

in touch

WITH MEMBERS OF GRUNDY COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Educated directors are more effective leaders



Vicki Daily, General Manager

It's no secret that for leaders to be most effective, they must be knowledgeable about the industries and issues that could impact the organizations they serve. This is especially true in the electric industry, and our local cooperative leaders – our board of directors who are elected by fellow members – invest a great amount of time in education and training so they are knowledgeable of issues that affect the operations of Grundy County REC.

Our board guides the cooperative in providing electricity that is safe, affordable, reliable and sustainable. Board directors play a crucial role in determining the strategic direction and priorities of Grundy County REC. This input and guidance are key as the co-op keeps the lights on today and also works to meet our members' future energy needs.

We strongly believe that a more informed and educated board is a more effective and successful board, which is why Grundy County REC invests resources in providing quality education and training to board directors. Through our affiliations with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, our directors have valuable opportunities to attend governance education courses and industry conferences so they are informed on the latest challenges, trends, regulations and technologies affecting electric cooperatives. In fact, our national association manages an extensive credential program for electric cooperative directors that includes opportunities to

earn a Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate and a Board Leadership Certificate. These programs are especially important for newer directors as they must learn quickly about their roles and responsibilities and understand the challenges and issues unique to the electric industry. Many of these education courses are provided here in Iowa which helps us manage costs.

Board directors also have a fiduciary duty to the co-op and face potential personal liability for breaching that duty. At Grundy County REC, board directors are fairly compensated for their leadership role and accepting the risks and responsibilities of governing the cooperative. Several variables affect director compensation, including the number of meetings and other education-related events and travel expenses.

Investing in valuable education and training for board directors helps ensure that our leaders make informed decisions that will guide the cooperative to a successful future as we power lives and empower the communities we serve.

Putting out fire!

During a recent Grundy County REC's safety meeting, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives focused on updating the staff's fire extinguisher protocol. This program covers fire prevention concepts in the workplace.

When a fire breaks out employees must know about escape routes, extinguisher locations, rally points, how to use an extinguisher and several other key points. All employees participated in a hands-on training course.



Member Service Manager Mike Geerdes practicing fire safety procedures as others observe.

Do we have your latest information?

It's important for Grundy County REC to have the most up-to-date contact information for our members to maintain communication about your accounts and other cooperative business. However, there are numerous accounts with outdated information. Current phone numbers are essential when we send out phone messages for important issues or notifications.

Please call Grundy County REC at 319-824-5251 or 800-390-7605 to update your information.

Warm up safely with space heaters

Space heaters can work wonders on the coldest winter days to warm rooms that your central heating system doesn't keep comfortable. But while manufacturers have worked to build more safety features into this alternative heating source, users still should be careful to ensure these cozy heaters don't become fire hazards.

Space heaters are designed as a supplemental source of heat, not as the main source. So you shouldn't use them constantly, especially in rooms that you don't use much. Check your space heaters for a UL seal, and follow these guidelines for safely using them:

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from drapes and furniture that could catch fire.
- Don't use extension cords with space heaters.
- Inspect the heater's cord periodically for frayed wires or damaged insulation. Don't use a space heater with a damaged cord.
- Check for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug gets hot, the outlet may need to be replaced by a qualified electrician. This could be the sign of a home wiring issue.
- Place your heater on a flat, level surface. Don't place heaters on furniture, as they may fall and break or even start a fire.
- Unless the heater is designed for use outdoors or in bathrooms, don't use it in wet areas.

On average, how much will it cost to run two 1,500-watt space heaters this winter?

Number of Space Heaters



Hours per day



Cents Per kWh

\$0.110



Cost per month

\$79.20

Scholarships available

- Corn Belt Power Cooperative partners with Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon, Iowa, to offer four \$500 scholarships. Recipients may be either first- or second-year students at Northwest Iowa Community College studying in the programs of Electrical Technology, Powerline or Powerline Technology. Students must maintain a 2.5 minimum GPA. Applications must be filed with Northwest Iowa Community College Foundation by March 1, 2019. For an application or more information, contact Sheila Van Engen, foundation secretary, Northwest Iowa Community College Foundation, 603 West Park Street, Sheldon, IA, 51201-1046, (800) 352-4907 ext. 246, svanengen@nwicc.edu.

- Corn Belt Power partners with Iowa Lakes Community College to offer one \$500 scholarship. To qualify, the recipient must be enrolled in the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program, a first- or second-year student at Iowa Lakes Community College, maintain 2.5 minimum GPA and be an Iowa resident. For an application or more information, contact Alison Mason, Iowa Lakes Community College, 712.362.0491 ext. 4491 or amason@iowalakes.edu. Applications due by April 1, 2019.

Brighten your home with LED holiday lights

Thinking about purchasing LED holiday lights this year? We're making it even easier and more cost-effective.

With our LED holiday light rebate, you can save up to \$2 per item, with no limit on the number purchased.

LED lights are:

Energy efficient - use less electricity compared to conventional bulbs.

Long lifespan - up to 50,000 hours or more used outdoors and twice as long indoors.

Safe - No chance of combustion since the bulbs are cool to the touch, regardless of how long they are left on.

Contact us today for an LED holiday light rebate form!

Savor an energy-efficient Thanksgiving feast

Make this year's Thanksgiving your most energy-wise ever. Enlist everyone to come up with energy-saving ideas.

Along with your invitation to family and friends, ask everyone to bring more than a side dish. Instruct them to come prepared to share their favorite ways to save energy and reduce their monthly electric bills.

After dinner, go around the table and have each person share a tip.

Save your ideas for last. Here's a cheat sheet to help you show off:

1. **Turn down the thermostat.** With a full house and a hot kitchen, your house will become steamy.
2. **Replace your light bulbs with LEDs and new LED fixtures.**

Your guests won't notice a difference in lighting, but you'll see a difference in your energy bill.

3. **Stuff the turkey AND the oven.** Cook several dishes at once. A variation of 25 degrees in either direction from the recommended cooking temperature will still produce the desired result.
4. **Cook at least one dish in the microwave.** Microwaves are faster than the oven and use less electricity.
5. **Completely fill the dishwasher.**



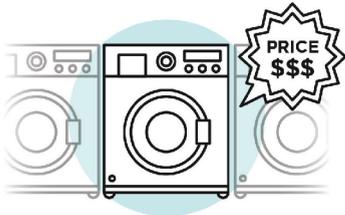
With a mountain of plates, using the dishwasher is more efficient than hand washing.

6. **Let leftovers cool slightly** so your refrigerator doesn't have to work so hard to cool hot foods.

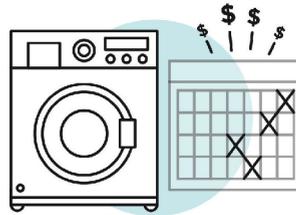
TIPS FOR PURCHASING NEW APPLIANCES

When shopping for new appliances, there are two price tags you should consider:

1. Purchase price of the appliance (think of this as a down payment)

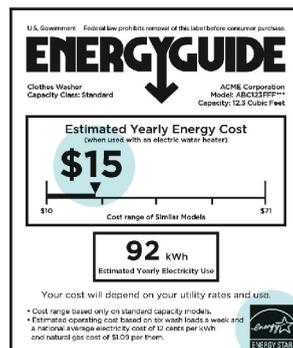


2. Cost to operate the appliance over its lifetime (how much energy the appliance uses)



That second price is important because you'll be paying for the appliance's energy use for the next 10 to 20 years.

- Look for the ENERGY STAR® label. ENERGY STAR-qualified products exceed the federal minimum standards for efficiency and quality.
- Carefully review the EnergyGuide label on the appliance. The label provides information about how much energy an appliance uses compared to similar models.
- Once you choose your make and model, compare prices. Keep in mind, many retailers will match a lower price offered by competitors.
- Recycle or sell your old appliance. Ask the retailer if they'll pick up your old appliance, or you can sell it yourself. Either option is better than the landfill!

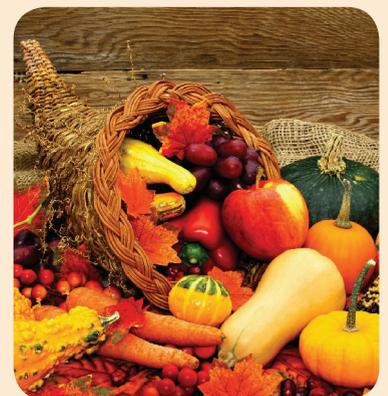


We're thankful for you

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for your membership in our electric cooperative.

Originally established to bring electricity to our area when no one else would, the cooperative is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs.

Together, let's continue making our corner of the world a better place. We can't do it without you, and for that, we're thankful for your membership.



High satisfaction shown among C&I accounts

Commercial and industrial members of Grundy County REC and Corn Belt Power Cooperative's member co-ops show high overall satisfaction with the service they receive from the cooperative they own.

Corn Belt Power conducted commercial and industrial satisfaction research on behalf of its member co-ops in April and May of this year, receiving 47 responses from 117 key account members via email, mail and phone. In addition to numerical ratings, verbal comments were collected and reported to individual member cooperatives.

Jim Vermeer, vice president, business development, explains, "About every five years, we conduct this research to see if our existing business development programs meet the needs of commercial and industrial accounts. It not only identifies trends in serving these members, but it helps us develop services that we provide."

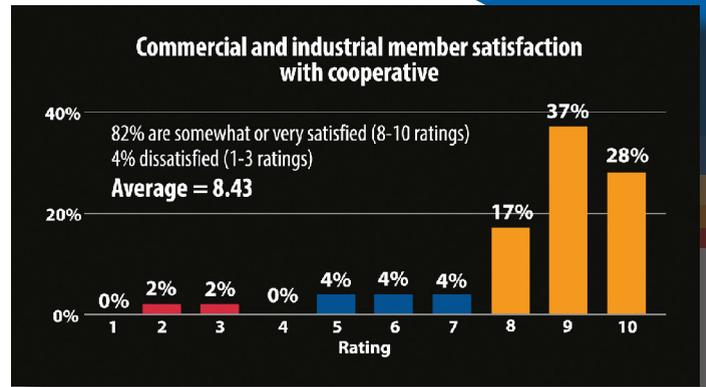
Overall satisfaction with the cooperatives that serve them was high. The aggregated survey results for all co-ops in the Corn Belt Power system showed 82 percent of respondents giving an overall satisfaction rating of 8 to 10 on a 10-point scale. Attributes that scored the highest were:

- Restores power quickly – 98 percent
- Has knowledgeable and competent employees – 94 percent
- Conducts business in a professional manner – 91 percent

Attributes rated lowest were:

- Provides electricity at lowest possible cost
- Uses renewable energy like wind and solar

Although the respondents had a



lower satisfaction score for their co-ops' involvement in renewable energy, they also rated that attribute the lowest on importance and 61 percent of businesses responded they would not be willing to pay more for renewable energy.

Many of the businesses participating in the survey have installed energy efficiency measures, with efficient lighting, occupancy sensors, efficient production equipment and more efficient motors topping the list. Future plans to improve energy efficiency include implementing process improvement programs and using infrared imaging of electrical and mechanical systems.



Office closed Nov. 15

The Grundy County REC's office will be closed for employees to participate in training on Nov. 15.

To report an outage or electrical issues during this time, please call 319-824-5251 or 800-390-7605 to speak to our dispatcher.



We will be closed Thursday, Nov. 22 and Friday, Nov. 23. Phones are answered 24/7 to report outages and emergencies. We are thankful for you, our members, and we appreciate the opportunity to serve you!

Safe portable generator use

Portable generators are useful during winter storms, but if not used safely they can cause injuries and death.

- Use portable generators outdoors in well-ventilated areas away from all doors, windows and vents.
- Make sure you have carbon monoxide alarms in your home.
- Do not use a generator in a wet area.
- Connect appliances to the generator with a heavy-duty extension cords.
- Do not fuel your generator when it is running.



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303 N Park Avenue • P.O. Box 39 • Grundy Center, IA 50638-0039
PHONES: 319.824.5251 or 800.390.7605 • FAX: 319.824.3118
OFFICE HOURS: Mon. - Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
GENERAL MANAGER: Vicki Daily



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