



CLARKE REC Headlines

The official publication of Clarke Electric Cooperative



SAFETY DRIVEN | ENERGY SMART | COMMUNITY INVESTED Volume No. 80 No. 4 | April 2020

Happy Easter

The Clarke Electric Cooperative office will be closed Friday, April 10 for Good Friday. We wish all our members a safe and happy Easter holiday.



Energy Efficiency



Tip of the Month

This spring, consider using a rain barrel to save energy. Rain barrels capture rainwater from a roof that can be used later for watering your lawn, garden or indoor plants. Using them helps reduce the energy and chemicals needed to treat tap water. They're economical, too, with DIY kits starting at around \$50. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, rain barrels can save about 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months.



Looking Out for You: February Outages

- Equipment/maintenance failure: 5
- Animal/bird: 2
- Maintenance: 2
- Customer caused: 1
- Motor vehicle: 1



CLARKE
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Safety Driven • Energy Smart • Community Invested
Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

P.O. Box 161 1103 N. Main
Osceola, IA 50213-0161
www.cecnet.net

When the lights go out, so do we. National Lineworker Appreciation Day April 13



CLARKE ELECTRIC IS PROUD TO HONOR THE LINEMEN WHO MAINTAIN 1,800 miles of power lines in our service territory. We invite all co-op members to take a moment and thank a lineman for the important work they do. On April 13, you can use #ThankALineworker on social media to show your support for the brave men and women who power our lives.



The Cooperative Difference: Working for You Through Thick and Thin

A S I SIT HERE WORKING FROM home writing this column to you about the COVID-19 pandemic, I am amazed how quickly things can change. Even the extensive planning that we do at Clarke Electric each year has been put to the flexibility test in recent weeks as we ensure we have the resources to keep the power flowing to our member-consumers when they need it most.

and months. The cooperative is adept at preparing for many types of emergencies – from tornadoes, bombs, fires, and ice storms to, well, even pandemics such as the one we are now facing.



DAVE OPIE
General Manager

For instance, our current construction work plan has now shifted to the pandemic business continuity plan as we try to anticipate the needs of our member-consumers over the coming weeks

Part of this plan required making some tough decisions. After careful consideration, **we decided to shut the office lobby doors on March 18, restricting traffic in and out of the office.** All employees

continued on pg. 2

Reading pays! We have hidden two of our members' account numbers in this issue. If you find your member location number, call during April to have \$10 deducted from your monthly energy account.

Working for You...from pg. 1

who are able to work remotely were sent home. We now maintain a calendar of who will be in the office on certain dates and **we are promoting social distancing and personal sanitation while they are working.** Our linemen are working individually, going directly from home to job site. Each lineman has a work list of non-safety sensitive functions they can work on that will continue to promote reliability on the system. Keeping our linemen working on an individual rotation will reduce their risk of contracting the virus from a work environment and ensure they are ready to work as the storm season approaches.



Billing Specialist Kim Griffin is one of the friendly voices you'll hear when you call the co-op office.

What does that mean for you? Other than not being able to walk into our office, you will find that we are still available to answer your phone calls. You can still pay your bill by dropping it into the box outside our building, calling our **Veri-phone** number to make a payment, or logging on to our **SmartHub** app. SmartHub is also where you can go to report an outage, review your energy use, look at current and past bills and more. You can sign up to receive an email or text alert when your bill is ready or when power is restored, if you experienced a power outage. I encourage all our members to sign up for the app. You can use it with an iPhone or Android. Situations like these remind us how important it is to take advantage of this worthwhile technology.

We have decided for the near future that **we will stop non-essential functions such as**



meeting in person with our field staking engineer, Nick Gannon. If you are planning to build a new service or upgrade a current service, call Nick and he will be happy to visit with you on the phone. 52-09-05-02

Another important decision we made was to **suspend disconnect fees and late fees until the end of May.** We know the COVID-19 situation is placing a financial burden on many families we serve, and this is one way we are able to help. If you find yourself struggling to pay your electric bill, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss payment options. By doing so, you can avoid receiving a larger than expected bill once the moratorium ends May 30.

With everything that is going on, the cooperative **launched our first Facebook page March 19** as an additional communication tool. We hope this helps our members stay connected to us during this difficult time. A reminder, though, that the Facebook page is not the place to report an outage and you should continue to contact the cooperative by phone to report an outage or downed power lines. As always, a phone call is also the best way to reach our member services staff if you have questions about your electric service.

When a crisis occurs is when electric cooperatives shine. We are known for pooling our resources, sharing solutions and helping one another. I want to reassure you that as COVID-19 impacts more areas, we will continue to work with local, state and federal agencies to coordinate responses. **We will do everything we can to keep our members, employees and communities as safe as possible.**

What we do know in the foreseeable future, is that Clarke Electric Cooperative will continue to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric power to all of you, our

member-consumers. While we cannot predict all the changes that will occur and affect every one of us, we do know we are prepared and will act with the best information we have available to keep the power flowing to your home, businesses and communities. We are here to serve you!



You Know He's a Lineman

by David Opie

*You know he's a lineman when you shake his hand
From years of working out on the land
A grip built from stringing wire over long spans
You know he's a lineman when you shake his hand*

*You know he's a lineman when you see his smile
He builds and repairs line mile after mile
But he can be ornery every once in a while
You know he's a lineman when you see his smile*

*You know he's a lineman when you look in his eyes
He never backs down and always gives his best try
He doesn't look away and he never lies
You know he's a lineman when you look in his eyes*

*You know he's a lineman by the way he talks
He'll tell you the honest truth and never balks
He doesn't have to raise his voice to get his point across
You know he's a lineman by the way he walks*

*You know he's a lineman by the way he lives
Hard work and long hours is what he gives
Yet he still makes time for his kids
You know he's a lineman by the way he lives*

You know he's a lineman when you shake his hand



Community Invested: Show Your Care with RECare

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC HAS left many of our member-consumers wondering how they're going to pay their winter heating bills. Now more than ever, Clarke Electric encourages members to help their neighbors and community by participating in RECare.

A one-time or monthly contribution to the RECare program can help offset high bills for those who need it. RECare funds can also be used to weatherize the recipient's home and help make electricity usage more efficient. Your donation is directed to local community action agencies for distribution to low-income families near you.

Consider contributing to RECare and help your neighbors and your community with high heating expenses. It's an easy way to show you care!

Member Authorization Form

Yes, I want to be a part of members helping members through the RECare program.

Enclosed is a check with a one-time donation.

I would like to make a monthly donation of \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

*Mail to: RECare, c/o Clarke Electric Cooperative,
P.O. Box 161, Osceola, Iowa 50213*

Pandemic Prompts Retirement Open House Cancellation



THE OPEN HOUSE EVENT TO celebrate the retirement of longtime Clarke Electric employee **Roger Phillips** scheduled for April 1 was cancelled in the wake of the spreading coronavirus within Iowa.

The cooperative sincerely apologizes to our member-consumers who did not have the opportunity to say goodbye to Roger in person. We felt it was in everyone's best interest to limit exposure and possible transmission of the coronavirus. We wish Roger well in his retirement and thank him for 35 years of dedicated service.

+ Safety Driven: April is Safe Digging Month

DID YOU KNOW THAT EVERY NINE MINUTES AN UNDERGROUND UTILITY IS damaged because someone didn't call 8-1-1 before digging? More than expensive damage to buried utility lines, digging without knowing where lines are located can result in injuries or even death.

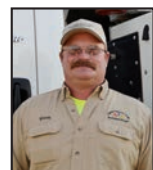
Follow these steps before digging:

1. Notify your local one-call center (8-1-1) or make an online request at www.call811.com.
2. Wait at least two business days for utility operators to respond to your request.
3. Confirm that the utility operators have responded to your request by comparing the markers to the list of utilities (electric, water, gas) the one-call center notified.
4. Respect the flag markers that serve as your guide throughout your project and are valid for 20 calendar days from the date the notice is made.
5. Dig carefully! Avoid digging near the flags (within 18" to 24" on all sides). If that's not possible, consider moving your project to another part of your yard.



PLEASE JOIN CLARKE

Electric in extending congratulations to Journeyman Lineman **Doug Reasoner** who will step into the serviceman position.



Doug Reasoner

Doug's been with the cooperative for more than 17 years. He will perform meter connects and disconnects along with substation inspections and some meter inspections.



Save the Date: Annual Meeting Sept. 14

A **COOPERATIVE FUNCTIONS** most effectively with strong leadership. Your board of directors is democratically elected from the membership to represent your interests and to provide long-term vision and direction.

Mark your calendar to attend your cooperative's annual meeting September 14 at the Clarke County Event Center. Board directors serve three-year terms and represent all cooperative members at monthly meetings. Three seats will be up for election in districts 1, 3 and 7.

In May, a nominating committee from those districts will be selected to nominate members to run for the seats.

For a district map, visit www.cecnet.net. If you are interested in serving on the nominating committee contact the office at (641) 342-2173.



Annual Pole Testing Program Key to Reliability

CLARKE ELECTRIC LINEMEN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF GOOD WEATHER IN FEBRUARY TO replace some of the cooperative's aged poles. The poles were identified by our contractor, Osmose Utility Services, following routine, annual tests. Poles found to have less than 67 percent of their original strength are tagged and scheduled for replacement by CEC. This particular pole replacement was done with the line de-energized, which is not generally the case. We were able to de-energize the line by using a tie line to back feed power to members and bypass this line while the replacement was made.



Sign Up for Automatic Bill Pay

E NJOY THE EASY, RELIABLE, AND secure way of using Clarke Electric's Automatic Payment Plan (ACH). Having your payment deducted automatically from your checking/savings account or a credit/debit card can save you time and money. 29-33-01-04

This service is FREE to our members. To sign-up visit us online at www.cecnet.net and click on SmartHub or call us!



Heat and cool your home efficiently.

You can sit back and relax because an electric heat pump is the most energy-efficient home cooling and heating option available today – and can reduce your energy consumption and utility bills during even the warmest months of the year. **Visit our website to learn more about going electric – and find rebates on new equipment.**



800-362-2154 cecnet.net



CLARKE
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

PO Box 161, 1103 N Main, Osceola, IA 50213-0161

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

David Opie, General Manager
Office Hours: Mon - Fri 7:30 am - 4 pm
Outside Depository Available 24 Hours
641.342.2173 | 800.362.2154

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

www.cecnet.net

Board of Directors
Randy Barnard, New Virginia
Larry Jackson, Clio
Larry Keller, Osceola
Kyle Kelso, Weldon
Cody Miller, Thayer
Randy Rouse, Corydon
Ed White, Osceola
Bill Willis, New Virginia
Lydda Youmans, Indianola