

MAY 2026

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Shine the Light
contest returns

Celebrating this year's
scholarship winners

Best burger recipes

Win \$100 in beef certificates ► See Page 3

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ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Alannah McKibben, a T.I.P. REC member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

WE ALL KNOW A LOCAL VOLUNTEER WORTH CELEBRATING

BY ERIN CAMPBELL



This is one of my favorite times of the year. While I enjoy the lovely weather and vibrant blooms, what makes it extra special is seeing your entries come in for our annual Shine the Light contest!

Celebrating volunteers across Iowa

Now in our sixth year, the Shine the Light contest is a statewide effort where Iowa's electric cooperatives celebrate our commitment to the communities we serve. During the month of June, member-consumers, employees and retirees of Iowa electric co-ops are encouraged to nominate volunteers in their communities who are making a positive difference. If you live in Iowa and receive electricity from an electric cooperative, you are eligible to enter our contest.

After the contest closes on June 30, our panel of judges will take on the difficult task of selecting three volunteers, and each will receive a \$3,000 donation to their local charity. We also feature each winning volunteer in the September issue of this magazine so our readers can learn more about the important work they do.

Who you can nominate

We are a few weeks away from accepting nominations but start thinking now about who you would like to recognize this year. You can nominate a friend, neighbor or relative for our Shine the Light contest starting June 1; nominees do not need to be electric cooperative member-consumers. Nonwinners who were nominated in previous years are welcome to be nominated again. Minors can be nominated as long as you have permission from their parents or



Nominate a local volunteer and they could win \$3,000 for their charity!

Contest entries accepted during June at www.IowaShineTheLight.com

legal guardians. Each co-op household can make one nomination per year.

How to submit a nomination

In the contest entry, we ask for some of your basic contact information (the nominator), contact information for the person you are nominating, and a summary (in 500 words or less) of how your nominee has made a difference in the community and how their local charity/nonprofit might use the \$3,000 donation. We try to keep the nomination process

simple while still providing essential details for our judges to consider.

This program is such a success because co-op members like you take time to celebrate those who go above and beyond in your community. Thank you for supporting our Shine the Light contest and consider making a nomination during the month of June at www.IowaShineTheLight.com!

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

EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

WIN \$100 IN BEEF CERTIFICATES

May is Beef Month in Iowa! To celebrate, we're giving away \$100 in beef certificates to use at a grocery store. You can select your favorite cuts to purchase, and then make mouthwatering meals at home.

Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting www.ieclmagazine.com no later than May 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 pizza stone and cookbook from the March issue was **Bob Toms**, a **Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative** member-consumer.



ENTER ONLINE BY MAY 31!



SHINE THE LIGHT

Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperatives
of Iowa

**Nominate a local volunteer
and they could win
\$3,000 for their charity!**

Contest entries accepted during June at
IowaShineTheLight.com



OUTAGE INFORMATION

If you don't have power or if you have a power emergency, call 712-659-3649 or 800-253-6211. Our phones are answered 24/7 year-round.

RVEC PARTICIPATES IN REC DAY ON THE HILL

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) was proud to participate in the 2026 REC Day on the Hill held at the Iowa State Capitol. This annual event brings together electric cooperative leaders, staff and advocates from across the state to connect directly with legislators and share the voice of rural Iowa.

Nearly 200 advocates, dressed in green, filled the Capitol to emphasize the importance of reliable, affordable electricity and to address the unique needs of cooperative members. RVEC representatives spent the day meeting with local lawmakers to discuss issues that directly impact the communities we serve.

A key focus this year was strengthening protections for utility lineworkers. Proposed legislation aimed to increase penalties for those who threaten or harm utility workers while they are on the job. Lineworkers often work in dangerous conditions, especially during storms and emergencies, and ensuring their safety remains a top priority.

Discussions also covered energy policy topics, such as third-party solar proposals and their potential impact on local control, reliability and fairness for cooperative members. While electric cooperatives support renewable energy when it makes sense locally, maintaining a balanced and responsible approach is crucial to protecting all members.

Besides legislative discussions, the event also provided an opportunity to educate policymakers about the cooperative difference. As a not-for-profit, member-owned utility, RVEC is dedicated to providing safe, reliable and affordable power while reinvesting in the communities we serve.

Events like REC Day on the Hill play a crucial role in making sure rural voices are heard and represented in decision-making. RVEC appreciates the chance to build relationships with elected officials and advocate for our members.

We appreciate the time legislators took to meet with us and thank them for their ongoing support of rural Iowa and electric cooperatives.



Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative
Reliable • Affordable • Responsible

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Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Summer Hours (Memorial Day - Labor Day)

Monday – Thursday: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

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- Karen Werner Schaller
- Steve Schable Carroll
- Adam Handlos Glidden
- Dave Schroeder Coon Rapids
- Carol Raasch Odebolt

Keaton Hildreth, CEO

RVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



NOTICE OF MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The following information is provided in preparation for the business-only Annual Meeting of Members on Sept. 16, 2026.

Any person, firm, corporation, or body politic may become a member of the Cooperative by:

- Applying for a membership certificate in the Association.
- Agreeing to purchase electric energy from the Cooperative as hereinafter specified.
- Agreeing to comply with and be bound by the Articles of Incorporation of the Cooperative and the By-Laws and any amendment thereto and such rules and regulations as may from time to time be adopted by the Board of Directors, provided, however, that no person, firm, corporation or body politic shall become a Member unless and until he/she or it has been accepted for membership by the Board of Directors or Members.

No person, firm, corporation, or body politic may have more than ONE membership in the Cooperative.

A husband and wife may jointly become members, and the above provisions' foregoing provisions may accept their application for joint membership.

No member of this Association may own more than one membership, and each member shall be entitled to one vote and not more at all corporate meetings. Votes shall be cast by member-owner and not by proxy.

Representation

The business and affairs of the Cooperative shall be managed by a Board of seven (7) Directors who must reside in and receive service from the Cooperative at a location within the district they represent. The number of Directors whose terms expire at such meeting shall be elected to hold office for three (3) years or until their respective successors have been elected and qualify. The election of the directors shall be by ballot, and each voting member shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote for each director to be elected.

Meeting of members

The Annual Meeting, as specified in the Articles of Incorporation, shall be held each year at such times as determined by the Board of Directors. Special meetings of the Cooperative's members may be called and held as provided for in the Articles of Incorporation. All Annual Meetings shall be held at locations specified in the Notice of the meeting determined by the Board of Directors.

Nominations

It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than ninety (90) days before the date of a meeting of the Members at which Directors are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of seven (7) Members of the Cooperative who shall be selected to give equitable representation on the committee to the geographical areas served or to be served by the Cooperative. No officer or Member of the Board of Directors shall be appointed a member of such committee. The committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least sixty (60) days before the meeting a list of nominations for Directors. Still, any twenty (20) or more Members may make other nominations in writing over their signatures not less than forty-five (45) days before the meeting. The Secretary shall post the same at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted. The Secretary shall also mail with the notice of the meeting a statement of the number of Directors to be elected and separately show the nominations made by the committee on nominations and nominations made by petition.

RVEC BOARD APPROVES ALLOCATION

The patronage allocation of \$1 million for 2025 has been applied to all Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) member-owners' patronage accounts that received service last year. Your allocation amount is shown on your bill.

Deferred patronage allocations are revenues exceeding the operating expenses of the cooperative, which are shown in the books as margins. This is allocated back to member-owners as patronage and is in proportion to

the amount you paid to the cooperative for electric service in 2025.

At present, the patronage has no cash value and cannot be used in payment of electric bills, or any other bill owed to RVEC. Even if you move off our lines, the patronage cannot be paid to you until that year is approved to be refunded by the board of directors.

The only time patronage can be refunded, other than the board of directors

approving a general refund to all member-owners for a particular year, is if the owner is deceased. The executor must complete the required paperwork. Estates are usually refunded several times per year when approved by the board of directors.

Please keep RVEC informed when you have a change of address. This ensures any future patronage checks will come directly to you.

ARE SMART APPLIANCES RIGHT FOR YOUR HOME?

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE



Smart technology is quickly becoming part of everyday life, and home appliances are no exception. From thermostats to refrigerators, connected devices promise greater convenience, improved energy efficiency and more control at your fingertips. But are these features truly worth it for every household? Before making the switch, it's important to understand how smart appliances work and whether they align with your lifestyle.

What makes an appliance “smart”?

Let's start by defining what “smart” means. Smart appliances – such as refrigerators, washers, ovens, thermostats and water heaters – connect to the internet. Typically, through Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, these appliances can be controlled using your smartphone, tablet or voice-assistant device. They are designed to optimize energy use and add convenience. Some smart devices can even learn your habits over time.

Are smart appliances right for your home? The answer depends on your preferences and types of appliances you already have. The better question might be: Are smart appliances right for you? Do you like the newest tech and typically keep your phone within arm's reach? Do you enjoy the convenience of calling out commands to Alexa? Or do you prefer less technology or something in between? Personally, I'm somewhere in the middle.

Where smart appliances can save energy

Many smart appliances allow you to see how much energy each device consumes. That information can be helpful to better understand your energy habits and identify where energy may be going to waste.

Smart thermostats are a popular choice for managing energy use and reducing energy waste. Heating and cooling systems are typically a home's biggest sources of energy

consumption. According to ENERGY STAR®, you can save an average of 8% on heating and cooling with a smart thermostat. Savings depend on your climate, the type of system you have and how you use it.

Most energy savings from a smart thermostat come from automating temperature adjustments while you are sleeping or away from home. If you are already good at manually adjusting your thermostat, you likely won't see big savings, but you might prefer the convenience of a programmable device you can control on an app.

Smart thermostats make it much easier to program your heating and cooling schedule. Some have geofencing features that automatically adjust settings based on how far your phone is from home.

Coming in with the second-highest energy user in most homes is the water heater. I like the smart controls on my heat pump water heater. Also called a hybrid water heater, it uses

heat pump technology to move heat instead of using energy to create heat. That makes it two to three times more efficient than a conventional electric resistance water heater. You can save even more energy with smart heat pump water heaters.

I can monitor energy use, change settings if we need more hot water and check how much hot water is available before I jump in the shower after my kids have used it. The app notifies me when it's time to clean the air filter on top of the unit. I can access that information without having to go down to the basement. I can even

set it to vacation mode after I've left the house for a trip. Not all heat pump water heaters have smart technology, so be sure to check before buying.

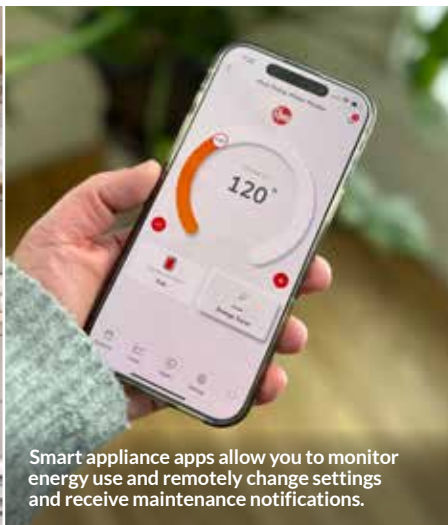
Balancing convenience with potential drawbacks

My refrigerator is a different story. I like the ability to monitor energy use, but it can be annoying to have my phone notify me that the door is open when I'm thousands of miles away at a work conference. There are certain features that can only be controlled through the app, which I find frustrating. The next thing I know, my husband texts me to make more ice

while he's standing right next to it, and I'm on the other side of the country.

Monitoring energy use and making it easier to control your household devices are benefits of smart appliances. Before upgrading, do your research to understand how the features work and whether they benefit your lifestyle. Smart technology can help lower your energy use. But, in some cases, you're better off improving your energy habits with the appliances already in your home.

Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Smart appliance apps allow you to monitor energy use and remotely change settings and receive maintenance notifications.



You can save an average of 8% on your heating and cooling costs with a smart thermostat, according to ENERGY STAR®.



Before buying new appliances, such as a smart dryer, research how the features work to understand whether they are beneficial to your lifestyle and help lower energy use.

COOL THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH SMART APPLIANCES

- Get an alert if your refrigerator door is open.
- Look inside your refrigerator without opening the door and wasting energy each time a family member wants a snack.
- Schedule your laundry or dishwasher to operate when your electricity rates are lowest.
- Have your dryer adjust cycle time automatically with incorporated sensors to help you reduce your dryer's energy use. This feature ensures that your dryer will automatically shut off when clothes are dry.
- Turn your room air conditioner off remotely from your smartphone if you forget before you leave home.



SMASH BURGERS

- 1 cup and 3 tablespoons ketchup, divided
 - 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
 - 2 tablespoons dill relish
 - 1 tablespoon mustard
 - 1 tablespoon green onion, diced
 - 1½ teaspoons pepper, divided
 - 1¼ teaspoons salt, divided
 - 3 pounds ground beef
 - 3 tablespoons white onion, grated
 - 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
 - oil
 - 16 slices cheese
 - 8 buns
- toppings: onion, lettuce, tomato**

In a small bowl, stir together 1 cup ketchup, mayonnaise, dill relish, mustard, green onion, ½ teaspoon pepper and ¼ teaspoon salt. Set smash sauce aside. Combine ground beef, grated onion, Worcestershire sauce, 3 tablespoons ketchup, 1 teaspoon pepper and 1 teaspoon salt. Divide mixture into 16 balls. Brush skillet or griddle with oil. Place ground beef balls in skillet and smash with a piece of parchment paper to create burgers. Cook 2 minutes on high. Flip and top with one slice of cheese. Cook another 2 minutes, or until done and cheese is melted. Brush additional mayonnaise inside bun halves and toast for 2-3 minutes. Assemble burgers in order: bottom bun, generous amount of smash sauce, two burger patties, onion, lettuce leaf, tomato slice, more smash sauce and top bun. Burgers can also be grilled and onions for topping can be sautéed. *Yield: 8 sandwiches*

**Lauren Zollinger • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative**

BARBECUED BURGERS (SLOPPY JOES)

- 10 pounds ground beef
- 3 cups onion, finely chopped
- 9 teaspoons salt, optional
- ¾ teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups tomato juice
- 3 cups ketchup
- 1 cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup prepared mustard
- ¼ cup vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- ¾ cup rolled oats, to thicken

Brown ground beef, then add remaining ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes. Or, to make ahead, mix and cook all ingredients except ground beef. Divide sauce into 10 small freezer bags and freeze. When needed, brown ground beef. Then, add one portion of sauce per one pound of ground beef and simmer for 30 minutes. The sauce is also great for tacos, taco bowls and similar meals. *Entire recipe serves 30*

**Sonya Colvin • Ames
Consumers Energy**

BBQ SHREDDED BEEF

- 2 pounds beef
- 1½ cups BBQ sauce, warmed
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon dried onion

Cook beef and shred. Mix all ingredients together and serve. *Serves 6*

**Rebecca Hancox • Plano
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

BACON-WRAPPED HAMBURGERS

- ½ cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ small onion, chopped
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon ketchup
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 6 slices bacon

In a bowl, combine all ingredients except bacon. Mix well, then shape into patties. Wrap each with a piece of bacon and secure with toothpicks. Grill patties until done. *Serves 6*

Tom DeVries • Maurice
North West Rural Electric Cooperative

GOOD OL' BURGER

- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- ¼ cup dry red wine or beef broth
- 1 tablespoon chili sauce
- ¼ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound ground beef
- buns

In a large bowl, combine egg, wine or broth, chili sauce, seasoning and pepper. Add beef and mix lightly but thoroughly. Shape into four ½-inch thick patties. Cover and grill burgers over medium heat 5-7 minutes on each side, or until 160 degrees F. Grill buns cut side down over medium heat 30-60 seconds, or until toasted. Serve burgers on buns with toppings of your choice. *Yield: 4 servings*

Joel Hartter • Rock Rapids
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

STUFFED BURGERS

- 2 pounds hamburger
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup rice
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 cup zesty Italian dressing
- 1 cup Miracle Whip
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- mozzarella cheese
- button mushrooms, sliced

Mix hamburger, eggs and rice well. Form into large, thin patties and place in an air-tight container. Whisk together ketchup, dressing, Miracle Whip and Worcestershire sauce. Add mixture to container with patties and marinate overnight. Take one patty and top with 1 tablespoon mozzarella and mushroom slices. Top with another patty and thoroughly seal edges together. Brown each side of patties, then place in slow cooker. Cover with marinade sauce and simmer on low for 3-4 hours. The burgers can also be grilled if you prefer.

Mary Roberts • Victor
T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

CROWD CRUSHER BEEF BURGERS

- 10 pounds ground beef
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup ketchup
- ½ cup mustard
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup dried onions, chopped
- 1 cup sweet pickle juice

Brown ground beef with salt and pepper. Once cooked thoroughly, add the remaining ingredients. Keep tasting until desired flavor is obtained. Serve immediately or place in slow cooker to keep warm. *Yield: 20 4-ounce sandwiches*

Walter Mason • Hampton
Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative

MOCK FILET MIGNON

- 1½ pounds ground beef
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon dry onion flakes, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 small can mushroom bits and pieces
- bacon slices

Combine all ingredients except bacon and form into thick patties. Wrap each with a slice of bacon and secure with toothpicks. Broil or barbecue on a grill to desired doneness. *Serves 6*

Deb Peterson • Albia
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

WANTED:

CHICKEN DINNER RECIPES

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

Deadline is May 31

Winner, winner chicken dinner! Grilled, fried, breaded or in a casserole, we're looking for your favorite chicken recipes. Selected submission will appear in our September issue, just in time for Family Meals Month. Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name, recipe category and number of servings on all submissions.

EMAIL: recipes@ieclmagazine.com

MAIL: Recipes

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



Visit www.ieclmagazine.com and search our online archive of hundreds of recipes in various categories.



GEOHERMAL ENERGY BREAKTHROUGHS

BY JEFF GROENEWOLD

The strongest geothermal resources in the U.S. are often found in regions with active geology, such as areas near major tectonic plate boundaries. The mud pots shown here are located outside the John L. Featherstone Geothermal Plant in California.

Electric cooperatives focus on delivering safe, reliable and affordable electricity to the communities they serve – and they do that by utilizing a variety of energy generation resources, ranging from natural gas, coal, hydropower, nuclear, solar and wind. One energy source that is often overlooked is geothermal energy. Geothermal power has been used for many years and continues to improve as new technologies are developed.

Geothermal energy is a renewable source of power that comes from heat inside the Earth. Geothermal resources are natural or man-made pockets of hot water found at varying temperatures and depths below the ground. Wells, which can be just a few feet deep to several miles deep, are used to bring extremely hot water and steam to the surface for a variety of applications, such as heating and cooling, direct use in industrial processes and electricity generation.

The strongest geothermal resources in the U.S. are often found in regions with active geology, such as areas near major tectonic plate boundaries. These resources are not limited to one location but are spread across several western states. One well-known example is The Geysers in Northern California, the largest geothermal power complex in the country. Facilities like this use injected water to create steam from underground

heat, which spins turbines to generate reliable electricity for the power grid.

In 2023, geothermal generation accounted for approximately 17 billion kilowatt-hours, the equivalent of a year's worth of consumption for the city of Indianapolis.

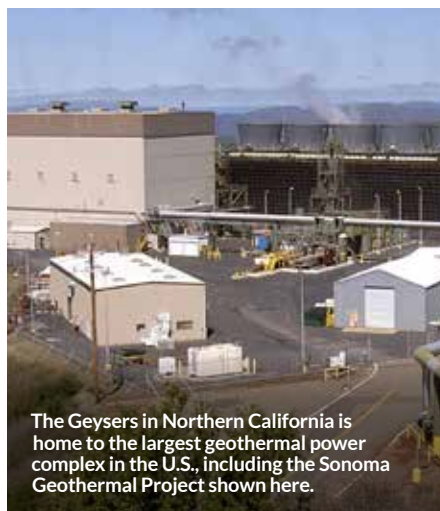
The U.S. has about 3.9 gigawatts of geothermal power capacity. Most of this power is produced in California and Nevada, which together generate the majority of U.S. geothermal electricity. Smaller amounts of geothermal power are also produced in Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah.

Technology advances and new projects

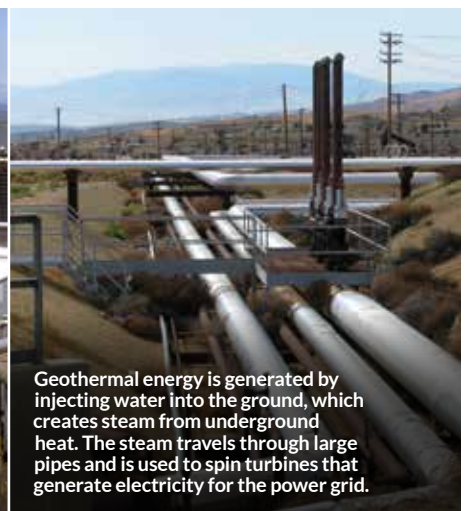
New ways of exploring geothermal energy, such as enhanced geothermal

systems (EGS) and superhot rock technology, are helping developers access heat sources that were not possible to use before. These new methods are making geothermal energy available in more places across the country.

In early 2025, investment in geothermal energy grew quickly, reaching \$1.7 billion. One example of this growth is Fervo Energy's Cape Station project in Utah. The project plans to produce 100 megawatts of power by the end of 2026 and increase to 500 megawatts by 2028. It already has approval to expand to up to 2 gigawatts. The project aims to produce electricity at a cost of \$79 per megawatt hour, even without government subsidies.



The Geysers in Northern California is home to the largest geothermal power complex in the U.S., including the Sonoma Geothermal Project shown here.



Geothermal energy is generated by injecting water into the ground, which creates steam from underground heat. The steam travels through large pipes and is used to spin turbines that generate electricity for the power grid.

Geothermal has a high capacity factor, near 90%, making it a strong source of around-the-clock power. Electric co-ops in the western U.S. can benefit from existing geothermal plants, while new technologies like EGS and hybrid designs are helping expand geothermal energy across the country. Continued federal support for tax credits, permitting and research lowers the cost and risk of new projects.

Growing investment and project development

Federal policy has helped drive recent growth in geothermal energy. The Geothermal Tax Parity Act (HR 6873), introduced in late 2025, aims to put geothermal projects on equal footing with oil and gas by extending important tax benefits, including exploration credits. Other proposed bills before the House

Natural Resources Committee focus on improving permitting, reducing exploration risk, clarifying land use and supporting lease sales.

Together, these efforts help create a stronger path for geothermal energy development in the U.S.

Jeff Groenewold writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

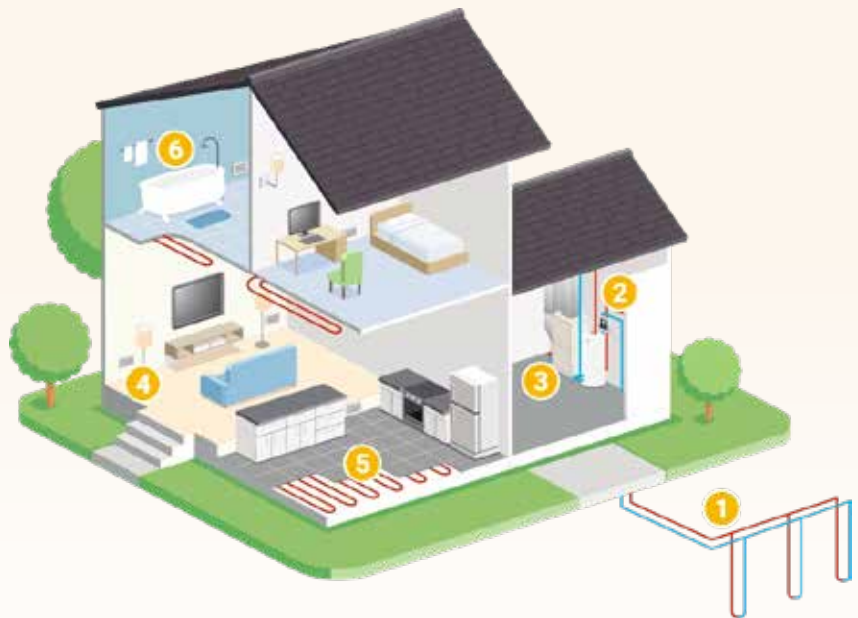
HOW GEOTHERMAL TECHNOLOGY WORKS IN HOMES

Beneath our feet, the Earth maintains a steady temperature year-round and geothermal systems use that stability to heat and cool homes efficiently. Also known as ground source heat pumps, these systems rely on a network of underground pipes, or “loops,” that circulate a water-based solution to transfer heat between your home and the ground.

In the winter, the system pulls heat from the Earth and brings it indoors. In the summer, the process reverses: excess heat from your home is transferred into the cooler ground. Because the Earth’s temperature remains relatively constant compared to outdoor air, geothermal systems operate far more efficiently than traditional heating and cooling systems.

Though the technology may sound cutting-edge, it’s been used by electric cooperatives for decades.

One of the biggest advantages is efficiency. Geothermal systems can be up to 400% efficient and typically reduce heating and cooling costs by 40% to 70%, saving homeowners around \$1,400 annually compared to older HVAC systems. While installation costs are higher – mainly due to the need for underground loop installation – many systems pay for themselves within five to seven years. Federal and state tax credits can also significantly offset upfront costs.



- 1 Ground loop.** The Earth absorbs and stores almost 50% of the sun’s solar energy. Because of this, the temperature 4 to 6 feet below ground is consistently between 45-70 degrees F. A geothermal system transfers heat from one place to another using a ground loop field buried in the yard. The loop field circulates a water-based solution through a series of pipes.
- 2 Flow center.** The flow center resides on your unit or a wall near the geothermal system. It pumps the water-based solution in the ground loop to the house or building unit to disperse heating or cooling.
- 3 Indoor heat pump.** The loop field transfers heat to the home through an indoor geothermal heat pump kept indoors through forced air and radiant heating and cooling.

- 4 Forced-air heating and cooling.** In a forced-air system, an air-handler disperses the ground’s heat to air in a home or building through ductwork and vents. In the cooling mode, the process is simply reversed.
- 5 Radiant heating (optional).** Known as the most comfortable type of heating, radiant heating uses a series of pipes under a home or building’s floor to circulate warm water, which heats the entire space evenly.
- 6 Hot water.** A hot water assist, known as a desuperheater, allows the system to capture excess heat to assist a water heater. This cuts hot water costs 25-40%. Geothermal systems can also provide 100% of the hot water needed for a home.

Beyond savings, geothermal systems offer durability and low maintenance, making them a long-term investment in both comfort and sustainability.

Unlike solar or wind, geothermal energy is available 24/7, using stored thermal energy from the Earth regardless of weather conditions.



INSTALLING ON-SITE GENERATION? NOTIFY RVEC FIRST

If you're considering installing an alternative energy system – such as solar panels or a wind turbine – you must notify Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) before construction begins. This ensures a safe and reliable connection to the electric grid for both you and RVEC.

For the safety of our crews and your property, all member-owners planning to install a generation facility connected to the electric grid must submit written notification to RVEC at least 30 days before construction. Your notice should include details, such as the type of facility (e.g., solar panels, wind turbines), and the expected completion date.

Alternative energy production facilities include solar, wind, waste management, resource recovery, refuse-derived fuel, agricultural crops or residue and wood-burning systems designed to generate electricity.

Have questions? Contact RVEC at 712-659-3649 or 800-253-6211. We're here to help ensure your project's success and safe integration into the grid.

CELEBRATING OUR 2026 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) is proud to support local students' educational goals with scholarship opportunities each year. We are excited to honor two outstanding students as our 2026 scholarship recipients.



Ella Heithoff

RVEC Basin Scholarship

RVEC is proud to award the 2026 Basin Scholarship to Ella Heithoff. The selection process was highly competitive, with judges noting the outstanding quality of all applicants. Ella, whose parents are RVEC members, plans to attend Iowa State University to study psychology.



Maddy Mason

Corn Belt Power Cooperative Basin Scholarship

Corn Belt Power Cooperative, RVEC's generation and transmission partner, offers scholarship opportunities to its member cooperatives each year. Their 2026 Basin Scholarship recipient is Maddy Mason, whose parents are RVEC members. Maddy plans to attend Simpson College to pursue a degree in education.

We celebrate Ella and Maddy for their accomplishments and wish them success as they start this exciting new chapter. RVEC is proud to invest in our communities' future by supporting students on their educational journeys.

PROPERTY TAXES PAID

Property taxes help fund important things like education and city and county government. You might not know 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 for the office and warehouse. RVEC pays taxes in the nine counties that we serve.

The following is a breakdown of the property taxes paid in 2025/2026.

COUNTY	TAXES PAID
Audubon County	\$ 3,931.00
Buena Vista County	\$ 162.00
Calhoun County	\$ 689.00
Carroll County	\$ 49,743.00
Crawford County	\$ 55.00
Greene County	\$ 3,260.00
Guthrie County	\$ 410.00
Ida County	\$ 85.00
Sac County	\$ 26,570.00



JOIN RVEC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC), our strength lies in the dedication of our member-owners, especially those who take an active role in shaping the cooperative's future. One of the most impactful ways to contribute is serving on the RVEC board of directors. This is your opportunity to be a voice for your community, advocate for members' needs and guide the cooperative toward continued success.

Why serve on the board of directors?

Serving as a director is more than a position - it's a commitment to the members, the cooperative and the community. As a board member, you will:

- **Make a difference:** Represent your neighbors and ensure members' voices are heard in critical decisions.
- **Shape the future:** Help guide policies that impact energy reliability, affordability and sustainability.
- **Develop leadership skills:** Gain valuable experience in governance, strategic planning and decision-making.
- **Support your community:** Advocate for policies that benefit local members and strengthen our cooperative's mission.

What does a director do?

Board members play a crucial role in setting the cooperative's direction by engaging in key responsibilities such as:

- **Strategic planning:** Helping shape RVEC's long-term vision and initiatives.

- **Financial oversight:** Monitoring budgets and ensuring fiscal responsibility.
- **Risk management:** Identifying challenges and maintaining operational stability.
- **Member representation:** Acting as a direct link between the cooperative and its members.
- **Political advocacy:** Engaging with policymakers to support cooperative-friendly policies.

Directors also stay informed on industry trends, emerging technologies and regulatory changes to ensure RVEC remains at the forefront of energy innovation.

How the nomination process works

RVEC's nominating committee plays a vital role in ensuring a fair and democratic election process. This process includes the following steps:

- 1 Recruitment:** One committee representative from each district helps identify potential candidates.
- 2 Candidate selection:** The committee reviews eligible members and encourages qualified individuals to run.
- 3 Nominations:** Interested members can submit their names to the committee for consideration.
- 4 Petition option:** Members can also seek election through petition nominations.

How to vote

RVEC ensures every member has a voice in the election process.

BOARD ELECTIONS IN 2026: POSITIONS AVAILABLE

At RVEC's business-only annual meeting on Sept. 16, 2026, two board positions will be open for election:

District 4: Currently held by David Onken

District 7: Currently held by Karen Werner

Members can vote:

- **By mail:** Ballots will be sent to members with clear instructions for submission.
- **In person:** Votes can be delivered directly to RVEC's headquarters in Glidden during regular business hours or placed in the drop box in Glidden.

Get involved

If you are passionate about making a difference and ensuring a strong future for RVEC, consider joining the board! To learn more or submit your candidacy, contact:

Jill Hannasch

712-659-3649 or 800-253-6211
jillh@rvec.coop

Your cooperative. Your leadership. Your future.

By serving on the board, you help shape the policies and decisions directly impacting RVEC and the community. Don't miss this opportunity to be a leader in RVEC's future!

AUTOMATICALLY PAY YOUR BILL

With your permission, Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) is able to withdraw your electric payment automatically from your bank account. Our bank will accept pre-authorized payments from any bank.

Payments are withdrawn from your bank account on the 20th of each month. At this time, there is no charge for this service; however, if our bank begins charging us, we will begin charging you a fee. If there are insufficient funds in your bank to cover your pre-authorized payment, an insufficient funds processing charge of \$30, plus bank charges, will be applied.

Please contact RVEC if you would like your payments automatically withdrawn from your bank account.

HOME SAFE HOME: SPRING INTO ELECTRICAL SAFETY

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN

Spring is a season of fresh starts. As the weather warms across Iowa, “For Sale” signs pop up, moving trucks roll through neighborhoods and many families begin a new chapter in a new home. It’s also a time when home projects and outdoor activities ramp up – making it the perfect moment to think about safety.

That timing lines up with two important reminders: May is National Electrical Safety Month and June is National Homeownership Month. Together, they offer a simple but powerful message for Iowa’s electric cooperative member-consumers: whether you’re settling into a new house or simply refreshing your current one, taking a few minutes to check your home’s electrical safety can protect your family, your property and your peace of mind.



Get to know your electrical panel

Knowing your breaker box means understanding its parts, like the main breaker for the whole house, individual switches for circuit breakers and their functions.

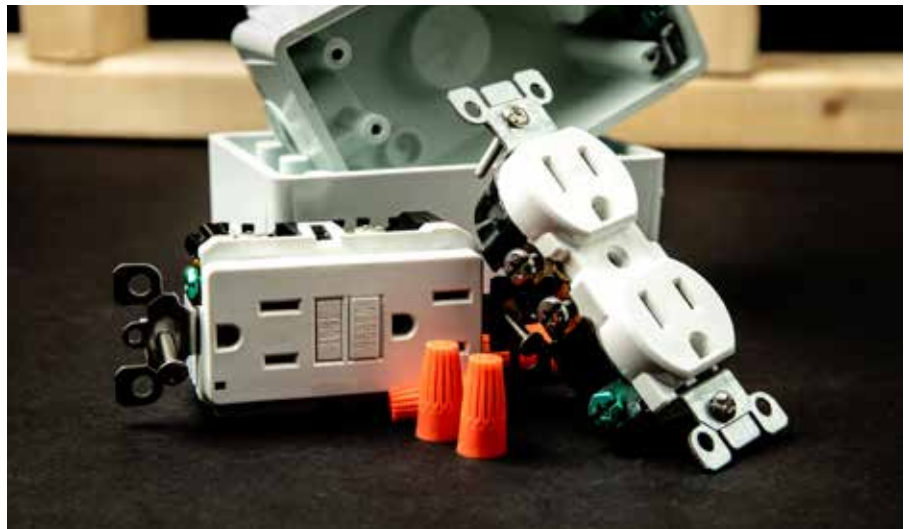
- Familiarize yourself with your electrical panel and label each breaker and panel by appliance or room.
- Test how to reset a tripped breaker.
- Find the main shut-off switch in case of an emergency.



Avoid electrical hazards

Identifying potential hazards can ensure your family’s safety, prevent fires and reduce costly repairs.

- Have only one heat-producing appliance, such as a coffee maker, microwave or space heater, plugged into an outlet at a time.



- Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extensions cords and outlet strips should not be used.
- Inspect cords for signs of fraying or damage and replace or repair them immediately.
- Only use extension cords temporarily. Don’t run cords under rugs, carpets, doorways or windows. Have a qualified electrician add more outlets if needed.
- Use surge protectors to safeguard devices such as computers, televisions and appliances from sudden power spikes.
- Always keep electrical devices away from water sources such as sinks, tubs and pools.
- Reduce risk of shock by using ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) around water sources such as kitchens, bathrooms, garages, basements and outdoors.
- Use outlet covers to prevent children (and pets) from inserting objects into unused outlets.
- Use light bulbs with the correct wattage – lamps and fixtures have a sticker to indicate the maximum wattage.
- Have a working smoke and carbon monoxide detector on every floor of your home and ensure there are units installed near your sleeping area.
- Keep outdoor ladders away from overhead power lines, including the electrical service into your home.



Call a professional if you notice these signs of an electrical problem

- Frequently blown fuses, tripped circuit breakers and unexplained power outages.
- A tingling feeling when touching an appliance.
- Discolored or warm outlets or switch plates.
- A burning or rubbery smell, or a buzzing or sizzling sound.
- Flickering or dimming lights.
- Sparks from an outlet.

As you enjoy Iowa’s warm weather, always keep electrical safety on your home checklist. Pair these habits with energy-saving steps, and you’ll reduce risk while lowering your utility bill. The little choices you make every day add up to a safer, more efficient household.

Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.

IT'S A GOOD THING THAT IT HURTS

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

His family described him as the calm in a storm. He had an endless curiosity about the world. He made the most of every opportunity to learn a new skill.

He was also good to his family's cat, Autumn.

Such simple details about Sgt. Declan Coady, 20, and yet they resonate with me, a cat lover with an insatiable curiosity.

I never knew Sgt. Coady, but I heard a lot about him after the West Des Moines native was killed in a March 1 airstrike in Kuwait. As soon as I heard the name Coady, my thoughts turned to my friend Becky Coady, whom I met in our 2017-2018 Leadership Iowa class.

Becky and her family are a military family. I hoped this loss wasn't someone they knew. But Sgt. Coady was a relative. My heart broke.

Sgt. Coady enlisted in the Army Reserve in 2023. He received the Army Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Ribbon and the Overseas Service Ribbon. He served his country with honor, courage and dedication, embodying the best of what it means to wear the uniform.

He died during in early-morning U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran. He and fellow Army reservists, including Maj. Jeffrey O'Brien of Indianola, were killed when a drone struck a port in Kuwait. These men and women were supporting Operation Epic Fury, a mission focused on destroying Iran's missile capabilities.

About a week after the deadly drone strike, family and friends gathered at Drake University to remember Sgt. Coady. "It's a good thing that it hurts," said Marty Martin, Drake's president, who is also a U.S. Air Force veteran and Air Force Reserve veteran. "Whether we knew Declan as a friend, as a member of our family, as a fellow student or one of our



students, we respected him and held him in esteem. And losing him hurts."

Honoring service and sacrifice

Too often in our hectic, fast-paced world, it's easy for losses like this to make news headlines and then quickly fade away. It's different, though, for the families, friends and communities closest to those who died.

Those memories can last a lifetime – and beyond. I'm reminded of this each Memorial Day when my family and I place flowers on the graves of our ancestors, including those who served in the U.S. Army more than a century ago.

Originally called Decoration Day, Memorial Day was first widely observed on May 30, 1868, to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers. I'm grateful this tradition lives on.

Protecting our freedom

Sacrifice is almost a foreign concept in our world today. Yet it's ingrained in our service members like Sgt. Coady and their families. Some pay the ultimate price.

I'm thankful we still have people who are willing to serve and protect our freedom, including soldiers like Sgt. Coady. Perhaps nothing reflects this spirit better than the Soldier's Creed from the U.S. Army.

SOLDIER'S CREED

I am an American soldier.

I am a warrior and a member of a team.

I serve the people of the United States and live the Army values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills.

I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert, and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy, the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American soldier.

Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at www.darcymaulsby.com.



IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine
for members of
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cooperatives

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