

MARCH 2024

iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

Apply for the Energy Trail Tour

Rate increase effective this spring

Sheet pan recipes

Win a Bissell® carpet cleaner ▶ See Page 3

WINTER MORATORIUM ENDS

The winter moratorium ends April 1, 2024. If your account(s) are past due, you will need to come in or call the office to make arrangements by March 31, 2024, to avoid disconnection of your electrical service.



RATE INCREASE EFFECTIVE WITH MAY BILLS

BY JIM GOSSETT



On March 1, we sent a rate increase notice to all Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) member-owners, advising them of rate

adjustments that will generate additional revenue, allowing RVEC to meet obligations set by our lender and for solid financial performance.

Rate stability is a priority

Receiving a rate increase notice from RVEC is not pleasant and not what we want for our member-owners. Rate stability is the top financial goal of your board of directors. An increase is necessary due to the increasing costs of delivering energy to your location.

A rule of thumb is to keep increases to an average of 1% per year, and we have accomplished this goal. The rate increase you will see on your bill in May (for April usage) is designed to generate an additional 7.69% increase in revenue. The last rate increase was eight years ago (2016) – a period when RVEC costs to distribute energy increased significantly, certainly more than 1% per year. While we resisted a

rate increase as long as practical, I am proud of RVEC employees who treat each one of your dollars as they would their own, reducing costs where possible.

Focused on efficiencies

Over this period, we took advantage of long-range efficiencies created by the merger in 2010 and made investments in technology, resulting in greater productivity. We have worked safely (which is a cost savings) and invested wisely to harden the electric distribution system for more reliability. I want to be clear – this is not an increase due to energy cost increases from our power supplier – but the increased cost of material, equipment and supplies we pay our vendors. Like in your home, farm and business, it seems no one is immune to cost increases.

When you see your rate notice, pay special attention to the comment section and contact us with your questions. Due to the amount of energy you use, how the rate increase affects your bill will likely differ from your neighbor's bill. Rest assured, we are doing all we can to create a rate structure that is fair and where all member-owners share equally in their contribution to cost recovery.



Office Address

Headquarters
PO Box 486 /
28725 Hwy 30
Glidden, IA 51443



Phone: 712-659-3649 or 800-253-6211

Fax: 712-659-3716

Hours: 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday

Website: www.rvec.coop

Email: info@rvec.coop

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Directors

- David Onken, President Glidden
- Jeff Cranston Odebolt
- Mark Ludwig Breda
- Karen Werner Schaller
- Steve Schable Carroll
- Adam Handlos Glidden
- Dave Schroeder Coon Rapids

Jim Gossett, CEO

RVEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

REMEMBER TO SPRING AHEAD

Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 10. Turn your clocks ahead 1 hour.



ARE PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS EFFICIENT FOR MY HOME?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. Unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can take a toll on your energy bills. Whether you should use space heaters depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

✔ Consider improving the efficiency of your home

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

✔ Use space heaters in small spaces

Perhaps your home is energy efficient, but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces you're occupying and try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, ensure the heater is sized correctly for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

✔ Make safety a priority

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model with the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating. Place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Remember, in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

VIEW YOUR DAILY USAGE ON SMARTHUB

SmartHub is a web application that allows you to view and change account information, notify Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative of account inquiries and make payments in a secure environment – right from your mobile device, computer, or tablet. You can monitor and analyze your electric use all at the touch of a button! This service will help manage your account and will free up your time with the convenient and free service. The app is free and can be downloaded from the App Store and the Android Market.

Go to www.rvec.coop and click on view and pay my bill to register for the service. SmartHub is also available as an app for smartphones and tablets.



ELECTRIC CO-OPS ADVOCATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND ELECTRIC RELIABILITY

Severe winter weather in January couldn't stop employees and directors from Iowa's electric cooperatives as they discussed concerns and priorities with state legislators during our 2024 Welcome Back Legislative Reception in downtown Des Moines. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the annual reception on Jan. 9 with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and FUELlowa.

The event provided an opportunity to meet with state legislators at the beginning of the 2024 Legislative Session to discuss issues impacting rural electric cooperatives and our communities.

For example, we're concerned about the potential establishment of Integrate Resource Plans (IRPs) in the Iowa Code. IRPs would essentially force the early retirement of carbon-based electric generation facilities, resulting in stranded costs and reliability concerns for the member-consumers we serve. Iowa's locally owned and governed electric cooperatives continue to support an "all-of-the-above" power generation strategy that ensures reliable and affordable electricity for our members.

During the 2024 Legislative Session, the Iowa General Assembly is addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to Iowa's rural economy.



Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, Iowa electric cooperatives will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues as we work to power lives and empower communities. We hope for better weather for our annual REC Day on the Hill event on March 12. Learn more about our advocacy efforts at www.iaruralpower.org.



Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative invite you to join us for one of two Energy Trail Tours being offered this summer. This 3-day adventure will allow you to experience, first-hand, how your power providers convert energy from water, wind, and coal into electricity. View coal being mined and see how those mines are then returned to productive farm and native grass lands. Enjoy interactive walking tours through a hydroelectric and coal-fired energy generation facility and other stops along the way. Meet other cooperative member-owners while traveling together across the Dakotas on-board a motor-coach bound for the North Dakota's Energy Loop. \$100 per couple covers your lodging, meals and entry fees. The remainder of your tour costs are covered by Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative. Two lucky couples from Raccoon Valley Electric will be selected at random from those who sign up.

YES, please enter our names in the drawing for the trip. We understand that if our names are drawn, we will be billed \$100.

Our first and second choice of dates:

June 26-28 1st 2nd (please circle)
 July 10-12 1st 2nd

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

First Person _____

Second Person _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

Clip this coupon and return to cooperative by May 3, 2024.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Iowa Utilities 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 the office headquarters:

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 486
Glidden, Iowa 51443
712-659-3649

If the member-consumer's complaint is related to the Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative's (RVEC) service rather than its rates, and the cooperative



does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the:

Iowa Utilities Board

1375 E. Court Avenue, Room 69
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
515-725-7321 or 877-565-4450
customer@iub.iowa.gov

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Program information may be made available in language other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and

TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. 38.27.07 To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form, AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of the alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

(2) Fax: (833) 256-1665 or
(202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

CONTRIBUTE TO RECare

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) has established RECare, a program for members helping members. RECare provides funds that are distributed by local community action agencies to help pay winter heating bills and to assist low-income member-owners.

You may make a one-time contribution, or you may make a monthly pledge that will be added your monthly electric bill. You may also contribute part of a matching fund if a matching fund is available. Please inform RVEC who will match your donation to maintain the appropriate records. Even a dollar a month will help others in need!



YES,

I want to be part of members helping members and contribute to RECare.

- I will make a one-time contribution to RECare. My check is enclosed.
- I will contribute \$ _____ per month to RECare. I understand that this amount will be added to my monthly electric bill.
- My gift is a matching fund gift. The matching fund is to be matched by: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Account # _____



**Raccoon Valley
Electric Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
Reliable • Affordable • Responsible

IOWA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

The magazine
for members of
Iowa's electric
cooperatives.

March 2024

Visit our website at www.rvec.coop

A group of utility workers, including men and women in various work attire like polo shirts, t-shirts, and caps, are gathered around a piece of electrical equipment labeled "SAFETY TRAINING". They appear to be in a training session or a safety meeting. The background shows a utility yard with yellow bollards and orange traffic cones.

SAFETY

IS THE BACKBONE OF RELIABILITY

Safety is **#1** at your **Touchstone Energy® cooperative**.

From the ongoing training of our lineworkers
to classroom safety programs for our kids.

Our commitment to electrical safety has always been job one.

So we can deliver reliable energy and peace of mind.

That's why safety runs through everything we do.



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives