

HIGHLINES

September 2017

A publication for members of Pella Cooperative Electric

Watch for Our Survey in Your Mail

Pella Cooperative Electric and our power supplier, Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), will soon be conducting a survey of members to collect more information about our membership's dwellings, appliances, and use of electricity. The feedback we receive will be used to help plan for future energy and service needs in our area.



The survey will be sent to 1,100 PCEA members who have been randomly selected. Your participation in this project is very important to us, and we appreciate the cooperation.

From the surveys that are returned, a random drawing of four \$25.00 energy credits will be given so please complete your survey and return it for your chance to win!

Notice

Are you a new member or an existing member that is taking out an application on another existing account? Please be aware that if the account that you are putting into your name has an outdoor light on the account, this outdoor light and charges automatically transfers to the new member.

If you see this itemized line on your electric bill and a charge for \$2.25 (metered light) or \$10.00 (unmetered light) and have questions about it, please contact us at (641) 628-1040 to discuss it.



In honor of you, our member,
we invite you to join us on
Saturday, September 16th, 2017
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.*

for MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

Join us at the Pella Cooperative office at 2615 Washington St., Pella, Iowa. Allow us to treat you to a hot dog, hamburger, baked beans, ice cream and a drink and thank you for being a Pella Cooperative Member! We know that behind all the successful cooperatives is an informed and engaged membership. This is our opportunity to thank our members for being just that. We look forward to seeing you!



*or until gone

◀Northey Visits the Iowa State Fair

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey stopped by the Touchstone Energy Booth at the Iowa State Fair in August. He had a chance to visit with Jolyn Hartson from Pella Cooperative Electric, and Kim Davis from Access Energy.

Visitors to the booth could register to win a free Nest thermostat, place a marker on their local electric cooperative, and see different options for energy efficient lighting. The Touchstone Energy booth at the Fair is sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa.

Paying For a System That Works Around the Clock



Jon Miles, CEO
Pella Cooperative
Electric

Your electric cooperative has been around for a long time, 81 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 reliably, efficiently and affordably delivering electricity to homes and businesses for decades, some of our members 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 of poles and wires, however, have 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 81 years old and it was driven all day, every day. By now, either that 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 or tornado 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 an 81-year-old furnace. Think of the additional money you'd spend each month, as opposed to

replacing it with a new, more efficient model. The same logic applies to your cooperative as we need to replace vehicles and

equipment over time to serve you best. Aside from the costs of tangible assets at the cooperative, there are also the costs of property taxes, insurance, regular maintenance and staffing that contributes to our overall system costs.

The original cooperative infrastructure fulfilled the expectations of that time in terms of reliability and affordability. Over the years, many of those needs have changed. What is 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 damage, and we trim vegetation throughout our system 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 our rates affordable while providing power that you can count on for your home or business.

Show You Care with RECare

Take the opportunity to make a difference in our community with the RECare program. RECare was established to help low income members pay their electric bills and make weatherization improvements to their home. Unemployment and unexpected expenses are some of the many reasons why families fall behind on their energy bills.

By giving to the RECare program, your donations will go directly to families in our community. All funds are distributed by the cooperative to a local community action agency. Contributions can be made through a monthly pledge on your electric bill or as a one-time donation. Matching donations are also accepted.

Even a dollar a month can make a difference for those in need, and your contributions are tax deductible.

Fill out this form and return with your payment or sign up on our web site, www.pella-cea.org.

MEMBER AUTHORIZATION FORM

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

- Enclosed is a check with a one-time donation.
- I would like to make a monthly donation of \$ _____ . I understand that this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill.
- Matching fund contribution. I will make a one-time contribution with a check enclosed. My contribution will be matched by: _____

Account #: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Mail your payment or sign up online at www.pella-cea.org.



2017-2018 Iowa Home Energy Assistance Program

The 2017-2018 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

WHEN TO APPLY:

- Elderly (60+) and/or disabled: October 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018
- All other households: November 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018

WHAT TO TAKE:

- Proof of Income (for all household members age 19+)
- Check stubs from the previous 30 days, award letter from Social Security or 2016 tax return
- Social Security numbers for all household members (documentation required)
- Recent heat bill
- Recent electric bill
- If you receive alimony or child support, it will also need to be verified.

PROOF OF INCOME:

- Wage Earners: Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your federal income tax return.
- Fixed Income: This income may include: Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.
- Self-Employed/Farmers: Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.
- FIP Recipients: Please bring your current DHS Notice of Decision or contact your local office for acceptable document information.

Income Maximums		
Household Size	One Month Gross Income	Annual Gross Income
1	\$1,759	\$21,105
2	\$2,368	\$28,420
3	\$2,978	\$35,735
4	\$3,588	\$43,050
5	\$4,197	\$50,365
6	\$4,807	\$57,680
7	\$5,416	\$64,995
8	\$6,026	\$72,310

For households with more than eight members, add \$610/\$7,315 for each additional member.

If you are not sure where to apply, please write to:

LIHEAP
Iowa Department of Human Rights
Capitol Complex
Des Moines, IA 50319

Or, call your local community action agency.



Keep Food Safe

Before, During and After a Power Outage

Unfortunately, power outages do occur from time to time. It's important to know how to keep your food safe during an outage. Use these tips from USDA to help minimize food loss and reduce your risk of illness.

Before power outage	During power outage	After power outage
<p>Keep refrigerator at 40° or below. Freeze items like fresh meat and poultry that you won't use immediately. Keep freezer set to 0° or below. Group frozen foods to help items stay colder longer.</p> <p>If you anticipate an extended power outage, buy dry or block ice to keep the fridge and/or freezer cold.</p>	<p>Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed!</p> <p>If the doors stay closed during the length of the outage:</p> <p>A full freezer will hold its temperature for 48 hours.</p> <p>A refrigerator will keep food safe for four hours.</p>	<p>Check the temperature inside your refrigerator and/or freezer.</p> <p>If the temperatures are safe, the food should be safe to eat.</p>

Foods that should be thrown out after an extended power outage:

- Meat, poultry or seafood products
- Milk, yogurt and other dairy products
- Cooked or sliced produce
- Eggs and egg products
- Soft and shredded cheese
- Opened baby formula
- Dough and cooked pasta

Pella Cooperative Electric
 A Touchstone Energy Partner
 The power of human connections

Source: USDA

Bright Idea



Kitchen sizes, styles and configurations have changed dramatically through the years, but one thing remains the same - the kitchen is the heart of the home. Focus on energy efficient lighting in the kitchen since lighting can make up to 15 percent of a home's energy budget.

Stay Safe During Harvest Season

Harvest season can yield higher number of electrocution, shock, and burn injuries. Pella Cooperative Electric urges farm workers to avoid tragic accidents by using caution when completing farm activities that take place around power lines.

As you head for the fields this fall, remember these safety tips:

- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level – under 14 feet – before moving or transporting; use care when raising them.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors with higher antennas.
- Always use a spotter or someone to help make sure that contact is not made with a line when moving large equipment or high loads.
- Be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles, or rods into power lines. Even non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay may conduct electricity under certain conditions.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electric systems.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height, and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- Review the possibility of underground utility supplies for new or replacement power lines.
- Never try to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

It's also important for operators of farm equipment or vehicles to know what to do if the vehicle encounters a power line. It's almost always best to stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility crew arrives to make sure power to the line is de-energized.

If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result. Even if a power line has landed on the ground, the potential for the area nearby to be energized still exists. Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire.

In that case, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Continue to hop or shuffle to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never try to get back on or even touch it. Many electrocutions happen when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

Wonder Why Your Electric Bill is Different From Your Neighbor?

We often get phone calls from concerned members wondering why their electric bill is different from their neighbors. We try to convey the message that you can't compare electric bills, just like you can't compare what you spend at the gas pump because your habits are likely to be very different and so are your costs.

As members of an electric cooperative, you and your neighbor pay the same residential rate for each kilowatt-hour of electricity you use. If your power bills are higher than your neighbor's, it means that you have used more electricity than they have.

There are many reasons why two neighboring homes may use electricity so differently. Some of the examples are:

Family size – are there two people in your home and four in your neighbors?

Insulation – Sufficient roof and wall insulation can make a big difference in both energy costs and comfort.

Windows – Double pane windows effectively reduce the amount of external heat or cold drafts.

Air infiltration – Caulking, weather stripping and foam sealants help reduce the amount of humidity and heat (and cold winter winds) entering the home through cracks and openings.

Thermostat settings – Take control of your home's energy use in summer by raising the air conditioner's thermostat to at least 78 F. Ceiling or portable fans will make you feel cooler.

Water heating – Fix leaky faucets, wash and rinse clothes in cold water and run the dishwasher only when full. A shower head with a flow rate of less than 2.5 gallons per minute will help also.

Appliances – Keep up with the Joneses by investing in energy efficient refrigerators, dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers, water heaters and air conditioners.

All these differences can make a real difference in a home's energy use. So instead of comparing your electric bill with the neighbor's, stop to think just what all electricity did for you in the past month. Divide your bill by the number of days in the billing cycle and see what your average day costs for all the work your electricity does for you.



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Pella Cooperative Electric is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative. The co-op exists to provide electric service at cost. It is the members (anyone who gets electricity from the cooperative), not outside investors, that own and control the co-op. Cooperatives are governed by a member-elected Board of Directors. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board of Directors: Bryce Arkema, Darrell Boot, Carroll Hoksbergen, Steve Inskeep, Bob Van Soelen, Norman Van Zante, Duane Ver Ploeg, and CEO Jon Miles.