



WATTS CURRENT

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative



November 2010

Heat Your Home Safely this Winter

Making wrong choices in heating your home this winter could prove disastrous, even deadly. Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) and the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) reminds consumers they can achieve comfort and desired energy savings without increasing the risk of harm to themselves or others.

To ensure everyone's safety:

- NEVER use a gas stove or oven for space heating.
- NEVER leave open burning fireplaces unattended.
- NEVER leave burning candles unattended

Supplemental home heating methods require strict adherence to safety precautions. Use extreme caution if you choose to supplement your primary heat supply. Wood-burning fireplaces and devices, candles, and portable fire pits are all fire hazards. According to the National Fire Protection Association, electric and kerosene heaters cause the most home fires during winter when more fires occur. Burning candles and overloading electrical circuits also cause many winter fires.

Always ensure adequate venting if you use a fireplace or wood burning stove. Consider that most gas and kerosene heaters, stoves, and grills are not intended for indoor use because of the ventilation that they require, so indoor use is not recommended.

Electric space heaters can help compensate for a cooler inside temperature and can be efficient when used on a limited basis to heat small, localized areas. However, they too can be dangerous and a fire hazard, causing injury or death. Many newer space heaters may have additional safety features like automatic shut off and improved heating element guards.

When using electric space heaters at home:

- Use only those with the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label.
- Remove lint and dust from them regularly.
- Keep them well away from papers, curtains, furniture, and other flammable items.
- Set them only on a non-flammable level surface, away from foot traffic.

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*All of us at
Raccoon Valley Electric
Cooperative (RVEC) wish you
and your family
a joyful holiday season!!*

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative
(RVEC)
will be
CLOSED for
for Christmas Day & for New Year's Day
on on
December 24th December 31st

Time's
Running
Out...

DECEMBER
31

...to take advantage of federal Energy Efficiency Tax Credits!

Incentives provided by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to help you make energy efficiency improvements to your existing home expire **Dec. 31, 2010**. Don't miss your chance to save!



Saving with the
STIMULUS

You can receive a tax credit for 30 percent of the cost of materials for qualifying improvements—up to \$1,500 over 2009 and 2010.

For a full list of qualified improvements visit:

www.energystar.gov/taxcredits

— CEO Comments —

Winter arrived in Northwest Iowa on November 12th with a formidable winter storm. A combination of snow, ice and wind caused nearly 600 RVEC members in Sac County to be without power at the height of the storm. Power was restored by Sunday afternoon for a majority of our member-owners. RVEC lost over 100 power poles and numerous cross arms and lines. To assist with the power restoration RVEC received 50 line workers by noon on Saturday and we continued to receive additional help through Monday.

We also had many members helping us by reporting damage and driving the lines looking for problems. We thank everyone for their assistance and we appreciate our member-owners' patience during this storm. The Cooperatives bordering RVEC also experienced many outages and similar damage. RVEC member-

owners are encouraged to report any safety concerns, downed power lines and low hanging wires immediately to RVEC. We all pray that this is not a preview of what the rest of the winter holds.

In response to January's devastating ice storm, we currently have Aevenia Construction and our own crews rebuilding over 30 miles of weakened lines. We are currently receiving bids for rebuilding an additional 200 miles of line. Work will continue throughout the winter as weather allows. Please give me a call if you have any questions about this process or schedule.

I wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

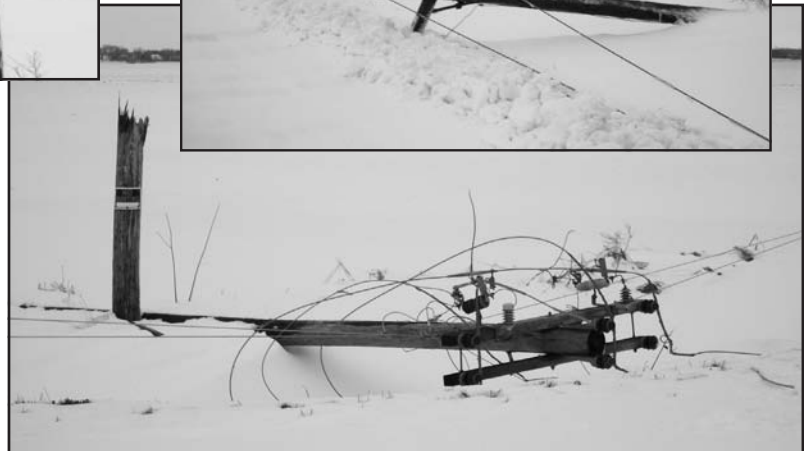


Property Taxes Paid

Property taxes are used to help fund such important things as education and city and county government. You might not be aware of it, but your Cooperative pays property taxes. Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) receives a tax bill for the poles, wires, transformers, etc. out on the line and another tax bill for the offices and warehouses. RVEC pays taxes in nine different counties that we serve.

The following is a breakdown of the property taxes paid in 2010.

County	Taxes Paid
Audubon County	\$3,173
Buena Vista County	\$73
Calhoun County	\$585
Carroll County	\$42,015
Crawford County	\$27
Greene County	\$2,720
Guthrie County	\$317
Ida County	\$39
Sac County	\$22,369



Damage from the November 12th winter storm.

Stay Safe If You Need To Use Your Generator

Portable electric generators are often put into use for temporary power. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions for installation and operation.

Use generators or other fuel-powered machines outside the home. Carbon monoxide fumes are odorless and can quickly poison you indoors.

Take special care not to overload the generator. Use appropriately sized extension cords to carry the electric load. Make sure the cords have a grounded, three-pronged plug and are in good condition.

Never run cords under rugs or carpets!

A double throw switch is **REQUIRED** when connecting generators to your electrical system. The reverse flow of electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

Give Space Heaters Their Space

Space heaters can work wonders on the coldest winter days to warm rooms your central heating system can't quite reach. But while manufacturers have worked to build more safety features into this alternative heating source, users still should take precautions 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 an Underwriters Laboratories (UL) seal and follow these guidelines for safely using it:

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from drapes and furniture that could catch fire.
- Don't use extension cords with space heaters unless absolutely necessary.
- Inspect the heater's cord periodically for frayed wire or damaged insulation. Don't use a space heater with a damaged cord.
- Check periodically 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.

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- Turn them off whenever you are not in the room or may fall asleep.
- Supervise children and pets in the vicinity.
- Make sure open-faced heaters have a proper screen and grate in place.
- Check for frayed cords before each use and for overheating cords periodically.
- Avoid using extension cords. If you do, use only properly grounded and insulated heavy-duty electrical cords (UL listed).
- **NEVER** hide a cord or extension cord under furniture, rugs, or drapes.

Complaint Procedure

The Iowa Utility Board requires that all non-rate regulated utilities post the following notice to its membership:

If a member-consumer has a problem with his/her service, please write or call:

Raccoon Valley Electric
Cooperative
P.O. Box 486
Glidden, Iowa 51443
712.659.3649

If the member-consumer's complaint is related to Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative's (RVEC) service rather than its rates, and RVEC does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the:

Iowa Utilities Division
Department of Commerce
350 Maple St.
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
515.281.5979

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For outages and emergencies --

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call: 712.659.3649

Former Sac County REC members
call: 712.662.4275



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The power of human connections

New Year's Resolution: Seal Leaks

Every hole in every wall of your house has the potential to rob it of comfortable, heated air and let the outdoor weather come inside.

That's a waste of the energy it takes to keep your home warm.

Take a walk around every room in your house. Notice your electrical outlets, Internet and TV cables and phone lines where they come into the house from the outside. Is there any space around the hole where the line or switch plate or cable fit?

If they're not snug, caulk around them until they are. That will help prevent air from leaking inside and out.



Sign up to receive Smart Choices, our monthly e-newsletter

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) offers Smart Choices as a way to keep in touch with members with energy efficiency news and important local information. Smart Choices readers also find out about drawings for prizes, special promotions and more.

Resolve to Get Involved

You get your electricity from an electric "cooperative" that is owned by its consumers — which means you're an owner.

Most big electric companies are owned by stockholders who don't live anywhere near the community where the customers buy their electricity. So they're not as invested in the well-being of the community or its residents.

Because electric cooperatives like yours are owned by consumers and consider you and your neighbors its "members," you have the right to vote during

board of director elections. You even have the right to run for a seat on the board if you want to.

Make a New Year's resolution to get more involved with the electric cooperative where you're an owner and a member. Determine to vote in the board election, to attend the cooperative's annual membership meeting and read the newsletter so you can keep up with what's going on.

When you're part of a cooperative, you have a say. Resolve to take advantage of that privilege during the coming year.

Spot Your Number

Read Watts Current and watch for your location number. If you spot it, call RVEC by the 20th of the month and you will receive an electrical bill credit for \$10.00.