CLARKE
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Safety Driven • Energy Smart • Community Invested
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

2026 HAPPY NEW YEAR

Volume 86, No. 1 | January 2026

HEADLINES

SAFETY DRIVEN | ENERGY SMART | COMMUNITY INVESTED

Cooperative Board Approves 2026 Operations Budget

SAM WALKUP
CFO

Each new year begins with a carefully crafted budget to help us serve our members with reliable, affordable energy. We build this budget with thoughtful attention to past performance, future projections and, most importantly, the needs of the people who rely on us.

A major part of our budgeting process is determining the cost of purchased power, our largest expense. We meet regularly with our power provider, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), to understand and plan for your energy needs over the coming year. To do this, we examine a 10-year forecast, review the previous year's electricity demand and analyze ongoing usage trends to ensure we can provide safe, dependable power.

We also take a careful look at our system and the infrastructure that keeps your lights on: the poles, wires, substation, technology and other utility essentials that serve you. We assess what needs to be replaced or upgraded and estimate the time and materials required for any new services.

Our fleet and capital purchasing programs help us responsibly manage large-scale equipment over its full life cycle so we can maintain what we have and replace items when needed.

2026 Budget Projections

- Revenue: $16.6M
- Cost of Power: $7.9M
- Operating & Maintenance: $3.4M
- Sales: 115.9M kWh
- Equipment/fleet replacement: $246,000

2026 Planned Projects

- New services: $197,500
- Loop upgrades: $70,000
- Pole replacements: $633,100
- Underground Residential Distribution cable/8A replacement: $200,000
- Voltage regulators: $50,000
- Tap phase conversion (2.8 miles): $200,000
- Substation transformer: $460,000
- ROW clearing: $483,000
- Osceola 3-phase rebuild (1.9 miles): $266,000
- Medora 3-phase rebuild (3.4 miles): $425,000

We review the performance and value of our contractor partners each year to make sure we're getting the best service for your cooperative. Sometimes it's more cost-effective to use a contractor

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

Apply Now for Youth Tour!

Area high school sophomores and juniors are invited to apply for an opportunity to earn an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. courtesy of Clarke Electric!

Each year, the co-op sponsors one local high school student to attend the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in our nation's capital. This isn't just a trip; it's a chance for students to step into history, discover their voice and begin shaping the legacy they'll leave behind. 6-09-12-56

The selected student will join a group of more than 30 students representing co-ops from across Iowa, and more than 1,800 students from across the country June 14-20. Together, they'll explore historic monuments and museums, meet with elected officials, and, most importantly, develop leadership skills, strengthen their resumes and form lasting connections with other young leaders from across America.

The selected student will be asked to speak about their experience at the Clarke Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting in September. Application dates and details can be found at www.cecnet.net. If you have any questions, please contact Cori Smith at csmith@cecnet.net or (800) 362-2154.

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, March 2: Youth Tour application deadline

Friday, March 13: Essay deadline

Wednesday, April 1: Youth Tour judging at the Clarke Electric office, 4:30 p.m.

June 14-20: Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, Sept. 15: Clarke Electric Annual Meeting

Looking Out for You: November Outages

Equipment failure: 5
Animal/bird: 2
Customer Caused: 1
Maintenance :1
Motor Vehicle:1
Trees:1
Undetermined: 1

Member Services Manager Jason Gibbs, left, presents Russell FD Fire Chief Brian Beaty and Lt. Trevor Steinhausen with a $4,000 donation.

Russell Fire Department Receives CEC Donation

Thanks to our members who contribute to the Operation Round Up fund, the Russell Fire Department will be able to purchase a vital piece of firefighting equipment.

Clarke Electric recently presented a $4,000 check to Russell Fire Department representatives to assist in the purchase and installation of a large volume deck gun. The equipment will provide excellent control, a range of motion and cover a long distance for water during an active fire. The deck gun will be installed on a new pumper truck that was acquired in 2024 with fundraising dollars.

The Russell Volunteer Fire Department consists of 30 dedicated volunteers covering over 110 square miles and protecting nearly 1,500 residents with fire and medical services. They respond to structure fires, grass fires, vehicle fires, car accidents, and medical emergencies, handling about 90 calls annually.

Beyond their own territory, they provide mutual aid to Chariton, Williamson, Corydon, Melrose, and both Lucas and Wayne County ambulance services. All members are CPR and Firefighter 1 certified, with some also paramedic certified.

We salute the commitment and hard work these individuals demonstrate to keep us all safe!

Considering Solar? Call Us First

Before installing solar, learn how interconnection may affect your service and billing rate. Call us at (800)362-2154 to discuss your options.

Working Together to Lower Demand

DAVE OPIE
General Manager

Brrr...!! That's what most of us say when the temperatures drop and we seek a warm refuge inside our homes this time of year. Shorter, colder days drive us inside where we rely on our heating systems, lights and everyday appliances to run our homes.

Often, many of us are using power around the same time – early mornings and early evenings – putting a strain on our electric grid.

At Clarke Electric, we work closely with Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), our wholesale power provider, to plan ahead for these seasonal changes. Together, we take a thoughtful, long-range approach to make sure you have reliable power every day of the year. These efforts include resource planning, power supply forecasting, and system maintenance that help keep energy flowing even during Iowa's toughest weather. But it's also important to remember that we're part of a much larger regional and national grid.

Across the country, winter can put additional strain on that bigger system. When homes and businesses everywhere are using more electricity at once, total demand can sometimes push close to— or on rare occasions beyond—available supply. 41-28-01-00

Severe weather, sudden cold snaps, or equipment issues can add to the challenge. In the uncommon event that demand threatens to exceed supply, the regional grid operator may call for temporary, controlled outages (often called rolling blackouts) to protect the stability of the system. When this happens, Clarke Electric calls upon its largest load members to curtail power use.

To help prevent these situations, our co-op and CIPCO work year-round to safeguard grid reliability. We conduct routine maintenance, invest in modern equipment, and plan and prepare for emergencies to help strengthen our local system. But reliability is a shared responsibility, and our members play an important part, too.

By making a few small adjustments during times of high electricity use, especially on the coldest winter days, you can help reduce demand and support the reliability of the grid we all depend on.

SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN HELP LOWER DEMAND

- Lower your thermostat a few degrees during peak hours (typically 6–9 a.m. and 4–9 p.m.).
- Delay running major appliances—such as dishwashers, laundry machines, and electric ovens—until mid-day or later in the evening.
- Turn off unused lights and electronics.
- Use space heaters sparingly, and only in occupied rooms.
- Close curtains or blinds at night to help retain heat, and open them during the day to let in natural warmth.
- Check your furnace filter monthly and replace dirty filters for more efficient air flow.
- Seal drafts around windows and doors to help keep warm air inside and reduce furnace run time.

These small steps may seem simple, but when our entire community works together, they truly make a difference. Thank you for helping Clarke Electric keep our system reliable—and for being a valued part of our cooperative family.

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Beware of "winter bill relief" energy scams.

Scammers often exploit high winter bills by offering fake discount or relief programs to unsuspecting consumers. They may ask for upfront payments or personal details to lower your rate.

Legitimate utilities never demand gift cards, wire transfers or payment through apps like PayPal or Venmo. Always verify offers directly by calling your utility's phone number located on your energy bill—do not call any phone numbers provided in a suspicious email or text.

Remember to take time to confirm before you pay; real savings programs won't pressure you for immediate action.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU? @ cecnet.net

Statewide outage map

Leased Light Program

SmartHUB

Rebates & Online Forms

Operation Round-UP

Call Before You Dig

Email newsletters

RECare

SAFETY DRIVEN

Master the Art of Safely Walking on Ice

Sidewalks and driveways can be particularly prone to melting and re-freezing snow and ice, and that can cause you to slip and fall if you're not careful. There are several things you can do to reduce the risk of falling when slippery conditions exist:

- Wear boots with grip soles. Traction cleats that fit over your shoes will help you walk with confidence on slippery surfaces.
- When getting out of your vehicle, look down. If there's ice you might want to park in a different place.
- Step, don't jump, from vehicles and equipment.
- Walk like a penguin with short, shuffling steps on ice.
- Don't carry or swing heavy loads that could cause you to lose your balance.
- Place your full attention on walking.

If you're about to fall:

- **Roll with it.** Bend your elbows and knees and try to take the hit on the fleshiest parts of your body, while protecting your head.
- **Relax** as much as possible when you begin to fall.
- **Toss the load** you're carrying. Protect yourself first!

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

Winter weather can cause your home heating system to work overtime. Check for air leaks and drafts around doors and windows, then seal them with weatherstripping or caulk. Close fireplace dampers when not in use, and consider installing insulating curtains to help keep warm air inside. You can also save energy by lowering your thermostat a few degrees.

Budget...from pg. 1

for certain tasks while our lineworkers focus on other important work.

Department heads also weigh in to ensure their needs are responsibly included. Communications and Member Services review newsletter and website costs, printed materials, and social media tools. Costs to improve our billing technology make certain that meter readings are user-friendly and efficient.

We place a strong emphasis on educational opportunities for both our employees and board members. As technology evolves, ongoing training guarantees our team remains competent and well-prepared to serve you.

Just like any household budget, we must be sure our revenue supports our expenses and loan payments, and that our numbers meet loan covenant guidelines. Each month, the board reviews our financials, which outlines revenues and costs to confirm we're aligned with our budget. If we drift from expectations, it is my responsibility to identify the reason and communicate openly about what's causing the difference.

Thank you for placing your trust in us. We are honored to serve you, and we remain committed to managing your cooperative with integrity, care, and dedication.

Tune into the monthly newsletter, Facebook, Instagram pages and website for periodic updates and milestones.

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OFFICE HOURS
Mon.-Fri.: 7:30 AM - 4 PM | Outside depository available 24/7

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Ed White
Vice President: Randy Rouse
Secretary: Cody Miller
Treasurer: Lydda Youmans
Asst. Sec./Treasurer: Randy Barnard

Directors
Liz Beck
Larry Keller
Zach Robinson
Natalie Rydl

GENERAL MANAGER
David Opie

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.