



WATTS CURRENT

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative
Reliable. Affordable. Responsible



January 2017

Electric Cooperatives Discuss Important Issues at Reception

Over 150 directors, managers and staff members from Iowa's electric cooperatives discussed priorities with 100 state legislators on January 10 during the annual Welcome Back Legislative Reception at the State Historical Building in downtown Des Moines. Other guests of honor included: Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds, Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, Secretary of State Paul Pate, Iowa Utilities Board Member Nick Wagner and Iowa Department of Economic Development Director Debi Durham. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, the Iowa Communications Alliance and the Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores of Iowa, hosted the annual reception.

"RVEC Board members look forward to the Welcome Back Reception each year. While they maintain contact even while the Legislature is not in session, this event is a good way to create awareness among our elected officials of what is important to RVEC member-owners and electric cooperatives throughout the state", said Jim Gossett, Director of Key Accounts and Economic Development at RVEC.

Important issues for the rural electric cooperatives this session include:

- line personnel safety
- state programs that complement federal rural economic development programs 14.18.01
- geothermal property tax exemption
- Duane Arnold Energy Center (nuclear power plant) machinery and equipment tax exemption
- review and revision of energy programs

In the coming months, the Iowa General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related items central to Iowa's rural economy. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, the directors, managers and staff will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues that allows for Iowa's member-owned rural electric cooperatives to continue providing affordable, reliable, safe and environmentally responsible power to more than 650,000 Iowans.

Electric cooperative representatives from all parts of the state will come to the state capitol in the next couple of months, where they will be able to visit with their legislators once again. The annual REC Day on the Hill will be held on March 22, 2017, at the capitol.



RVEC Directors Steve Seidl, Dennis Kennebeck, Mark Ludwig along with Jim Gossett, Director of Key Accounts and Economic Development and Terry Finley, Board Director for Calhoun County REC visiting with Representative Brian Best during the Welcome Back Reception.



— CEO Comments —

Paying for a System that Works Around the Clock

Your electric cooperative has been around for a long time – 80 years to be exact. We’ve witnessed the many ways electricity has transformed the communities we serve and our rural landscape. Before electricity, today’s household tasks were hard work and dangerous. For example, cooking and washing clothes involved a lot of manual labor. Thankfully, practically everything we do – from entertainment to our jobs – is impacted by the ease of electricity.

A lot has changed since electric cooperatives first turned the lights on for rural Iowa. One thing that hasn’t changed is our mission to provide electricity to you. Because we’ve been reliable, affordable and responsible in delivering electricity to homes and businesses for decades, some of our member-owners ask why they still need to pay for a system that should have been paid for by now.

The truth is, most – if not all – of the original system was paid for many years ago. The original infrastructure, such as poles and wires, which was paid for many years ago has likely been replaced. When you have a system that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, equipment needs to be replaced at regular intervals. Imagine if you had a car that was 80 years old and it was driven all day, every day. By now, either the car would not be operating, or every part of the car – from the tires to the engine – would have been replaced many times. The same is true for utility infrastructure. While poles and wires generally have a life span of 30-40 years, some may not last as long due to a variety of conditions. For example, a major ice storm can cause power lines to snap and poles to break regardless of their age.

Paying for an electric cooperative system can be compared to paying for your home. Over many years or decades, the original tract of land and the physical property are paid in full. But infrastructure updates such as a new furnace, air conditioner, windows, and roof are required, not to mention updates to appliances, carpeting, flooring, and paint. Consider how inefficient it would be to heat your home with a 80-year-old furnace. Think of the additional money you’d spend each month due to its inefficiency instead of replacing it with a new model. The same logic applies to your co-op as we need to replace vehicles and equipment over the years to serve you best. Aside from the costs of hard assets at the co-op, there are also the costs of property taxes, insurance, regular maintenance, and staffing that contribute to our overall system costs.

The original co-op infrastructure fulfilled the expectations of that time in terms of reliability and affordability. Over the years, many of those needs have changed. What’s in place today is an improved distribution system that allows us to meet increasing demands for kilowatt-hours in an efficient manner. Not only has the need for electricity increased, but our processes now result in reduced outage times. We also work to extend the life of infrastructure through maintenance at regular intervals. Poles are routinely tested for termites, and we trim vegetation throughout our system on cycles to maintain a high level of reliability. To balance reliability with affordability, we upgrade our system when and where it makes sense to do so. We balance financing upgrades and replacements with debt and equity so that we can keep your rates affordable while providing power that you can count on for your home or business. 23.12.01



**RVEC WILL BE
CLOSED
FEBRUARY 20th
FOR
PRESIDENTS
DAY.**



Give your Valentine the gift of energy efficiency

If you want to give your Valentine a useful and unusual gift, offer to make the home more energy-efficient.

A few ideas:

- ♥ Buy a bagful of LED light bulbs and use them to replace the standard incandescent bulbs your Valentine probably has in lamps and overhead fixtures. LEDs use 75 percent less energy than the old bulbs and last up to five years.
- ♥ Change the heating and air conditioning filters, which could require climbing a ladder or removing a grate. A dirty filter can be clogged with dust, pet hair and other debris that prevents air from passing through it — and that will force your loved one's furnace or a/c to work extra hard — and waste energy — to keep the home comfortable.

- ♥ Switch the direction of all ceiling fan blades to the “winter” position. That makes the blades gently push warm air — which rises — back into the room so your Valentine will feel more comfortable without turning up the heat.
- ♥ Replace your Valentine's old thermostat with a programmable model that will automatically lower the heat as soon as everyone leaves the house for the day and crank it back up a little just before the family gets home. 12.05.01
- ♥ Buy your Valentine a casual, washable sweater or a flannel quilt to curl up in while reading or watching TV. Your gift will keep her warm and make it unnecessary for her to crank up the thermostat.



Line Patrol

Annual maintenance of our entire system has started. The linemen will be inspecting the lines for defective items, checking meters and looking for any safety hazards.

During the inspections we look for, shot insulators, blown arrestors, loose guy wires, split or bad poles, poles have nothing stapled or bolted to them and trees are not close to our electric lines. We are also looking for inadequate clearances from buildings and other driveways.

We have maintenance programs to upgrade lines and ensure that you have the most reliable and safest system possible.

Anytime you have questions about the trucks in your neighborhood, give us a call.

Stay Safe and Warm in Snow and Ice Storms

Power outages due to snow and ice storms are especially threatening because of extreme cold temperatures.

After a snow or ice storm, avoid going outside if possible. Downed power lines could be submerged in snow and ice, making them difficult to identify. When outside, treat all downed and hanging lines as if they are energized. Stay away and immediately contact RVEC. Remember that downed power lines do NOT have to be arcing, sparking, or moving to be “live” — and deadly. 39.28.01

When the power is out because of a snow or ice storm, RVEC and Safe Electricity suggests these tips to help you stay safe and warm:

- Stay inside, and dress in warm, layered clothing.
- Close off unneeded rooms.
- When using an alternative heat source, follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards, and be sure to properly ventilate. Always keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it.
- Stuff towels and rags underneath doors to keep the heat in.
- Cover windows at night.
- Keep a close eye on the temperature in your home. Infants and people over the age of 65 are more susceptible to the cold. You may want to stay with friends or relatives or go to a shelter if you can't keep your home warm.

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Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

-- Directors --

David Onken, Pres. Glidden
Jeff Cranston Odebolt
Dennis Kennebeck Carroll
Mark Ludwig Breda
Steve Seidl Coon Rapids
Mark Tigges Glidden
Karen Werner Schaller

-CEO-

James E. Bagley

-Office Address-
Headquarters

PO Box 486, 28725 Hwy 30
Glidden, IA. 51443
Phone: 712.659.3649
800.253.6211
Fax: 712.659.3716
Monday - Friday
7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

www.rvec.coop
e-mail: info@rvec.coop

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative
(RVEC) is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.



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What exactly is an electric cooperative?

You receive this publication because you buy your electricity from an electric cooperative. That's a utility that operates like no other.

Cooperatives are consumer-owned businesses, which means that you and your neighbors actually own your electric utility. In fact, you may have noticed that the utility refers to you as a "member" rather than as a "customer."

The cooperative's board of directors is a group of consumer-members just like you, and, in fact, you can run for a seat on the board yourself if you'd like to. When the directors' terms expire, the cooperative will hold an election—and you will get to vote. So the cooperative is governed by its consumers, and those who govern it are elected by the consumers.

Cooperatives have their roots in their local communities, so they never sell stock. That way, consumer-members retain local control. 35.13.02

Take advantage of the opportunity to participate as an owner-member of your electric cooperative by attending its membership meetings and voting in board elections.

What to do if you have a Power Outage?

- ✓ Check your fuses or circuit breakers to rule out problems with electricity inside your home. Replace fuses or reset breakers if needed. It is the member's responsibility to repair any wires or equipment located between the meter pole and your buildings and/or equipment.
- ✓ Check the lower left section of your meter. If you can see a red light you have power coming into your location. 30.15.03
- ✓ If you do not see the red light in your meter please contact RVEC immediately so we can begin restoring your power.

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.