

# living with energy

IN IOWA

 **Grundy County REC**  
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

AUGUST 2021

Annual meeting notice ▶ See Page 5

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

**Grundy County REC  
annual meeting details**

**Spectacular  
sandwich recipes**

**Electric co-ops support  
rural child care options**

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To have your photo considered for a future cover, email high-res images to editor@livingwithenergyiowa.com. If we select your photo, you'll be awarded with **\$100.**



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**ON THE COVER**



Congratulations to Karleen Stanley, a member of North West REC in Orange City, for submitting this month's cover image. She captured this beautiful photo while sitting on her front porch in Plymouth County. ⚡

# Thank you for shining the light on local volunteers

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



Earlier this summer, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives had an opportunity to try something new. Following last year's pandemic

precautions and derecho destruction, we thought the timing was right to shine the light on positive efforts in our state. The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa started the Shine the Light contest to honor the unsung heroes in our communities who volunteer their time and talents.

In the pages of this magazine and through your electric co-op's social media posts, you were invited to nominate a local volunteer in June. Because this was our first year managing the statewide contest, we didn't know what kind of response to expect. We are thrilled to share that 39 people from 19 of Iowa's electric cooperatives nominated a local volunteer through our contest website.

We received the email confirmation messages as nominations were submitted. It was truly a blessing to read each entry as they popped into my inbox. I looked forward to learning about incredible Iowans as the month went on; it was a delight to read the heartfelt essays from the nominators.

Our judging panel is now working on the difficult task of sorting through the entries to select three winners who will each receive \$1,500 for their local charity or community organization of choice. We will feature the three winners in next month's issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine, and we have already identified several other nominees that we may highlight in future issues.

On behalf of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, I want to

thank the Iowa electric cooperative member-consumers and employees who took the time to submit a nomination this summer. You have truly helped us in our cooperative effort to shine the light on community heroes. Thanks to you, our new contest is off to a great start, and we are already looking forward to being inspired by next year's nominees!

On Pages 10-11, you will find the list of our 39 nominees, in alphabetical order by last name. We want to honor each and every one of them for their commitment to their communities – it's the same guiding principle that drives your electric cooperative every day. ⚡

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



## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

### Win a Breville Panini Press & Grill!

Make spectacular sandwiches at home with a Breville Panini Press & Grill. The versatile appliance is perfect for quick weeknight meals and casual entertaining, doing double duty as an indoor grill and sandwich press. With a large surface area, this family-friendly machine accommodates up to four sandwiches at once. ⚡



#### Visit our website and win!

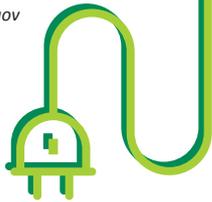
Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) no later than Aug. 31, 2021. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the Cuisinart smoker from our June issue was Jeanie Hall, Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When shopping for new light bulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure the energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.



Source: energy.gov



## Grundy County REC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  
 "Our mission is to provide our members safe, reliable, electric service"



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**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
 Call our office 24/7: 319-824-5251

**General Manager:** Michael Geerdes

**Officers and Directors:**

- District 1: Kevin Pruisner
- District 2: Norbert Boyle
- District 3: Nick Strohbehn
- District 4: Larry Rohach
- District 5: Matt Kopriva
- District 6: David Schmidt
- District 7: Jason Paper

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

# Affordable electricity powers quality of life

BY MICHAEL GEERDES

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, at almost all times. Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.

According to the Energy Information Agency, the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."



However, that's not true with electricity. Let's take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses:

Over the last five years, the cost of rent increased 3.4%, medical care increased 2.8% and education increased 2.2%. But the cost of electricity only increased 1%. Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it remains a great value.

So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity – it's a necessity. That's why Grundy County REC will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably. ⚡

Michael Geerdes is the general manager for Grundy County REC.

### Electricity powers quality of life

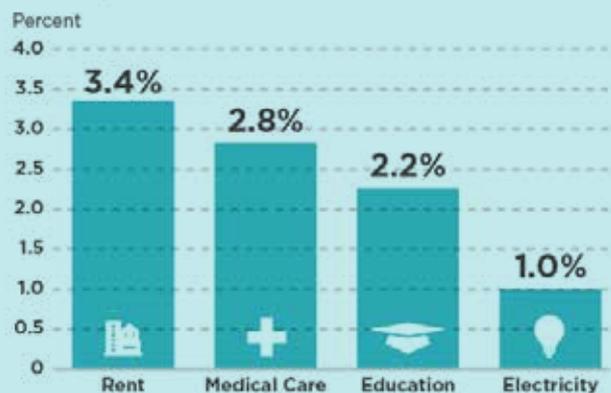
Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones, computers, TV and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.

There is more demand for electricity than ever before. In homes, schools, business and commercial sectors, such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

Typically when demand goes up, so too does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee.

## ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

# Official notice of annual meeting

The 85th Annual Meeting of the Members of Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative will be held at the Grundy County REC headquarters, 303 N. Park Avenue, Grundy Center, Iowa, with optional dinner and activities from 5-7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 9, 2021, to take action upon the matters listed below. The business meeting portion of the event will begin at 7 p.m.

1. The reports of officers, directors and committees;
2. The election of two (2) directors of the Cooperative for a term of three years each;
3. All other business, which may legally come before the meeting or any adjournment(s) thereof.

In connection with the election of directors scheduled for this meeting, the following members have been nominated for Director by the Nominating Committee appointed by the Board of Directors of the Cooperative pursuant to the Bylaws.

## THREE-YEAR TERM (Two to be elected)

- **District No. 2:** Nobert Boyle (Incumbent)
- **District No. 3:** Nick Strohbahn (Incumbent)

You are urged to attend the meeting, hear the reports of the officers, vote for directors and transact such other business as may come before the meeting. Ballots can also be returned via mail. We encourage you to exercise your right as a member and vote.

## District 2

Norb Boyle, incumbent, lives just east of Ackley with his wife Lori. They have two daughters and four grandchildren. Norb graduated from Iowa State University with a B.A. in Ag Business. He is an ag loan officer for Greenbelt Bank & Trust in Iowa Falls. Norb enjoys camping and going to grandkids' activities. Norb has been an Ackley FD volunteer firefighter for 20 years. He also volunteers with



various community activities in Ackley and Iowa Falls. The Boyles are members of Ackley First Presbyterian Church. Norb has been on the REC board and has served various roles for nine years.

## District 3

Nick Strohbahn, current board secretary and incumbent, lives northwest of Reinbeck on the family farm with his wife Melanie and has been on the board for three years.



They have four daughters: Paige, Lauren, Addison and Emerson. Nick has a custom farming business, where he hauls manure, finishes hogs and does some row crop farming. He enjoys following his daughters' sporting events, helping with their 4-H projects and camping the week of the county fair. He also enjoys helping at the Benton County Speedway. ⚡

**Learn more about Nick in the August Director Feature on page 13!**

## ANNOUNCEMENT

# Grundy County REC plans in-person annual meeting!

Join us on Thursday, Sept. 9, from 5-7 p.m. for food, fun, prizes, and engagement with staff and directors. The business meeting session will begin at 7 p.m.

For those who stop by in-person, you can enter to win a Green Mountain Grill from our member Recreation Unlimited, a children's bike and one of four \$50 bill credits! Attendance at the business meeting session is not required to qualify for these prizes. We are looking forward to being able to once again meet in person! ⚡

**85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**  
9.9.21

**Grundy County REC**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  
"Our mission is to provide our members safe, reliable, electric service"

# Child care options expand with rural utility support

BY KAY SNYDER



Child care has joined workforce and housing as one of the most critical needs across Iowa. According to a report from the Iowa Department of Human Service's Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, 28% of Iowa communities are considered child care deserts. A child care desert is defined as a city with more than 50 children in the community and more than three children per child care slot.

Child care shortages are complex issues that must be addressed at different levels. As communities tackle this issue, it is no surprise that Iowa's rural utilities are engaged and supporting long-term solutions.

## Stanton: Need for child care spurs additional development

Stanton has many projects focused on adding to the community's quality of life while attracting technology companies and new citizens. One key project is the expansion of the Stanton Child Resource Center (SCRC).

Two to three years ago, the community began initial conversations to expand and renovate the existing SCRC facility. But with new considerations due



to COVID-19, the planning group began exploring options for a less-expensive facility and one that could accommodate pandemic-related guidelines. These factors led to the decision to build a new SCRC facility in a different location.

As additional people were brought into the planning conversation, an opportunity arose to tap into property in a 22-acre section of land owned by the Stanton Area Industrial Foundation and create a master plan for development of the Stanton Technology Park.

The new 11,000-square-foot SCRC facility will accommodate up to 130 children, which is 50 more than the current facility. It will be the first business in the new Stanton Technology Park, which is the perfect amenity for future businesses and

employees in the area.

"A lot of people are looking at getting out of the cities. They'd like to raise their children in a rural setting, but they need good jobs, housing and reliable day care," says Kevin Cabbage, CEO and general manager of Farmers Mutual Telephone Company. "We will start with the day care and then build around it. This is just one component of an answer to growing southwest Iowa."

The project is currently in the fundraising stage and dirt work will be completed this fall. The new SCRC is expected to open in Spring or Summer 2022. Southwest Iowa REC, Central Iowa Power Cooperative and Farmers Mutual Telephone Company, support this effort, which will provide electric power and telecommunications to the day care and future technology park.

"Southwest Iowa REC is pleased to support the Stanton Child Resource Center and Stanton Technology Park," says Phil Kinser, CEO of Southwest Iowa REC. "Local families are well-served by the center, and the need to serve more children and families is critical to area development."



**Glidden: New child care center coming soon**

Conversations and planning for a child care center in Glidden began several years ago. These discussions led to the development of Lil Wildcat Education Center, Inc. in 2020, which will construct and operate a child care facility in the community.

Fundraising is in full swing for this new 5,327-square-foot child care facility that will be located next to the Glidden-Ralston School building. The new day care will be a licensed child care center with rooms for infants through five-year-olds, plus a before- and after-school program. Though the education center will be located near the school, it will operate year-round to provide consistent opportunities for families who need day care throughout the year.

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) is supporting the new child care facility in several ways through its contributions and also by coordinating funds from Basin Electric Cooperative and CoBank. RVEC also secured funds through the U.S. Department of Agriculture

(USDA) Revolving Loan & Grant Program to provide a \$360,000, 10-year, 0% interest loan from its Revolving Loan Fund when approvals for additional funding and a land sale are cleared this summer.

If all goes as expected, construction will begin within the next few months, with the opening in Spring 2022.

**Panora: Little Panther expands to meet demand**

Little Panther Daycare & Preschool in Panora has recently broken ground on a 1,440-square-foot expansion of its existing building. This addition will allow the facility to accommodate 15 more children and two additional full-time employees.

Currently, Little Panthers has a three-year wait for its classrooms. Page Arganbright, director of Little Panther, recognized two local cooperatives that stepped up to provide 0% interest loans to support the expansion and speed the path to construction. Cozy Nelsen, CEO of Guthrie County REC, says Little Panther was one of the first projects

funded through Guthrie County REC’s Revolving Loan Fund.

“Little Panther Daycare is an invaluable asset for Panora and the surrounding area,” says Nelsen. “Guthrie County REC is proud to continue to support this much-needed expansion.”

The Panora Telco leadership was similarly enthusiastic. General manager Andy Randol says they have also supported Little Panther from the beginning because they know the critical role day care provides in the community.

As with most challenges, there are many answers to help alleviate child care needs in Iowa and the results may be slow to recognize. Iowa’s rural utility partners continue to demonstrate their commitment to community by providing technical and financial assistance to support impactful community initiatives, including child care facilities across the state. 🌱

Kay Snyder is the director of marketing and communications for the Iowa Area Development Group.



Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) has been helpful to many utility partners and communities as they have collaborated to support solutions for child care and other challenges. For more information, contact your rural electric cooperative or IADG at [www.iadg.com](http://www.iadg.com).

# SPECTACULAR Sandwich RECIPES



## Oven-fried Pork Tenderloin Sandwiches

- 2 tablespoons light olive oil
- ½ cup flour
- seasoned salt, optional
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup milk
- ¾ cup panko breadcrumbs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 4 pork loin slices (4 ounces each), tenderized
- 4 hamburger buns

Line a 9x13-inch sheet pan with oven-safe parchment paper. Drizzle olive oil over parchment paper and set aside. Place flour in a shallow bowl or pie plate, add seasoned salt if desired. In a second shallow bowl, beat egg and milk together. In a third shallow bowl, combine panko breadcrumbs, salt and pepper. Dredge both sides of pork slices in flour, then the egg mixture, then the seasoned breadcrumbs. Place loin slices on sheet pan with oil. Bake at 400 degrees F for 20-25 minutes turning halfway through, internal temperature should be 145 degrees F. Serve on buns. *Serves 4*

**Barb Sexton • Rockwell City  
Calhoun County Rural Electric  
Cooperative Association**

## Spinach Sandwiches

- 3 cups fresh spinach
- ½ cup celery, diced
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- mayonnaise
- salt and pepper, to taste
- white or wheat bread

Shred spinach then add celery, onion and eggs. Add mayonnaise until mixture reaches a spreading consistency. Season to taste. Chill until ready to eat. Spread between slices of bread.

**Penny Sue Haley • Keswick  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative**

## Tuna Burgers

- 1 can tuna, drained
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- ½ cup American cheese, cut up
- 1 small onion, minced
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- salt and pepper, to taste
- buns

Mix together tuna, celery, cheese, onion, mayonnaise, salt and pepper. Put tuna mixture on buns. Wrap buns in aluminum foil and place on baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15 minutes.

**Annalee Buffington • Marshalltown  
Consumers Energy**

## Cheese Salad Sandwiches for a Crowd

- 10 pounds American cheese, grated
- 2 cups sweet pickle relish
- 2 4½ -ounce cans pimento
- 2 dozen hard-boiled eggs, peeled and grated
- 3 quarts Miracle Whip
- ⅔ cup granulated sugar
- evaporated milk, optional

Mix all ingredients together, adding additional Miracle Whip if needed. May also thin with some evaporated milk. Spread on bread, buns or crackers. This recipe can be divided in half for 75 people, or by 10 for 15-18 people. *Serves 150*

**Mabel L. Fisher • Sigourney  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative**

Source:  
Sandwich America

### THE EARL OF SANDWICH

The man credited with creating the first sandwich is John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich. Legend suggests he was unwilling to free up his hands during gambling events, so his servants brought meat between two slices of bread that he could hold with one hand.

## Jazzed-up Ham and Cheese Sandwiches

- 24 sweet Hawaiian rolls
- 2 pounds smoked ham
- 1 pound pepper jack cheese
- 1 pound cheddar cheese
- 1 cup butter
- 4 tablespoons dried minced onions
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons mushrooms, chopped (optional)

Slice rolls in half. Put bottom half in greased 9x13-inch pan. Layer ham and cheese. Put top half of rolls on top. Melt butter with remaining ingredients and spread over top of buns. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20-30 minutes.

Steph Messner • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## Favorite Chicken Salad Sandwiches

- 1 12.5-ounce can white meat chicken
- 1 8-ounce can water chestnuts, finely chopped
- dill or sweet pickle relish
- mayonnaise
- bread

Mix chicken and water chestnuts together. Add relish and mayonnaise to taste. Spread on your favorite bread and enjoy.

Sandy Slaymaker • Victor  
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

## Grilled Cheese Taverns

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 can tomato soup
- ½ can water
- ¼ cup ketchup
- ½ teaspoon mustard
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- salt and pepper, to taste
- bread
- butter
- American cheese slices
- dill pickle sandwich chips

Brown ground beef with onion, drain grease. Stir in soup, water, ketchup, mustard, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, sugar, salt and pepper. Simmer on low for 1-2 hours, stirring frequently. Heat griddle to 350 degrees F. Butter one side of bread slice and place buttered side down on griddle. Top with a slice of cheese, enough tavern meat mixture to just cover the bread, dill pickles and another slice of bread, buttered side up. Grill 2-3 minutes on each side or until bread is browned and crispy. Let cool a bit before slicing in half diagonally. Tavern meat mixture freezes well for later use.

Joni Rus • Rock Valley  
North West Rural Electric Cooperative



**Search** our online recipe archive for thousands of recipes from Iowa's rural kitchens.

[www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com/recipes](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com/recipes)

## Wanted: Christmas Morning Recipes The Reward: \$25 for every one we publish!

With good tidings and great joy in mind, we want your favorite Christmas morning recipes! No matter if your dish is savory, sweet, simple or extra special, breakfast gathered around the Christmas tree is sure to be a treasured holiday tradition. If we run your recipe in the magazine, we'll send a \$25 credit for your electric co-op to apply to your power bill. Recipes submitted also may be archived on our website at [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com).

The deadline is Aug. 31, 2021. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions. **Also provide the number of servings per recipe.**

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

**MAIL:**  
**Recipes**

*Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine  
8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48  
Urbandale, Iowa 50322

### KIDS LOVE THEIR PB&Js

The average American child eats about 1,500 PB&J sandwiches by the time they graduate high school.

SANDWICH BITES

### SANDWICHES BY THE MILLIONS

Americans eat about 300 million sandwiches every day, and National Sandwich Day is celebrated on Nov. 3.

SANDWICH BITES

### HAM REIGNS SUPREME

The most popular sandwich in America is the standard ham sandwich with ham, cheese, mustard and mayonnaise. It is followed in popularity by the BLT.

SANDWICH BITES

### NO. 1 SANDWICH ON THE MENU

Sandwiches are on the menu more frequently than any other type of entrée at restaurants.

SANDWICH BITES

# Shine the Light contest nominees

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



## 2021 SHINE THE LIGHT NOMINEES

**Brad Arndorfer** from Bancroft was nominated by **Richard Arndorfer of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Bancroft Volunteer Firefighter's Association**.

**Suzanne Asklesen** from Cambridge was nominated by **Carol Gilbert of Midland Power Cooperative** for her work with the **Ballard Education Foundation**.

**Helen Beneke** from Pocahontas was nominated by **Parker Aden of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Pocahontas County Foundation**.

**Barb Brennan** from Emmetsburg was nominated by **LuAnn Opheim of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for her work with **Unity Lutheran Ministries**.

**Lynn Buth** from Danbury was nominated by **Clem & Kay Wessling of North West Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with **Danbury EMT**.

**Catherine Burkman** from Albia was nominated by **Aimee Campbell of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.** for her work with the **Albia Victorian Stroll**.

**Cathy & Denny Carlson** from Hampton were nominated by **Karen Ringleib of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative** for their work with **Carlson Tree Farm**.

**Sandy Carson** was nominated by **Alexis Carson of Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.** for her work with the **Clarke Athletic Booster Club**.

**Judy Combs** from Bloomfield was nominated by **Joye Lore-Lawson of Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Davis County Tourism Board**.

**Karen Conrad** from Epworth was nominated by **Janet Berger of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Epworth Community Food Pantry**.

**Jim Davies** from Hampton was nominated by **Christy Mason of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Windsor Theatre Development Corporation**.

**Gary Doehrmann** from Waverly was nominated by **Anne Sesker of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Waverly Fire Department**.

**Skott Gent** from Monmouth was nominated by **Nancy Miller of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Maquoketa FFA Alumni**.

**Hayden George** from Albia was nominated by **Roger George of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.** for his work with the **CJ3 Foundation**.

**Michael Goodin** from Schleswig was nominated by **Leroy Hight of Western Iowa Power Cooperative** for his work with **Under the Son Childcare**.

**Dawn Hamilton** from Malcom was nominated by **Marna Montgomery of T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Malcom Food Pantry**.

The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of Iowa are driven by our commitment to community. To celebrate local volunteers this summer, we launched the Shine the Light contest. Employees and member-consumers of Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives were invited to nominate someone who makes a positive difference in their community.

Three winners will be awarded a \$1,500 donation to their charity or community organization of choice and featured in the September issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine.

Please join us in congratulating and thanking these nominees for their outstanding commitment to community. Learn more at [www.IowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.IowaShineTheLight.com). 🌟

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



**Arika Hammond** from Cherokee was nominated by **June Hammond of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Puppy Jake Foundation**.

**Robert Hantsbarger** from Arthur was nominated by **Twyla Godbersen of North West Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Schaller Volunteer Fire Department**.

**Patti Hastings** from Harpers Ferry was nominated by **Hollee McCormick of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **American Legion Auxiliary**.

**Ronda Hughes** from Lime Springs was nominated by **Jason Passmore of MiEnergy Cooperative** for her work with the **Lime Springs Betterment Foundation**.

**Jodi Irlmieir** from Anita was nominated by **Lorilyn Schultes of Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association** for her work with **Anita Town & Country**.

**Chris Jensen** from Hamlin was nominated by **Gail Petersen of Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association** for her work with the **Caring and Sharing**.

**Barry Johnson** from Hampton was nominated by **Garrett Thompson of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Harriman-Nielsen Historic Farm**.

**Margaret (Margie) Kenyon** from Dallas Center was nominated by **Carolyn Snyder of Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association** for her work with the **Minburn Community Betterment Group**.

**Cynthia (Cindy) Loots** from Pomeroy was nominated by **Nancy Bruns of Calhoun County Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Pomeroy Area Veteran's Park**.

**Erica Luebbers** was nominated by **Amanda Petersen of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Royal Family Kids Camp**.

**Steve Mixer** from Burlington was nominated by **Gina Hardin of Access Energy Cooperative** for his work with the **Des Moines County Community Emergency Response Team**.

**Dwight Morenz** from Lake City was nominated by **Darcy Maulsby of Calhoun County Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with **Central School Preservation**.

**Linda Muhlbauer** from Manilla was nominated by **Jean Voegel of Western Iowa Power Cooperative** for her work with **Main Street Manning**.

**George North** from Allison was nominated by **Deb McWhirter of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with **Allison Wilder Park**.

**Dan & Carol Patterson** from Marengo were nominated by **Nancy McMann of T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative** for their work with **Marengo Food Distribution**.

**Stacy Pippitt** from Missouri Valley was nominated by **Lori Clark of Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with **St. Paul Community Table**.

**Larry Rapagnani** from Marcus was nominated by **Jolene Deichmann of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for his work with **Community Ministries**.

**Lori Roose** from Waverly was nominated by **Sandi Miller of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Little Lambs Preschool**.

**Todd Ross** from Denmark was nominated by **Renae Welborn of Access Energy Cooperative** for his work with **Denmark Fire & Rescue**.

**Marianne Sjaarda** from Sioux Center was nominated by **Jen Sandbulte of North West Rural Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **HOPE Food Pantry**.

**Beth Thole** from Sibley was nominated by **Don & Cindy Thole of Osceola Electric Cooperative, Inc.** for her work with the **McCallum Museum/Farm Shed**.

**Matthew Turack** from Griswold was nominated by **John Turack of Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative** for his work with the **Pregnancy Center of Southwest Iowa**.

**Marlene Walthart** was nominated by **Dawn Eveleth of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative** for her work with the **Emmet County Animal Shelter**.

*We'll announce the three winners during the 2021 Iowa State Fair. Visit the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa booth in the Bruce Rastetter 4-H Exhibits Building.*

SAFETY MATTERS

# Linemen complete pole climbing exercise

During June's safety meeting, Scott Meinecke, director of safety for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, visited Grundy County REC to educate the staff on a variety of safety related topics. This included conducting pole-climbing and bucket-rescue exercises with linemen. ⚡



Karl Nielsen



Aaron Bird

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR HUNTERS

This hunting season, we encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and take necessary precautions while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.



-  **Take notice** of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
-  **Do not** shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
-  **Know** where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.
-  **Be especially careful** in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
-  **Do not** place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.
-  **Do not** place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazards to our line crews.

OFFICE CLOSING



Grundy County REC will be closed on Monday, Sept. 6, in observance of

# Labor Day

Our phones are answered 24/7 at 319-824-5251

ANNOUNCEMENT



# National Safe Digging Day

National Safe Digging Day is Aug. 11. If you dig in your yard before having underground utilities marked, you could be in for an unwelcome surprise. Make sure you call 8-1-1 first! ⚡

# Felix Grundy Parade



Derek Snakenberg, apprentice lineman, and Allyson Miller, executive assistant/HR, participated in the 2021 Felix Grundy Days Parade in Grundy Center last month.

HOW YOUR CO-OP WORKS

## Meet Grundy County REC Director Nick Strohbehn



Each month, Grundy County REC will feature a different member of your co-op board. This is an excellent opportunity for members to learn more about the board

that serves you.

This month, we introduce you to Nick Strohbehn of Reinbeck, your District 3 Director.

### How long have you been on the board of GCREC?

I have been on the board for nearly three years.

### Why did you decide to run?

I chose to run for the Grundy County REC board of directors because I was unfamiliar with how

the REC worked, and I thought it would be interesting to learn about the co-op business model.

### What are some of your accomplishments while on the board and/or committees you've served on?

I think we have taken a step in the right direction with our hiring of a new general manager and all the new staff seem to work well together as a team. Also, being able to return substantial patronage the last couple years to help benefit our members.

### What's your favorite thing about serving on the GCREC board?

I have really enjoyed getting to know the board members and staff; I've also enjoyed getting the opportunity to work through issues together. ⚡

CONGRATULATIONS



## Nielsen family welcomes daughter

The Grundy County REC family grew by 10 little fingers and 10 little toes last month! Karl Nielsen, first class lineman, and his wife Brandi welcomed their second baby girl into the world. Sadie Jean Nielsen, born July 10, weighed 7 pounds, 3.4 ounces and was 20 inches long. Congratulations to Karl, Brandi and Kaylee (big sister) – she is beautiful! ⚡

## CORRECTION

In the July issue, we listed Kenneth Fogt as a member of this year's nominating committee, which was incorrect. The 2021 nominating committee members were Mike Wiarda and Mark Schildroth. We apologize for any confusion. ⚡

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow us on Facebook!



Make sure to follow Grundy County REC on Facebook to stay up-to-date on energy efficiency information, safety tips, current promotions, outages and more! ⚡

# Working together to combat cyber attacks

BY PAUL WESSLUND

Computer hacking is a top news story these days, and for years, electric cooperatives have focused on blocking cyber threats from interfering with the nationwide electric grid that keeps our lights on. You can also help defend against that electronic mischief – and you should!

## Protecting the “smart grid”

The network of power lines, transformers and substations adds up to an incredibly complex system that reliably brings us conveniences of modern life. That network is transforming into a “smart grid” that does an even better job of delivering electricity.

It’s adding renewable energy sources like solar and wind power, which calls for sophisticated software to keep power flowing at night or when the wind isn’t blowing. Computer algorithms make plans for the most efficient and reliable operations when forecasts call for storms, wildfires or times of high-power use.

Making such modern miracles happen means joining with another dominant part of today’s world – the internet.

The blink-of-an-eye speed of balancing the generation of electricity with the flip of a light switch relies heavily on the electronically connected world. The internet is incredibly useful, but also a target of troublemakers from lone, self-taught experts to international crime rings. Electric utilities know this and work every day through their own offices and national organizations on cyber safety.

You can take smart steps, too, to protect yourself and the electric grid. Because the power grid uses the internet, that means that any of your internet-connected devices

are also part of the grid: computers, security cameras, printers, smart TVs, health monitors – even cars and lightbulbs can be connected to the internet.

## Four ways to be cyber secure

Here are the top tips experts advise to defend against hackers:

- 1 Lock the front door.** If you have wireless internet in your home, the traffic comes in through the router. If you take just one step, create a strong password for that router, and set a reminder to change the password regularly.
- 2 Use a secret code.** Weak passwords make things easier for hackers. A study found the most-used password in 2021 was “123456.” A more secure option uses combinations of uppercase and lowercase letters, combined with numbers and special symbols like “&” or “!” Be aware that every major internet-connected appliance comes with its own factory-installed password you should change right away.

**3 Stay vigilant.** If you receive an email with an attachment you weren’t expecting, don’t open the attachment. If you get a message with a link you didn’t know was coming, don’t click it. Even if it’s from a friend, call them and ask if they sent it – hackers can send messages using your friend’s address.

**4 Stay state-of-the-art.** Your computer and other devices will regularly offer updates – install them. They often contain security updates to protect against the latest cyber threats. And they will come to you directly through your computer, phone or printer.

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month is in October, and the Department of Homeland Security has titled this year’s theme, “If you connect it, protect it.” That’s good advice for your home – and for the electric grid! ⚡

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

## Four Ways to Combat Cyber Threats

- 1.** Periodically change the password for your Wi-Fi router.
- 2.** Use unique codes or phrases to create stronger passwords.
- 3.** Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders.
- 4.** Update software regularly.



# School clothes shopping showdown

BY VALERIE VAN KOOTEN

When our three boys were at home, one of my least-favorite chores of the year was determining what clothing fit after a long summer of what always seemed to be unprecedented growth. As August rolled around, I would haul out the contents of their closets for the annual “try-on.”

This was met with great resistance by the male contingent. I don’t know if girls would have been any easier, but each of my sons swore the clothing in their closet was just fine, even though I had seen inches of ankle showing in the blue jeans and bulging seams on the T-shirts over the summer.

The final showdown usually came the night before the scheduled shopping trip, when they were forced to try everything on so I could make notes. They would rip items on and off with a speed I couldn’t have purchased on a school day, so my notes were usually perfunctory and illegible.

## Dressing room drama

It was a challenge to do the shopping day with all three boys, but I didn’t have the time or energy to take them one at a time. We would set off in fairly high spirits, but ultimately, we always found ourselves in the same situation – the boys inside a men’s dressing room with me standing outside the entrance, trying to get them to try things I was bringing in.

Any one of the three would hiss, “Mom, get OUT OF THE MEN’S DRESSING ROOM!”

“What’s the big deal? Everyone is curtained off,” I’d reply. As I looked around, I realized the only other dressing room occupants were other mothers trying to get a glimpse of



whether the jeans on their own child were too tight or too long.

I added, “If you won’t come out into the store so I can see what you’re wearing, I have to come in.”

“I am NOT coming out there,” a son would growl.

“Okay, your choice,” I’d blithely chirp, ripping the curtain open.

No matter how an item of clothing fit, my sons would pronounce it “fine.” Too big, falling off the shoulders, stomach showing, pants squeezing, hems dragging . . . it was all “fine.” It took the persistence of a sleuth to get a true picture of what fit and what didn’t.

We’d arrive home, crabby, tired and hungry.

## Foiling mom’s plans

I thought I arrived at a great solution the year the boys were old

enough to drive themselves. I sent them shopping with a list and some money and told them to come home with what they needed. Our youngest son returned with a bag of socks and three video games. He determined he didn’t need anything else to wear. Plot foiled.

My husband Kent was in a dressing room trying on jeans recently, when he overheard a conversation a man and his son were having next to him. The father instructed, “When mom comes over, tell her you love it. If you say it’s ‘fine,’ she’ll make you go out and show her.”

It seems they’re on to us, moms. 🚀

Valerie Van Kooten is a writer from Pella who loves living in the country and telling its stories. She and her husband Kent have three married sons, two incredibly adorable grandsons and a lovely granddaughter.



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