

● MARCH 2025

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING



**Are you ready to serve?**

**Electric co-ops bring unique  
value to their communities**

**Seafood recipes**

**Apply for the Energy Trail Tour ▶ See Page 13**

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## ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Rene Carson, a Consumers Energy member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to [editor@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:editor@ieclmagazine.com). You could receive \$100!



# ENERGY ISSUES AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BY HALEY MOON



Energy policy remains a top priority for Iowa lawmakers in the current state legislative session. Since the 91st General Assembly began on Jan. 13, legislative leaders

and Gov. Reynolds have emphasized key issues that could impact how electricity reaches Iowans in their homes and businesses. As always, Iowa's electric cooperatives are actively engaged in these discussions to ensure the voices of co-op member-consumers are heard and that the best interests of rural Iowa are considered.

The following are key legislative issues under discussion and their potential impact on your local electric cooperative:

## Service territory protections

Protecting the state's defined electric service areas remains the top priority for Iowa's electric cooperatives. This law, established nearly 50 years ago, is essential for cooperatives to invest in local economic development, maintain affordable rates and ensure reliable service. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives remains vigilant in safeguarding these protections from legislative proposals that could undermine them. Learn more at [www.ProtectRuralIowa.com](http://www.ProtectRuralIowa.com).

## Third-party solar developments

Proposals in the legislature aim to establish third-party community solar programs in Iowa. These arrangements are different from the community solar programs available from some Iowa electric co-ops. You may have received information at your home or heard of neighbors being approached about subscribing to or leasing land for non co-op community solar projects.

While electric cooperatives support a diverse energy generation mix, there are concerns that these entities do not adhere to the same consumer protection

standards required of public utilities. Additionally, these projects could disrupt assigned service territories that are crucial for co-ops. If you have questions about solar energy or are approached by one of these third-party entities, please contact your local cooperative for more information.

## Governor's energy priorities

Gov. Reynolds has outlined several energy-related priorities aimed at shaping Iowa's future in energy generation, transmission and distribution. These initiatives cover a wide range of topics, including how investor-owned utilities plan for and set rates and invest in new energy projects, ways the state of Iowa can examine the potential of nuclear energy, and making funds available for water infrastructure projects.

One issue of particular importance to electric cooperatives is the Right of First Refusal (ROFR). ROFR grants Iowa-based electric utilities the first opportunity to construct and maintain regional transmission projects within the state. Electric cooperatives support ROFR, as it enables Iowa's utilities to continue working together on critical

infrastructure projects that help maintain reliable electricity service.

Iowa's electric utilities employ thousands of Iowans to design, maintain and repair power lines in the state to ensure power continues to flow during our most extreme weather conditions. They invest in our communities and utilize Iowa companies as suppliers while working with landowners to protect Iowans' interests. Learn more at [www.IowaElectricHomeTeam.com](http://www.IowaElectricHomeTeam.com).

## Staying engaged in the legislative process

As the legislative session progresses, your local electric cooperative directors and staff are actively engaging with lawmakers to advocate for policies that protect and strengthen rural Iowa's energy future.

For more information on these issues or to stay updated on legislative developments, please contact your local cooperative.

*Haley Moon is the senior manager of policy and advocacy for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

### WIN A \$100 GIFT CARD FOR LANDSCAPING!

Planting season will soon be here! Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of a typical household's energy use, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. To help with your spring landscaping projects, we're giving away a \$100 gift card from a local garden center or nursery.

#### Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than March 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified.

The winner of the stainless steel bread machine from the January issue was **Lisa Liles**, an **Access Energy Cooperative** member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY MARCH 31!

## SPRING FORWARD

Sunday, March 9, marks the start of Daylight Saving Time, so remember to set your clocks ahead 1 hour!



We're  
**LUCKY**  
to serve members  
like you!

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

**Grundy County REC**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

"Our mission is to provide our members safe, reliable, electric service"



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303 N Park Avenue • P.O. Box 39  
Grundy Center, IA 50638

**Phone:** 319-824-5251

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**Call Before You Dig (Iowa One Call):**  
800-292-8989

**Website:** [www.grundycountyrecia.com](http://www.grundycountyrecia.com)

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**Email:** [mgeerdes@grundycountyrecia.org](mailto:mgeerdes@grundycountyrecia.org)

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
Call our office 24/7: 319-824-5251

**General Manager:** Michael Geerdes

### Officers and Directors:

District 1: Kevin Prujsner  
District 2: Norbert Boyle  
District 3: Nick Strohbehn  
District 4: Larry Rohach  
District 5: Matt Kopriva  
District 6: Roger Brown  
District 7: Jason Paper

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# ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BRING UNIQUE VALUE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

BY MICHAEL GEERDES



Electric cooperatives stand out from other types of businesses because we are built and led by the communities we serve. As

independent, not-for-profit electric utilities, we are owned and governed by our local members – not by outside shareholders or investors. This is a powerful differentiator.

Here are a few ways electric co-ops like Grundy County REC bring unique value to the local communities we serve.

- **People before profits.** Co-ops are not-for-profit and provide at-cost electric service. Any excess revenue is returned to our member-consumers in the form of capital credits.
- **Community comes first.** We care deeply about our local communities, and we live and work here, too. That's why we engage in economic development and our Revolving Loan Fund program, sponsor local students for scholarships and youth programs, and give back to local organizations such as Christmas in Grundy County, 4-H, Kiwanis, Grundy County Fair and the Grundy County Memorial Hospital Foundation, to name just a few.
- **Affordable, reliable power is our priority.** Grundy County REC purchases electricity from Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Corn Belt Power), our wholesale energy partner. Corn Belt Power is a generation and transmission cooperative formed by a group of electric co-ops in our state. This cooperative business structure allows us to pool local resources and provide electricity at a lower cost than if we purchased it from outside sources.

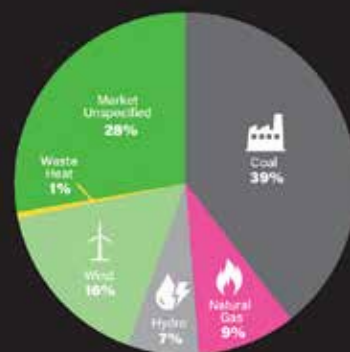
We're focused on our members' energy needs – not only for today but for the long haul. We're advocating for smarter energy policies that prioritize reliability and affordability for all. We recognize we must be inclusive of all energy sources, which is why we work closely with Corn Belt Power to ensure a diverse mix of sources is used to generate the electricity we provide to our members.

Grundy County REC is working to power a brighter future through innovation that meets tomorrow's energy needs. Reliable, affordable electricity is more important than ever before, and our focus will continue to be the best interest of the local communities we serve.

*Michael Geerdes is the general manager for Grundy County REC.*

## Corn Belt Power Generation Mix

\*Numbers reflect 2023 generation mix; 2024 generation mix was not available at the time of this publication.



\*Estimated percentages comprise Basin Electric Power Cooperative's and Western Area Power Administration's generation supplies. This information does not allow any cooperative member to claim environmental attributes of power supply since some renewable energy certificates are sold to improve the economics of renewable generation. For more information, contact Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, 1300 13th St. North, Humboldt, IA 50548, 515-332-7726.

# ARE YOU READY TO SERVE?

Are you interested in how Grundy County REC works? Are you interested in being more involved in your local electric cooperative? We have a great opportunity for you! Serving on the Grundy County REC board means you're making a difference locally, using your talents and perspective to guide big decisions about the co-op that, in turn, benefit the larger community.

While day-to-day decisions are made by co-op staff, major decisions are made by the board, whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the community it serves. On a granular level, our board members typically provide input and guidance on the following:

- Budgets
- Co-op goals and direction
- Co-op community and charitable contributions
- Capital investments and upgrades in equipment and technology
- Renewable investments and energy mix

- Co-op role and involvement in economic development
- Represent our co-op and industry organizations at state, regional and national meetings

Grundy County REC's board elections will be held at the annual meeting in September. Additional information regarding qualification requirements, deadlines and other relevant information will be shared over the next few months.

## District seats up for election in 2025:

- **District 1** – Currently filled by Kevin Puisner
- **District 5** – Currently filled by Matt Kopriva
- **District 7** – Currently filled by Jason Paper

The nominating committee for these districts will be appointed at the April 24 board meeting and published on the cooperative's Facebook page and



website. This committee will meet on May 22 to make their candidate nominations.

While you don't need to be an expert in electricity or business to run, you do need a passion for the community and a willingness to actively serve and learn. We're looking for individuals who can represent the full gamut of the members we serve. Our board meets on a regular basis, and we offer specialized training opportunities to help board members make informed decisions. Board members gain a deeper understanding of the electric utility industry, the cooperative business model and local economic development efforts.

To learn more about the cooperative's director election process and 2025 details, please contact Allyson Miller at [amiller@grundycountyrecia.org](mailto:amiller@grundycountyrecia.org). See below for official election information.

## ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION: ANNUAL DIRECTOR ELECTION PROCESS

### ARTICLE IX

**SECTION 1.** The business and affairs of the Association shall be managed by a Board of seven (7) directors who must be members of the Association.

**SECTION 2.** (a) The territory served or to be served by the Cooperative shall be divided into seven (7) districts, each of which shall contain as nearly as possible the same number of members and shall be composed of one or more contiguous townships. Each district shall be represented by one (1) Board Member. (The district breakdowns are available at the cooperative headquarters; members can request a printed or emailed copy.)

(b) Not less than one hundred twenty (120) days before the Annual Meeting of the members at which meeting, Board Members are to be elected, the Board should review the composition of the seven districts and, if it would find inequalities in representation, which could be corrected by a redelineation in the districts, the Board should reconstitute the districts so that each shall contain as nearly as possible, the same number of members.

(c) The Nominating Committee shall be appointed not less than sixty (60) days or more than one hundred eighty (180) days prior to the Annual Meeting. Such Nominating Committee

shall be composed of those Directors of the Cooperative whose terms expire one (1) year after the Annual Meeting for which nomination of candidates for Directors are being made and other members of the Cooperative who shall be appointed by the President of the Board of Directors. The members appointed by the President of the Board of Directors shall be members of the districts for which Directors shall be elected at the current Annual Meeting. Each nominee for Director shall be a voting member who resides in the district for which a Director is being elected at the current Annual Meeting and shall meet the qualifications for becoming or remaining a Director.

The Nominating Committee shall prepare a list of nominees identifying each candidate by name, address, and the Director district in which they reside. The Nominating Committee shall make a good faith effort to nominate two (2) candidates for each Director position to be filled. In the event the Committee is unable to identify two (2) candidates for each position who consent to be nominated, the Committee may nominate only one (1) candidate for the position. The written list of nominations of the Nominating Committee shall be posted at the office of the Association not less than thirty (30) days prior to mailing the notice of the Annual Meeting of members. For ten (10)

days after posting of the list of nominations by the committee, additional nominations of members residing in the district of the vacancy may be made by written petition on forms provided on request of any member and signed by not less than fifteen (15) members of the Association. Any member nominated shall give prior consent to such nomination whether by committee or petition.

The notice of the Annual Meeting of members shall list the names of all nominees for the office of Director.

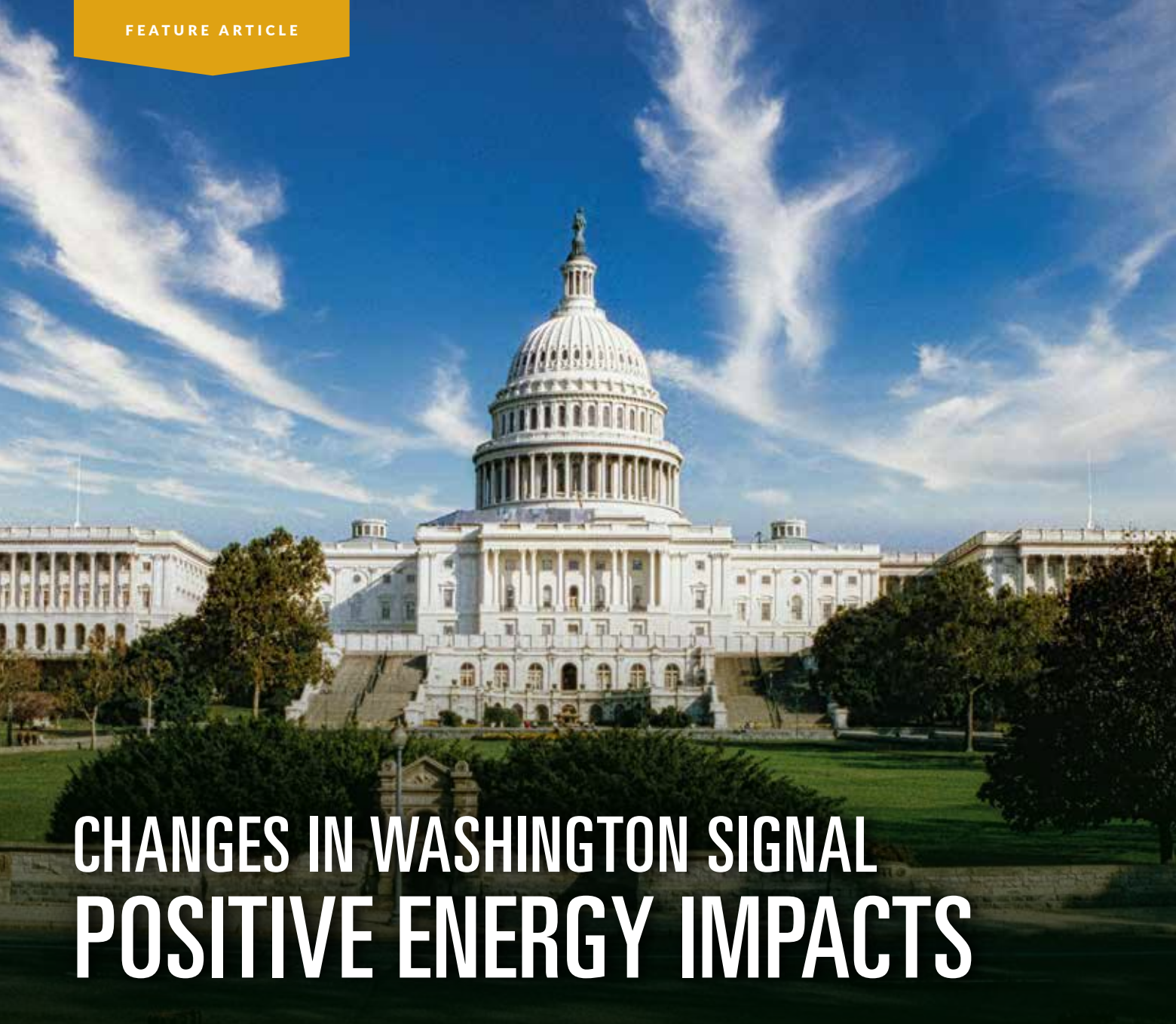
(d) At each regular Annual Meeting, a number of Directors equal to the number of

Directors whose terms expire at the time of such Meeting shall be elected to hold office for the term of three (3) years, and until their respective successors shall have been elected and qualified.

(e) The election of Directors shall be by ballot.

(f) Each voting member of the Cooperative present at the Annual Meeting shall be entitled to vote for one (1) candidate in each district from which Directors are to be elected at the Annual Meeting. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes in each District at the Annual Meeting shall be considered elected as a Board Member for that district.





# CHANGES IN WASHINGTON SIGNAL POSITIVE ENERGY IMPACTS

BY SCOTT FLOOD

The 2024 election centered on widespread frustration with America's economy and immigration. While energy policy didn't receive as much time in the campaigning spotlight, the second Trump presidency is likely to result in significant changes in how our nation approaches its ever-growing demand for electric power. For electric cooperatives, it appears those changes will be positive.

"America is at an energy crossroads, and the reliability of the electric grid hangs in the balance," explained Jim

Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), in a message expressing the association's desire to work closely with President Trump and Congress to protect energy affordability and reliability. "Critical generation resources are being retired faster than they can be reliably replaced. At the same time, electricity demand is skyrocketing as power-hungry data centers and new manufacturing facilities come online. Smart energy policies that keep the lights on are more important than ever."

## **A critical juncture in energy policy**

Shortly after the election, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) warned that many regions face an elevated risk of electricity shortfalls in the face of extreme weather such as prolonged cold snaps. NERC, the nation's grid watchdog, reiterated that older power plants are being retired at the same time Americans are using more electricity. While solar and wind farms have been sprouting up, they can't deliver the always-available electricity that coal- and gas-fired plants have



long provided. Hurricanes Helene and Milton compounded the problem by damaging critical grid infrastructure.

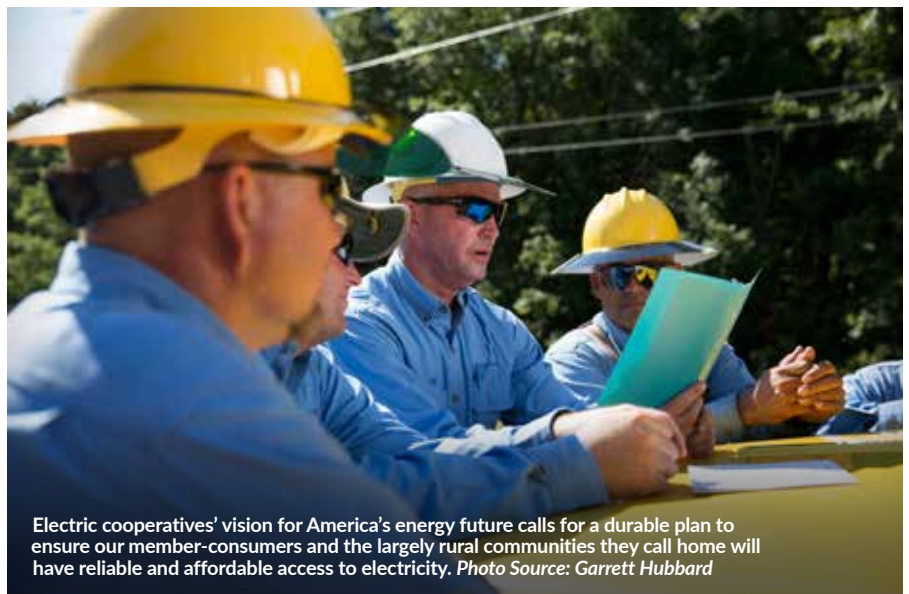
The first Trump administration scaled back many of President Obama's initiatives to replace fossil fuels with "clean power," so observers expect President Trump's team to overturn many of the Biden administration's energy-related policies. NRECA has been urging officials to eliminate regulatory burdens such as the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) power plant rule – which many believe exceeds the EPA's legal authority – and to encourage the U.S. Department of Energy and other agencies to take steps that will eliminate bureaucratic roadblocks and bolster the long-term reliability of the nation's grid.

### **Advocating for reliable, affordable power**

Electric cooperatives' vision for America's energy future calls for a durable plan to ensure our member-consumers and the largely rural communities they call home will have reliable and affordable access to electricity in the face of the nation's skyrocketing demand.

Electric cooperatives are comfortable taking a leadership role in this effort because we have worked hard with elected officials and their staffs to advocate for our members. Policymakers from both parties have consistently commended electric cooperatives as reputable energy providers and engines of economic development that play a vital role in transforming the local communities they proudly serve.

Solidifying a positive and resilient energy future for co-op communities involves a long list of issues and elements. For example, NRECA is pressing Congress and the Trump administration to take concrete steps to overhaul outdated permitting laws that delay or frustrate efforts to build the new infrastructure tomorrow's energy needs demand. We need to address public lands and conservation regulations that make it challenging to operate powerlines, maintain rights of way and reduce potential wildfire



Electric cooperatives' vision for America's energy future calls for a durable plan to ensure our member-consumers and the largely rural communities they call home will have reliable and affordable access to electricity. Photo Source: Garrett Hubbard



Electric cooperatives are pressing Congress and the Trump administration to take concrete steps to overhaul outdated permitting laws that delay or frustrate efforts to build the new infrastructure tomorrow's energy needs demand. Photo Source: Robb McCormick Photography

threats. Electric cooperatives are also working to support their member-consumers by maintaining federal programs and tax credits that bolster electric reliability and affordability.

While President Trump has earned a reputation for demanding swift action on his priorities, we need to remember that change doesn't happen quickly in Washington. For example, undoing the EPA power plant rule will require a robust regulatory process that will take some time to ensure this repeal can withstand expected legal challenges. While the exact path we'll take is still coming into focus, our top priority is the interest of the local communities

we serve and the everyday Americans who call them home.

We will continue to strengthen our voice by making sure our representatives at the federal and state level are aware of our concerns and the importance of ensuring reliable, affordable electricity for all Americans.

The strength of the electric cooperative movement and the clout we have when we work together are unsurpassed, positioning us for continued success as we work with the new administration.

*Scott Flood writes on a variety of energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*



## MAINE BAKED FISH

- 4-6 white fish fillets, any type
- 1 can cream of shrimp soup  
milk
- 1 can small shrimp, drained and rinsed  
buttered breadcrumbs

Place fish in a buttered, flat baking dish. Thin the shrimp soup with milk and pour over fish. Add canned shrimp over soup layer. Cover lightly with breadcrumbs. Bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes. Serves 4-6

Jane Person • Batavia  
Access Energy Cooperative

## BLACKENED WALLEYE

- 2-4 walleye fillets
- 1 stick butter  
Zatarain's blackened seasoning, to taste

Rinse the walleye fillets in cold water, pat dry. Place in plastic or metal bowl in the refrigerator. Melt butter in a small pan, then remove from heat and let cool briefly. Pour melted butter over the chilled fillets. Toss with tongs to ensure they are coated entirely. Shake Zatarain's blackened fish spice over the fillets, stir and add spice until the fillets are coated well. Outside, heat a cast iron skillet over a propane fish fryer until smoking hot. Use tongs to put a few fillets into the hot pan. Leave room between fillets. Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side. Remove and enjoy. Serves 2-4

Allyson Bailey • Hamilton  
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## CAROL'S MOCK LOBSTER

- 3 quarts water
- 1 tablespoon mixed pickling spices
- 2 bay leaves
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vinegar
- 1 pound frozen haddock or cod fillets, thawed
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon paprika
- lemon butter, as desired

Bring water to boil on high heat. Place pickling spices in a cheesecloth bag and place in boiling water. Add bay leaves and vinegar. Reduce heat to medium and add fillets. Cook for 2-3 minutes, until the fish turns white. Remove and place fillets on oven broiler rack. Brush with butter and sprinkle with paprika. Broil 3 inches from broiler unit for 7-8 minutes. Don't turn over. Serve with lemon butter. Serves 4

Nancy Pelzer • Ames  
Consumers Energy

## "NORWEGIAN" FISH BOIL

- 8-10 6-ounce haddock fillets, or any white fish
- 3-5 pounds small red potatoes
- 1 bag pearl onions

Rinse fish and tie fillets in cheesecloth. In a large pot, boil potatoes and onions for approximately 20 minutes. Add fish and boil for an additional 10 minutes. Remove and serve on a large platter. This goes well with coleslaw and lefse. Serves 8-10

Janmarie Olson • Holland  
Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative



## SALMON WITH TOMATOES AND FETA

- 4 4-ounce salmon fillets
- Old Bay seasoning, to taste
- 1½ cups cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- ¾ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ¾ cup lemon juice
- ¾ cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon parsley flakes

Place salmon fillets on individual pieces of foil, pulling the foil up around the sides to form a boat. Sprinkle salmon with Old Bay seasoning. Mix the remaining ingredients in a large bowl. Spoon mixture over the salmon in the foil. Wrap the foil around the salmon and topping, closing the edges. Place in baking dish and bake at 350 degrees F for 30-35 minutes. Serves 4

MacKenzie Dreeszen Rutter • Ankeny  
Consumers Energy

## OYSTERS BURGUNDY

- 10-15 medium oysters
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon green onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons parsley, chopped
- ½ teaspoon garlic, minced
- breadcrumbs
- Parmesan cheese
- paprika

Place oysters and lemon juice in a casserole dish; add salt and pepper to taste. Blend butter, green onion, parsley and garlic. Spread mixture over oysters. Sprinkle top with breadcrumbs, cheese and paprika. Bake at 350 degrees F for about 10 minutes or until crumbs are brown. Serves 4

Cheryl Schiller • Donnellson  
Access Energy Cooperative

## SALMON LOAF

- 1 15.5-ounce can salmon
- ¾ cup milk
- ¾ cup soft breadcrumbs
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons onion
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- dash pepper

Drain salmon, reserving liquid. Pour milk over breadcrumbs and let stand for 5 minutes. Then add salmon, liquid reserved from salmon, eggs, onion, lemon juice, parsley and seasonings. Spread in greased pan and bake at 350 degrees F for 40-50 minutes, until firm. Serve plain or with sauce of your choice.

Ardine Dillingham • Hartley  
Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Visit [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) and search our online archive of hundreds of recipes in various categories.



## SHRIMP TACOS

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons sour cream
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 cup green cabbage
- ½ cup red cabbage
- 1 pound shrimp, raw
- 1 tablespoon taco seasoning
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 6-8 medium tortillas
- avocado, optional
- tomatoes, optional

In a bowl, combine mayonnaise, sour cream, garlic, cilantro and lime juice for a cilantro lime sauce. Finely shred cabbage and add cilantro lime sauce. Mix well and set aside. Season the shrimp with taco seasoning. Heat oil and butter in a skillet. Once hot, add shrimp and cook for 2 minutes per side until opaque. Warm the tortillas, add a bed of slaw mix and top with shrimp. Add any other ingredients to your liking such as avocado or tomatoes. You can also substitute hoagie buns for tortilla shells and make a po'boy sandwich. Serves 4-5

Crystal Hammes • Libertyville  
Access Energy Cooperative

**WANTED:**

## FIRECRACKER FAVORITES

**THE REWARD:**  
**\$25 FOR EVERY ONE**  
**WE PUBLISH!**

**Deadline is March 31**

Submit your favorite firecracker (spicy!) recipes. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.



**EMAIL:** [recipes@ieclmagazine.com](mailto:recipes@ieclmagazine.com)  
(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

**MAIL: Recipes**  
Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine  
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48  
Des Moines, IA 50322

# IOWA'S REA POWER PLANT MUSEUM RECEIVES NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

BY MADISON ALERT



The history of electric cooperatives is woven into the fabric of rural America, where a shared sense of purpose has always united individuals in pursuit of a brighter future. Before electrification, rural life was defined by darkness, isolation and relentless challenges. Yet, even in the most trying times, these communities possessed a determined spirit – a vision that would forever change the course of American history. Fueled by grit and willpower, that spirit laid the foundation for one of the most profound and transformative movements in our nation's past: rural electrification.

On May 11, 1935, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7037, establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). This pivotal moment in history created the Rural Electrification Act, a federal loan program that sought to bring the power of electricity to

rural America. While investor-owned utilities resisted, farmers of rural America saw an opportunity and flooded the newly formed program with applications, signaling the dawn of the electric cooperative movement.

## Embracing the call for rural electrification

Northern Iowa embraced the call for electrification. Newspapers like the *Hampton Chronicle* served as champions for electrification, urging community support with articles like the March 12, 1936, piece, "Are You Interested in Rural Electrification?" It was a call for unity to bring light to the countryside. And so, Iowa farmers gathered, forming cooperatives that would forever change the landscape of rural life.

The cost of this dream was shared among farmers committing to pay a monthly fee, roughly \$5, for 100 kilowatt-hours of electricity.

It was a leap of faith for many as skepticism and doubt lingered. However, the cooperative spirit ran deep, and farmers' collective perseverance soon proved naysayers wrong.

On Feb. 10, 1937, northern Iowa farmers joined together to incorporate the generation cooperative Federated REA. Days later, REA Deputy Administrator John Carmody announced the decision to fund Federated REA to serve Franklin, Hardin, Wright, Butler, Grundy and Hancock counties in Iowa. The \$222,000 loan laid the groundwork for Iowa's Reeve Power Plant south of Hampton.

## A dream becomes reality

The Reeve Power Plant is situated on six acres next to the Rock Island Railroad, which helped ensure that construction materials and fuel could be easily transported to the site. The



winning construction bid of \$51,875 by a local contractor allowed work to begin on Sept. 1, 1937, signifying construction of the power plant was full steam ahead. Concrete was mixed and poured by hand; innovative methods of steam and tarps helped overcome the freezing temperatures of Iowa's winter.

By January 1938, the Reeve Power Plant was fully enclosed, and in mid-March, the first two engines – massive Nordberg powerhouses – were tested and successfully fired up. Then, on March 23, 1938, at 8:30 a.m., the dream became a reality. The Reeve Power Plant began operations, delivering 24-hour electric service to its six rural counties. With that, Federated REA became the first cooperative west of the Mississippi River to generate and distribute farmer-owned electricity, marking the beginning of a new era. In less than seven months, rural electrification had arrived. In the years that followed, two additional engines were added, and crews

braved challenging weather and the struggles that came with expanding.

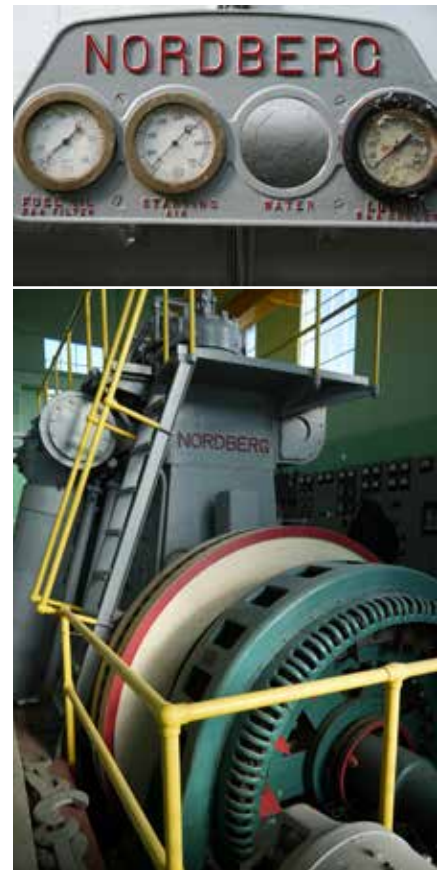
In 1947, Federated REA merged with the Central Electric Federated Cooperative Association in Pocahontas to form Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Corn Belt Power). This new cooperative structure responded to the soaring demand for electricity, utilizing the Reeve Power Plant to manage overflow from its primary generation facility. During this period of peak demand, energy brownouts became a common occurrence, with sections of the service territory experiencing reduced electricity usage to balance the grid. Concurrently, rural electrification had reached over 90% of U.S. farms, a remarkable achievement that underscored the success of the cooperative business model.

In 1950, Corn Belt Power transitioned the Reeve Power Plant to standby mode after a new generation source was commissioned to meet the grid's growing needs. Despite this change, the site continued to house a substation, providing vital support to the cooperative's members in the region and maintaining its role in the legacy of rural electrification. After serving its membership for decades, the generation plant was finally taken out of commission in 1974.

### Maintaining historical significance

In 1988, the plant was donated to the Franklin County Historical Society, and through the efforts of countless volunteers, the REA Power Plant Museum was born. The museum, which opened to the public in 1990 as a Historic Place on the National Register, stands as a powerful reminder of the hard work, sacrifice and unity that made rural electrification possible. In 2002, the museum earned recognition as a point of interest within the Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area.

In December 2024, the Reeve Power Plant was designated as a National Historic Landmark, honoring its legacy as the last remaining original plant built following the 1936 Rural Electrification Act. This recognition commemorates the plant's physical



structure and celebrates the remarkable spirit of innovation and perseverance it represents.

With many thanks to the Franklin County Historical Society and volunteers like Rick Whalen of Hampton, the historic site remains a testament to rural America's transformation. This dedication helps to preserve the spirit of hope, resilience, and effort that made electrification possible, ensuring the story continues to inspire future generations.

Museum exhibits showcase the challenges and triumphs of a bygone era, while displays highlight life before and after electrification. Visitors can also see artifacts like the original three-cylinder engine, circuit panels, transformers and the iconic concrete blocks engraved with "REA." The museum offers a living history of rural America's transformation, powered by the cooperative spirit and the collective will of those who dared to dream of a brighter future.

*Madison Alert is the communications specialist/key accounts representative for Franklin REC.*



# BE READY FOR STORM SEASON

BY ALLYSON MILLER



Spring is on our doorstep and like many of you, I'm looking forward to more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy warmer

weather! Springtime brings many of my favorite activities, such as cooking out with family and friends, working in the yard and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

Unfortunately, spring and summer can also bring perfect conditions for severe storms.

Grundy County REC crews are always prepared and ready to respond should power outages occur in our area. When severe storms cause power disruptions, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during storms and outages.

## During a power outage

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avoid damage from potential power surges and will also help prevent overloading circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.

If you plan to use a portable generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check Grundy County REC's Facebook page for restoration updates.

Severe storms can occasionally bring down power lines. If you see a downed line, always assume it's energized and never approach it. If flooding occurs, never walk through areas where power lines could be submerged.

## Plan now for severe weather

Advanced planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and lessen the impact of the storm's effects. Sign up for NOAA emergency alerts and warnings and follow Grundy County REC on Facebook. If you experience an outage, don't report it on Facebook, as this is not constantly monitored. Instead, call 319-824-5251 to report the outage. Our phones are answered 24/7, year-round, so calling is the fastest way to let us know if your power is out.

I hope we don't experience severe storms over the spring and summer months, but we can never predict

Mother Nature's plans. At Grundy County REC, we recommend you plan today because storm preparedness is always the best defense.

*Allyson Miller is the executive assistant/human resources for Grundy County REC.*

## FEMA storm and disaster preparedness recommendations

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Confirm you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies
- Ensure your first aid kit is stocked and your prescriptions are current
- Set aside basic household items you may need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV
- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location



# SPRING CLEANING FOR EFFICIENCY

It's the time of year when many of us start on our spring-cleaning checklist. Here are a few energy efficiency items to add to the list!



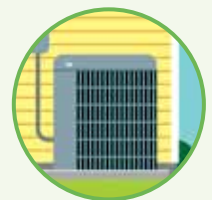
- ✓ Change air filters to improve airflow and save energy.



- ✓ Dust electronics and other electrical items to increase efficiency and lifespan.



- ✓ Check light fixtures to make sure you're using energy-saving LED bulbs.



- ✓ Schedule an inspection or service for your home heating and cooling system.



# ADVOCATING FOR THE COOPERATIVE AND ITS MEMBERS

Grundy County REC Board Vice President Kevin Puisner and Director Larry Rohach were among nearly 170 senior staff and directors that traveled to Des Moines in January to attend the annual Welcome Back Reception. The event was an opportunity to discuss concerns and priorities face to face with state legislators, including defined electric service territories and other important energy-related matters.



Grundy County REC Directors Kevin Puisner (second from right) and Larry Rohach (far right) are pictured with Sen. Annette Sweeney (center) and co-op directors from Consumers Energy in Marshalltown.

## LET'S CELEBRATE THOSE POWERING YOU!

Electric cooperatives celebrate Lineman Appreciation Day on April 14! Want to thank a lineman? Send in your words of thanks and appreciation for the Grundy County REC line crew, and we'll share it with them. You can complete the note (right) and mail it to the co-op office or email your comments to Allyson Miller at [amiller@grundycountyrecia.org](mailto:amiller@grundycountyrecia.org).

*Thank you*

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Member Name

**Happy Lineman Appreciation Day!**

☒ YES, please enter our names in the drawing for the trip.

Our first and second choice of dates:

June 18-20    1st    2nd    (please circle)  
June 25-27    1st    2nd

I/we ☐ have ☐ have not participated in this tour in the past.

First Person \_\_\_\_\_

Second Person \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

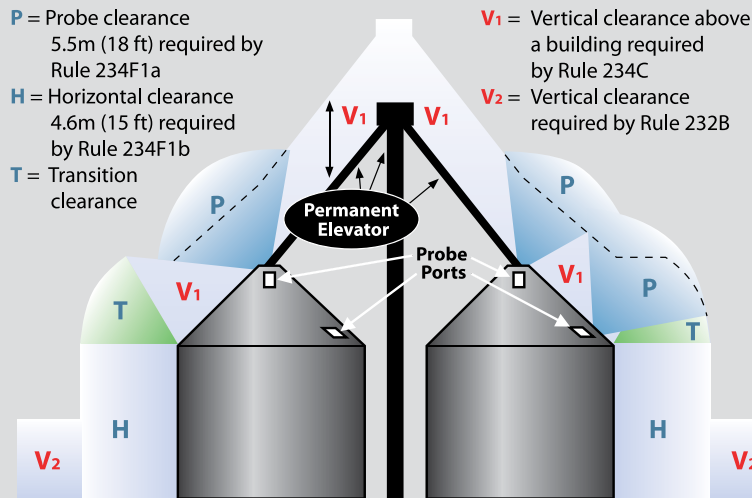
Clip this coupon and return to cooperative by April 18.

**Energy Trail Tour 2025**

Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative invite you to join us for one of two Energy Trail Tours being offered this summer. This 3-day adventure will allow you to experience, firsthand, how your power providers convert energy from water, wind, and coal into electricity. View coal being mined and see how those mines are then returned to productive farm and native grass lands. Enjoy interactive walking tours through a hydroelectric and coal-fired energy generation facility and other stops along the way. Meet other cooperative member-owners while traveling together across the Dakotas on board a motor coach bound for the North Dakota's Energy Loop. Two lucky couples from Grundy County REC will be selected at random from those who sign up.

Scan the QR code to register today!

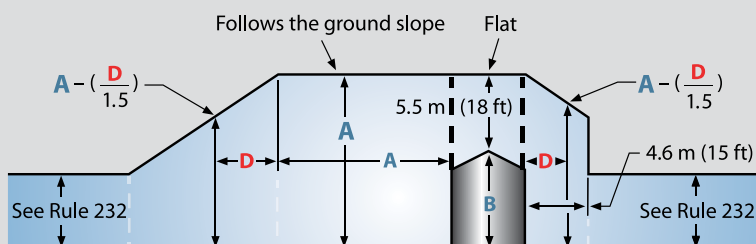
## Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by permanently installed augers, conveyors or elevators



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## Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors or elevators

### ELEVATION

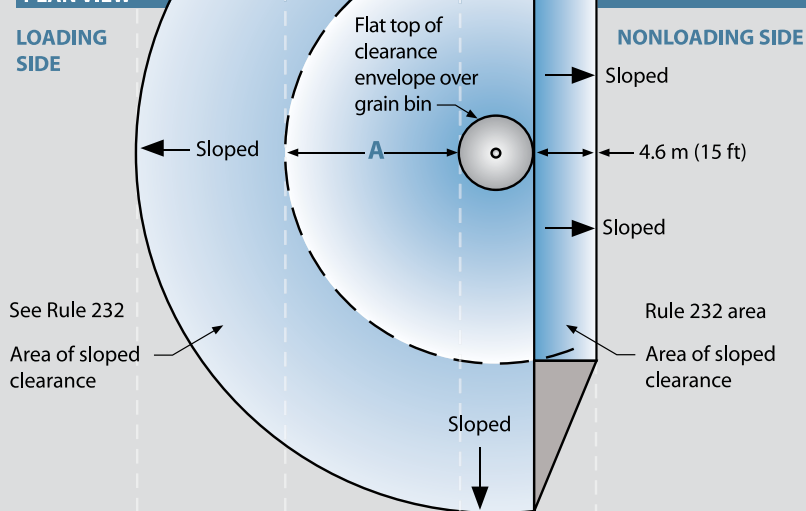


**B** = Height of highest filling or probing port on grain bin  
**A** =  $B + 5.5\text{m (18 ft)}$   
**D** = Variable horizontal dimension

In the area of sloped clearance, the vertical clearance is reduced by 300mm (1 ft) for each additional 450mm (1.5 ft) of horizontal distance from the grain bin.

### PLAN VIEW

#### LOADING SIDE



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## MAINTAIN PROPER CLEARANCE AROUND GRAIN BINS

The state of Iowa requires specific clearances for electric lines around grain bins, with different standards for those filled by portable and permanent augers, conveyors and elevators. According to the Iowa Electric Safety Code found in Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 199 – 25.2(3) b: An electric utility may refuse to provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing electric line which does not provide the clearances required by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) C2-2017 "National Electrical Safety Code," Rule 234F. This paragraph "b" shall apply only to grain bins loaded by portable augers, conveyors or elevators and built after Sept. 9, 1992, or to grain bins loaded by permanently installed augers, conveyors, or elevator systems installed after Dec. 24, 1997. The Iowa Utilities Commission has adopted this language.

Your local electric cooperative is required by the Iowa Utilities Commission to provide this annual notice to farmers, farm lenders, grain bin merchants and city and county zoning officials. The drawings on this page show the required clearances, but your co-op's policies may be more restrictive. If you have any questions concerning these regulations – or what needs to be done before you begin placing a new grain bin or moving an existing one – please call your electric co-op for help.

These drawings are provided as part of the Iowa electric cooperatives' annual public information campaign and are based on the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. To view the actual drawings, refer to that publication.

Every care has been taken for the correctness of the contents of these drawings. However, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and its member cooperatives accept no liability whatsoever for omissions or errors, technical inaccuracies, typographical mistakes or damages of any kind arising from the use of the contents of these drawings, whether textual or graphical.



# THE POWER OF THE ASSIST

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

Any March Madness fans out there? While it's easy to focus on the superstars in these big games, a talented volleyball player at our local high school got me thinking about teamwork in a different way.

Norah Riedesel is an 18-year-old senior at South Central Calhoun (SCC) High School. This fall, she reached a major milestone of 1,500 career assists. Her accomplishment reminded me of a morning last July when I was in Ames for Iowa Swine Day. (Stick with me – you'd be amazed at what you can learn at farm meetings.)

The keynote speaker, Ross Bernstein, presented "The Champion's Code: Building Relationships Through Life Lessons from the Sports World to the Business World." One of his stories revolved around his youth in southern Minnesota and his passion for hockey. He mentioned his favorite player, Wayne Gretzky, who racked up 894 regular-season goals and 1,963 assists during his storied career.

"When you make a goal, you make one person happy. But an assist makes two people happy," Bernstein said. "Wayne understood the power of the assist."

That wisdom popped back into my head when I decided I should reach out to Norah. "Here's someone who really understands the power of the assist," I thought.

## We win or lose together

Norah told me she started playing volleyball in fourth grade. She played right back (a defensive position) during her freshman and sophomore years of high school and became a setter during her junior and senior years.

"There are a lot of things that go into setting," Norah explained. "The biggest skill you need is the ability to make quick decisions on the spot. The first thing I think about is the other team's defense. Every team

has their weakness, so it's important to get the ball to hitters who can put the ball in that weak spot."

Assists are an integral element of teamwork, she added. "The phrase 'bump, set, spike' didn't come from nowhere. Without a good pass, there's probably not a good set. Without a good set, hitters aren't in the position to score."

That's exactly the mindset that led Norah and her fellow SCC Titans to the regional final game last fall. Had they won, they would have competed in the state volleyball tournament.

While Norah's high school volleyball career has ended, the power of the assist is a lesson that will serve her well in life. (She's headed to college to earn her doctorate of physical therapy degree and specialize in sports physical therapy.)

## Success beyond sports

Norah is a real-life example of how the power of the assist reflects the talent and heart of a person. The assist combines skill and intention. It embodies your willingness to intentionally give up a chance for personal gain to create the possibility for a teammate to shine.

The assist doesn't just exist in sports. Ever heard of Reggie Young? This



Norah Riedesel (front row, third from the right), a senior at South Central Calhoun (SCC) High School, has played a key role on the SCC volleyball team.



American guitarist (1936-2019) was a leading session musician who performed on various recordings back in the day. His power of the assist made countless artists, including Elvis Presley, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Merle Haggard, sound even better.

The power of the assist also influences the arts. Think of the director who guides the actors in a movie or theater production to excellence. In the publishing world, there's the detail-oriented editor who polishes writers' prose to make these stories more clear, concise and compelling.

The power of the assist is a big responsibility, as Norah reminded me, but it can unleash exceptional results. Even better, it's a mindset that anyone can cultivate. What will your next great assist look like?

*Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at [www.darcymaulsby.com](http://www.darcymaulsby.com).*

Visit our website at [www.grundycountyrecia.com](http://www.grundycountyrecia.com)



# WHERE WE LIVE

WE FIND POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS  
WILL EMPOWER OUR MEMBERS TO  
THEIR PASSIONS



Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  
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