annual meeting for the safety of all involved. However, given that the 2020 annual meeting was canceled due to COVID-19, the board and staff wanted the face-to-face interaction with our members. This paved the way for the innovative idea of a drive-thru annual meeting in 2021. On April 6, Franklin REC hosted its first ever drive-thru annual meeting, and you helped make it a great success!



## Board serves breakfast to employees

To show their appreciation, the Franklin REC board of directors served breakfast to the employees on Lineworker Appreciation Day, Monday, April 12.

# Improving your yard? Know what's above and below

When the temperature warms to signal the arrival of spring, many of us begin planning improvements to our outdoor spaces. This could include building a deck, adding a patio, or assembling play equipment. Remember to plan for safety prior to adding an outdoor structure or improving your yard.

Being aware of power line locations near your home is important for you and your family's safety. Always look up and around for power lines, recognizing too that electricity can jump or transfer even without direct contact. Also know what's below before starting any digging job.

Your Touchstone Energy cooperative and Safe Electricity offer these tips to keep in mind while working in your yard:

- Assume that all power lines are always energized and keep at least 10 feet between a power line and you or any item you are holding.
- Perform a hazard assessment of the work area, noting all power line locations.
- Call 8-1-1 to mark underground utilities before digging. The service is free.
- Utility locators do not mark private lines, however. Private lines need to be marked by an independent locating service.
- Once underground utilities are marked, the 8-1-1 "Call Before You Dig" service recommends that the area within 18 to 24 inches of either side of the marked lines be dug by hand with a fiberglass-handled shovel, not by machine.
- Do not install structures within 25 feet of a power line. Consider the height and reach of all structures in relation to the lines.
- Educate your children about power line safety and how electricity can jump. Teach them to never touch a power line or get too close to one — either directly or with a toy or object.
- Use extreme caution when moving ladders and operating long-handled tools, such as pool skimmers, around trees and power lines.
- Also use extreme caution and look up and around for power lines when you are elevated, whether it be on a ladder, a boom lift, scaffolding, or your roof.
- Keep in mind that specialized tree trimming experts certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in utility clearance are the only persons legally allowed to trim within 10 feet of power lines.

Please contact us with questions about specific power line clearance recommendations concerning decks, pools and play structures in your yard. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



**You can't AVOID  
what you CAN'T SEE**

Starting a job — big or small — without first getting utilities marked could result in serious injury, service disruptions for you and your neighbors, and a hefty fine.

**Call 8-1-1 before you dig.**

Learn more at: **Safe  
Electricity.org®**

**Memorial Day  
Monday, May 31**

**Our offices are closed  
on Monday, May 31, in  
observance of Memorial  
Day.**

**As always, our phones are  
answered 24/7 for outages  
and emergencies.**

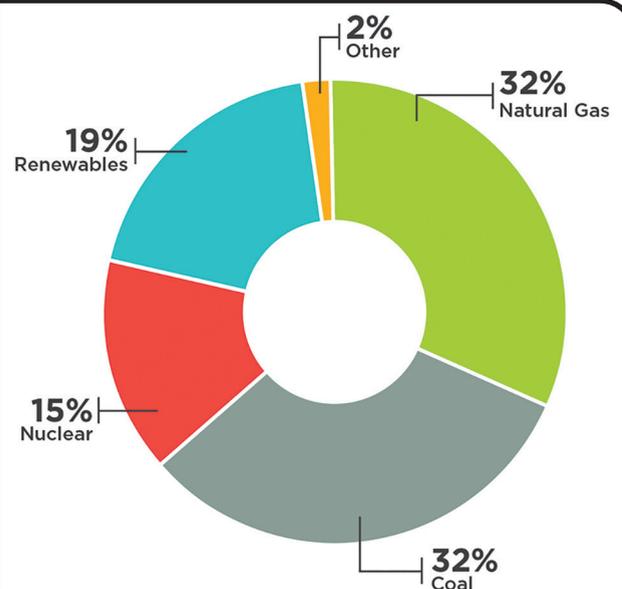


## Co-op Energy Sources

Nationally, electric cooperatives use a variety of fuels to power consumer-members' homes and businesses.

This diverse fuel mix supplies co-op members with the safe, reliable and affordable power they depend on.

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (2019 data)



# Shining the Light on community volunteers in June



Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Iowa's electric co-ops are launching a new contest in June to celebrate local volunteers. The Shine the Light contest, sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, will accept nominations and select three winners who will each receive a \$1,500 donation to their local charity or nonprofit.

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers during the month of June. We encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

The three winners will be announced during the Iowa State Fair in August. In addition to the \$1,500 donation, each winner will be featured in the September issue of Living with Energy in Iowa magazine.

Go to [www.IowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.IowaShineTheLight.com) to review the contest rules. Contest entries will be accepted at this website starting on June 1. Help us shine the light on community volunteers this summer and consider making a nomination.



**Nominate a local volunteer  
and they could win  
\$1,500 for their charity!**

Contest entries accepted during June at  
[IowaShineTheLight.com](http://IowaShineTheLight.com)

## Too much screen time? Try blue-light glasses

If you're spending too much time watching TV, scrolling through social media posts, or playing video games, your eyes may be paying the price.

Computer, TV, and phone screens emit blue light, part of the visible light spectrum with the shortest wavelengths and the highest energy. We sit so close to our screens, that blue light can penetrate our eyes.

Too much exposure to blue light can increase the risk of macular degeneration, an eye disease that can lead to permanent vision loss. The more screen time you log, the greater your risk.

One remedy: blue-light canceling glasses. The lenses filter out blue light.

Computer glasses, on the other hand, reduce eye strain while using digital devices.

Both models are sold with prescription or non-prescription lenses.

**Your Touchstone Energy cooperative encourages you to MOVE OVER AND SLOW DOWN when you approach a vehicle with flashers on.**

**Let's make sure everyone arrives safely!**



**MOVE OVER  
SLOW DOWN**

## COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Effective May 22, 1991, the Iowa Utilities Board passed a ruling requiring all non-rate regulated utilities to post the following notice to its memberships: If a member-consumer has a question or concern regarding his/her electric service, please write or call your local electric cooperative at the following address or phone number:

**Butler County REC**  
521 N. Main Street, PO Box 98  
Allison, IA 50602-0098  
(319) 267-2726  
[www.butlerrec.coop](http://www.butlerrec.coop)

**Franklin REC**  
1560 Highway 65, PO Box 437  
Hampton, IA 50441-0437  
(641) 456-2557  
[www.franklinrec.coop](http://www.franklinrec.coop)

**Prairie Energy Cooperative**  
2099 Highway 3 West, PO Box 353  
Clarion, IA 50525-0353  
(515) 532-2805  
[www.prairieenergy.coop](http://www.prairieenergy.coop)

If your complaint is related to your cooperative's service rather than its rates, and your cooperative does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board by calling 515-725-7321 or toll-free 1-877-565-4450; by writing to 1375 E. Court Avenue, Room 69, Des Moines, IA 50319-0069; or by email to [customer@iub.iowa.gov](mailto:customer@iub.iowa.gov).



Marvin Janssen, director, retired after 50 years of REC service.



Gordon Greimann, board president, and Garrett Thompson, CEO, greeted members as they arrived.



Don Greimann, director, and Brenda DeYoungue, member relations/billing representative, speak with members during the drive-thru annual meeting.

## Drive-thru annual meeting held

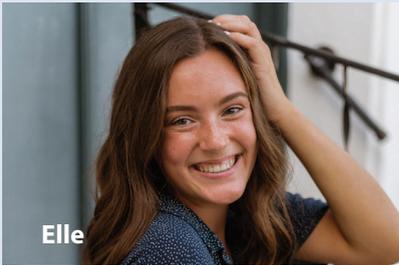
Tuesday, April 6, Franklin REC members participated in the drive-thru annual meeting. We received 267 ballots, with voters receiving a \$20 bill credit. Matt Roelfs was elected to replace the retiring Marvin Janssen in District 1.



## Ringleb awarded Basin Power scholarship

Courtney Ringleb, a senior at Hampton-Dumont High School, has been awarded a \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative member cooperative employee scholarship (for dependents of cooperative employees).

Ringleb will be attending North Iowa Area Community College, Mason City, in the fall and majoring in nursing. Her parents are Harold and Karen Ringleb, Hampton. Karen is the Franklin REC chief financial officer.



Elle



Jenny



Benjamin

## Commitment to Community scholarships awarded

Three \$500 "Commitment to Community" scholarships were awarded by Franklin REC to:

- Elle Westhoff – daughter of Randy & Taunya Westhoff – Hampton-Dumont High School
- Jenny Wibholm – daughter of John & Holly Wibholm – Iowa Falls-Alden High School
- Benjamin Sauke – son of Chris & Amy Sauke – Hampton-Dumont High School

These students showed commitment to their community by volunteering in organizations or events in their communities and at their churches, among other activities involving their time and talents.

Scholarship information is available in October of each year on our website, in our office, and through area high school guidance counselors. Applicant's parents/guardians must be members of Franklin REC.

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**smart choices**

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Visit us online at [www.franklinrec.coop](http://www.franklinrec.coop)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.