



CLARKE REC Headlines

The official publication of Clarke Electric Cooperative



SAFETY DRIVEN | ENERGY SMART | COMMUNITY INVESTED **Volume No. 81 No.3 | March 2021**



Office Closed

The Clarke Electric office will be closed Friday, April 2 for Good Friday. We wish all members a safe and healthy holiday weekend!

Energy Efficiency



Tip of the Month

Don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends a temperature of 35-38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for the freezer. Make sure the refrigerator doors are sealed airtight to maximize efficiency.
Source: www.energy.gov

Looking Out for You: January Outages

- Equipment failure – 4
- Construction – 1
- Unknown – 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

Community Invested: 2021 Scholarship Opportunity

WHEN CLARKE ELECTRIC developed its updated mission statement a few years ago, it was a thoughtful process to include the things that are most important to us. The third part of the new mission statement, "Safety Driven, Energy Smart, Community Invested," reflects our strong feelings about supporting the communities in which we live and work.

That's why when the NRECA Youth Tour was cancelled for the second year due to the pandemic, we felt it was important to find a way to continue to contribute to invest in our youth. We did a little brainstorming and felt that allocating those dollars to a scholarship program was a good fit.

The cooperative will award \$10,000 in scholarships in 2021. High school seniors whose parents are co-op members and reside within Clarke Electric Cooperative's service territory may apply. These

scholarships can be used for college or vocational-technical schools. If you know of someone who meets these qualifications, reach out to me or the cooperative to find out more about the new program.



JASON GIBBS

Please attach a copy of your transcript to the scholarship application and a short essay on why electric cooperatives are important to you. Applications must be submitted to Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 161, Osceola, IA 50213, by close of business, April 1. Scholarships will be released to the student following the completion of his/her first semester.

Visit www.cecnet.net to find more information or send me an email at jsgibbs@cecnet.net. We look forward to supporting our youth in 2021!



WHAT: Youth scholarship
WHEN: Deadline April 1, 2021
WHO: High school seniors
WHERE: Must reside in CEC territory
HOW MUCH: \$10,000 in awards

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

Don't Let Your February Electric Bill Leave You



BY THE TIME YOU RECEIVE YOUR electric bill in March, you've probably already long forgotten about the extreme cold weather our area experienced in mid-February. Days of subzero temperatures for many meant running the heat almost non-stop. 3-27-12-00

If you notice your bill is higher than usual this month, it's because when the weather is cold, your energy consumption increases. It takes more energy to keep your home warm. If you have windows or doors that don't have a good seal, it can contribute to cold air invading your space, causing your furnace to run more often.

Perhaps you have an outside water heater or maybe an engine warmer or a space heater plugged in. You might be staying home more and cooking or baking more often. While the list of energy users and energy wasters is long, we can remind you of ways to reduce your energy consumption. Make sure you use energy efficient appliances, unplug things that are not in use, install a programmable thermostat or use smart technology to reduce your energy use. If you have questions and are interested in ways to save, you can check out our new website at www.cecnet.net.

You can also log into the SmartHub portal to see which days were the highest usage days. If these high usage days happened on days the outside temperature were low, it may indicate the cold temperatures is what drove up your bill higher than usual.

SmartHub mobile app

Don't forget we offer quick and easy access

to your account information with our SmartHub mobile app or online account.

Visit the app store for IOS users or the Google Play store for Android users or visit www.smarthubapp.com to download the SmartHub app. Once downloaded, you can search by cooperative name or by location to locate your electric provider (Clarke Electric Cooperative, Osceola, IA). If you are a current e-bill user, you can access your account information by logging in with your current username and password. If you are a new user, click new user to set up a new account, then click register. You will need your billing account number, your last name and an email address to register.

You will need to answer a security question and confirm zip code. A temporary password will be emailed to you. Enter the temporary password at login and then you can change the password to one you want. Then, start the app.

With SmartHub, you can:

- Check kWh usage (for the week, year or previous year);
- See current and past bills;
- View the outage map;
- Contact Clarke Electric Cooperative;
- Pay your bill;
- Report an outage;
- Update your contact information; and
- Access several other reports and features.



+ Safety Driven: *Speaker Opportunity*

CLARKE ELECTRIC IS ALWAYS looking for ways to help our neighbors be aware of the dangers of electricity and how to stay safe when around electricity.

If you have a civic organization or even a group of friends looking for a guest speaker, contact us for more information. Our staff is happy to develop a program or topic that suits your needs. We are also happy to meet with your group virtually if needed.

Electrical safety doesn't discriminate based on age; anyone can be affected by the dangers of electricity no matter how old you are. As we enter the spring and summer storm season, Clarke Electric can provide your group with tips on how to prepare for power outages, how to report outages, and what to do when power lines are down, as well as other common everyday electricity safety tips for the home.

Contact Jason Gibbs at the cooperative, (641) 342-2173. The price is right: FREE!



**Unplug gadgets
and appliances
that consume
energy even when
they're not in use.**

Behind on Your Electric Bill? Contact Clarke Electric Before the Winter Moratorium Ends April 1

IF YOUR ACCOUNT IS PAST DUE, and you have not made payment arrangements by April 1, you will be subject to disconnection of your electric service. To avoid disconnection, you must pay your electric bill in full by April 1 or request a reasonable payment arrangement for your past due account(s). On and after April 1, we are not required to post a 48-hour disconnection notice on your premises. Call our office today to make arrangements or to request information at (641) 342-2173 or (800) 362-2154.

Payment Plans: Those who have fallen behind on their accounts may be eligible to enter into a reasonable payment agreement with Clarke Electric to pay the accumulated debt over time and keep your power connected. If you are past due on your account, contact Kim or Cori at the cooperative to discuss payment plan terms.

Budget Billing: For member-consumers with tight budgets, seasonally high electric bills can cause financial difficulties. Clarke Electric's budget billing payment option makes it easier to budget and anticipate. To enroll, contact the cooperative to discuss whether budget billing is right for you.

State of Iowa Resources: We also encourage anyone who has fallen behind on payments to contact the Iowa Bureau of Energy Assistance at (515) 281-0859 or their local community action agency regarding eligibility for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is designed to assist low-income families meet the cost of home heating for electric or natural gas service. Applications are accepted at your local community action agency and may provide a one-time per year payment to assist with heating costs for eligible households.



KIM GRIFFIN, Billing Specialist & CORI SMITH, Customer Service/Cashier

We are happy to work with you to make sure your account is current to avoid any interruption in service. If your account is past due and you have not made a payment arrangement, please call us before April 1 at (641) 342-2173 or (800) 362-2154.

Extreme Weather Leads to Unprecedented Measures to Protect Electric Grid



ERIN CAMPBELL
Iowa Association
of Electric
Cooperatives

EVEN THOUGH the word "unprecedented" has been used often over the past 12 months, there really is no other way to describe what happened in the electric industry last month. 40-35-03-01

On Feb. 15 and 16, utilities across the Midwest, including several local electric cooperatives in western and north-central Iowa, implemented load control measures and temporary power disruptions to reduce electric demand on the grid. These highly unusual control measures were needed to prevent a catastrophic system-wide blackout. Electric demand reached historic highs due to electric heat use during record-breaking arctic weather that lingered over a large portion of the country. To put it simply, there was not enough

available generation/supply to meet this exceptionally high electric use.

Many electric utilities across the country are members of regional transmission organizations (RTOs) and independent system operators (ISOs), also referred to as power pools. These federally regulated entities work on a regional scale to coordinate, control and monitor supply and demand on the electric grid. RTOs do not own the power grid, but they do work as "air-traffic controllers" of the grid to ensure reliable supplies of power, adequate transmission infrastructure and competitive wholesale electricity prices on behalf of their member utilities.

Clarke Electric was not affected by these outages because its power provider, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), is part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). However, issues arose within the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which serves member utilities throughout 14 states, including several electric



cooperatives in the north and northwestern portions of the state.

These local distribution cooperatives, served by Corn Belt Power Cooperative, L&O Power Cooperative and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO), needed

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The Cooperative Difference: Youmans Earns National Recognition as Co-op Director

BOARD TREASURER LYDDA YOUMANS recently earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director designation from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). The program consists of five courses that focus on basic governance knowledge and the essential skills of cooperative directors and prepares directors to fulfill their fiduciary duty as elected officials serving on behalf of their membership.



Your cooperative encourages our directors to take education and training courses to become knowledgeable on cooperative issues. We think an informed and educated board is a more effective and successful board. Lydda took advantage of virtual classes offered through the NRECA and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) in order to earn the designation.

Congratulations Lydda!

Keeping Up with You is Important to Us

HAS YOUR CONTACT information changed lately? It's important for Clarke Electric to be aware of any changes to our member-consumers' phone number, email address or physical location. We use the information to help identify your location during outage events, to send important cooperative information and return your capital credits.

Take a moment to call us at (800) 362-2154 or email us at clarke@cecnet.net to update your information. You can also log in to the SmartHub app and update your contact information. Thank you!



Campbell...continued from pg. 3

to shed specific amounts of electric load at particular times to maintain a safe and functional electric grid under unprecedented Energy Emergency Alert (EEA) orders. The SPP-related outages that affected some lowans were part of a larger electric demand management effort that impacted several states in the Midwest.

To comply with EEA orders, some local electric cooperative substations were taken offline for about an hour at a time on average. Unfortunately, these outages occurred with almost no advanced warning as SPP manages electric supply and demand minute-by-minute in real time. Local electric distribution cooperatives had just minutes to initiate substation outages and they worked to avoid interrupting service to critical facilities.

These load control measures were unprecedented in our region, stemming from historically frigid weather impacting a vast portion of the country over a prolonged period. While extremely rare,

this is another example of how your local electric co-op works to protect the electric grid.

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

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME REMINDER

Don't forget to spring forward on March 14! Set your clocks forward by one hour.



CLARKE
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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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.

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