



Volume 84, No. 4 | April 2024

# HEADLINES

SAFETY DRIVEN | ENERGY SMART | COMMUNITY INVESTED

## The Rewards of Good Spring Weather

As the vibrant hues of spring begin to flourish, so too does the need for proactive construction and maintenance programs within our electric cooperative. With the change in seasons comes a unique set of challenges and opportunities to uphold the reliability of our electrical infrastructure and ensure uninterrupted service for our members.

Spring means sudden temperature fluctuations and unpredictable storms. These conditions can pose significant challenges to our electrical grid, potentially leading to outages and disruptions. Our infrastructure must be resilient enough to withstand whatever nature throws our way.

At Clarke Electric, we understand the critical importance of proactive programs for both construction and maintenance, especially as we transition into spring. These programs are designed to identify and address potential vulnerabilities in our infrastructure before they escalate into larger problems. By staying ahead of the curve, we can minimize the risk of outages and ensure reliable electricity for our members.

The early arrival of warm weather this year meant we could begin our construction and maintenance programs



**DAVE OPIE**  
General Manager

*continued on page 2*

## THANK YOU LINEMEN!

National Lineworker Appreciation Day  
Thursday, April 18, 2024



**YOU ARE  
THE  
POWER  
BEHIND  
OUR  
POWER**

Front row, from left:  
**Doug Reasoner**, lineman  
**Cory Dommer**, construction foreman  
**Hunter Koehn**, lineman  
Back row, from left:  
**Chad McIntosh**, mgr. of operations  
**Rob McCoy**, maintenance foreman  
**Eric Page**, lineman  
**Zach Stewart**, lineman  
**Jarad Taylor**, lineman  
**Greg Kindred**, warehouseman  
**Max Hunter**, lineman  
*Not pictured: Chris Oberbroeckling*



**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.

# Opie: Clearing the Way for Reliability...from pg. 1

sooner than anticipated. Our team has been out inspecting our power lines for any signs of wear and tear caused by winter weather or aging infrastructure. Any weaknesses or potential hazards were identified and placed on a schedule to prevent failures during spring storms.

As this time of year is also the start of the growing season, we are keeping an eye on vegetation growth, which can invade upon power lines and cause outages. Our vegetation management program ensures that trees and foliage near our infrastructure are trimmed and maintained to minimize this risk.

We have 11 substations that are in rotation to be groomed to reduce the growth and keep the right-of-way free from underbrush and trees.

We continuously invest in upgrading and modernizing

our equipment to enhance reliability and efficiency. This includes replacing aging components, adopting smart grid technologies, and implementing advanced solutions to better resist the challenges of spring weather.

As your electric cooperative, we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing reliable electricity to our members, rain or shine. Our dedicated team works tirelessly behind the scenes to implement robust construction and maintenance programs that safeguard our infrastructure and keep the lights on for our members.

As we welcome the arrival of spring, rest assured that we are prepared to face whatever challenges come our way. Together, we will continue to build a brighter, more resilient future for our members.

Thank you for your continued support.

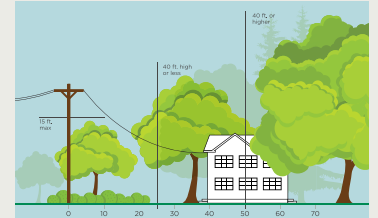
## 3 Ways to Help Limit Tree Trimming

Did you know Clarke Electric Cooperative is required to trim trees and other types of vegetation that grow too close to overhead power lines?

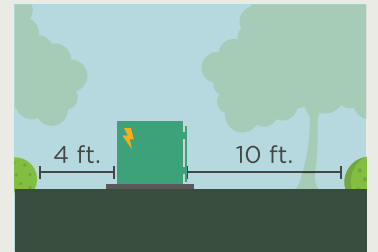
Keeping power lines clear of overgrown vegetation in the utility's right-of-way improves service reliability, helps keep our linemen and your family safe from fallen power lines, and helps keep costs down as preventative maintenance.

If you're planning to plant a tree or other landscaping this spring, make sure you follow these three steps to help our cooperative keep our communities beautiful!

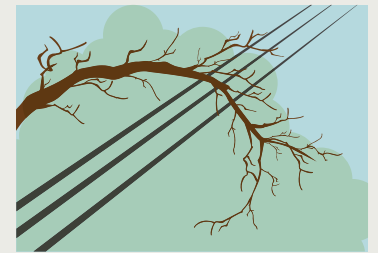
**1. Plant trees in the right place.** Trees that will be <40 ft. should be planted at least 25 ft. away from power lines (>40ft. should be at least 50 ft. away).



**2. Don't block pad-mounted transformers.** Plant shrubs at least 10 ft. away from transformer doors and 4 ft. from each side.



**3. Report dangerous branches.** If you spot a tree or branch that is dangerously close to power lines, please let us know.



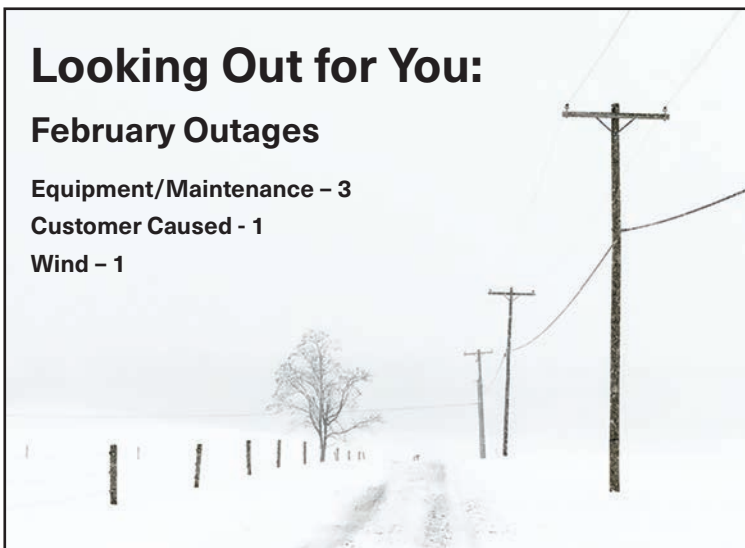
### Looking Out for You:

#### February Outages

Equipment/Maintenance – 3

Customer Caused - 1

Wind – 1



## CLARKE ELECTRIC

SUMMER LOBBY HOURS IN EFFECT  
MAY 6 - AUG. 22

MONDAY	7:00 - 4:00
TUESDAY	7:00 - 4:00
WEDNESDAY	7:00 - 4:00
THURSDAY	7:00 - 4:00
FRIDAY	CLOSED
SATURDAY	CLOSED
SUNDAY	CLOSED

Phones will be answered  
Mon-Thurs 6 AM - 4 PM  
Fri 7:30 AM - 4 PM

# New Billing Features

We are always looking for better ways to be more efficient and give our members options that work with their lifestyle.

We work with our software system vendor to look at updates and options that are being developed to help us with this mission. We attend annual training to learn to use the new options, but it takes time to integrate changes.

Recently, we were able to transition some of our tasks into Messenger, a program that integrates our billing, customer service and SmartHub features.

With Messenger we are able to call, text and email past due notices. Since many of our members no longer have landlines, it has been increasingly difficult to reach

our members or leave a message. Messenger helps us keep contact information current.

Also, a new feature we are able to incorporate with our “new bill” notice for our paperless members is the addition of a link to our newsletter within the notice. We have many members who like the paperless features and opt to receive an email and text when their new bill is ready for viewing. 20-01-01-02

As we move forward with training, we will continue looking for better ways to serve you.

Thank you for your support!



**KIM GRIFFIN**  
Billing Specialist



## 2024 REC Day on the Hill

Representatives from Iowa's rural electric cooperatives convened at the State Capitol March 12 to advocate for power reliability and other important during the annual REC Day on the Hill event.

“Our annual advocacy day at the capitol is a powerful opportunity to meet face-to-face with our state legislators and share a local perspective on issues that impact rural Iowans and rural economic development,” said Chuck Soderberg, executive vice president and general manager for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC).

Advocates asked elected officials to ensure reliable electric service for Iowans by supporting an “all-of-the-above” electric generation strategy. Also related to reliability, advocates talked with their legislators about Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs) and the potential pitfalls of requiring Iowa utilities to file IRPs as part of contested case proceedings before the Iowa Utilities Board.

Additionally, co-op representatives discussed the issue of “right of first refusal” which allows incumbent, established utilities to have the first option to construct, maintain and operate electric transmission projects.

During the advocacy event, representatives educated legislators on the benefits of the not-for-profit cooperative business model, which includes local ownership, democratic governance and cost-based rates. Several electric cooperatives displayed booths in the rotunda which provided information on topics including economic development, digital metering advancements, investments in technology, safety innovations, energy efficiency efforts and vegetation management work.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

A well-designed landscape can add beauty to your home and reduce home heating and cooling costs. Plant deciduous trees to the south of your home to block sunlight in the summer and reduce the need for air conditioning. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the winter, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs to block winter winds. Dense evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and northwest can help lower energy used for home heating.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU? @ [cecnet.net](http://cecnet.net)



Statewide  
outage map



Leased Light  
Program



SmartHUB



Rebates &  
Online Forms



Operation  
Round-UP



Call Before  
You Dig



Email  
newsletters



RECare

# April is National Safe Digging Month



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.

## Don't Be a Scam Victim

We hear the story all too often: seniors are being targeted by scammers who threaten to shut off their electricity due to nonpayment.

This particularly vulnerable population, many of whom live on a fixed income, are more likely to be tracking their expenses closely. So when scammers call, their fear tactics and threats can be very convincing, even if it doesn't seem quite right.

Clarke Electric will never threaten to disconnect your electric service. We will make several attempts to receive payment, and provide plenty of notice if disconnection is imminent. In most cases, we can work with you on a payment arrangement that suits your budget, as long as you communicate with us.

There are many safe ways you can pay your electric bill:

1. Call us at (844) 241-0266.
2. Visit [www.cecnet.net](http://www.cecnet.net) and click on "Pay Now" to be directed to a secure payment portal.

3. Sign up for automatic monthly payments.

4. Mail your payment (allow 10 days for delivery).

5. Pay in person at our Osceola office. 42-01-01-02

6. Stop by and drop your payment in our outdoor 24/7 drop box.

7. Use budget billing.

Remember, never provide your social security number, credit card number or banking information to *anyone who has called you.*

If you feel you have been contacted by a scammer, please report the incident to your local police department.

Finally, call Clarke Electric if you have any questions regarding your bill. We are here to help keep you - and your money - safe!



**JASON GIBBS**  
Manager Member Services

## Considering Solar? Call Us First

As solar gains popularity, we want to be sure you understand how a solar interconnection with our system can impact your current account and billing rate. Call us at (800) 362-2154 to discuss your options before investing in solar.



**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  
(641) 342-2173 | (800) 362-2154  
[cecnet.net](http://cecnet.net)

### OFFICE HOURS

Mon.-Fri.: 7:30 AM - 4 PM

### Summer Hours (May 6-August 22)

Mon.-Thurs. 7 AM-4 PM, closed Friday

Phones answered Mon.-Thurs. 6 AM-4 PM and Fri. 7:30 AM-4 PM

Outside depository available 24/7

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:** Ed White  
**Vice President:** Randy Rouse  
**Secretary:** Marni Kelso  
**Treasurer:** Lydda Youmans  
**Asst. Sec./Treasurer:** Randy Barnard

**Directors**  
Larry Keller  
Cody Miller  
Zach Robinson  
Natalie Rydl

### GENERAL MANAGER

David Opie

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*