

Southwest Lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

Corning | Mount Ayr | Stanton

October 2024

Annual Meeting Recap

THANK YOU! to the members and guests who attended the Annual Meeting on Thursday, September 5th at the Lenox Community Center. An enthusiastic crowd of members and guests gathered to enjoy a ribeye steak sandwich meal, prize giveaways, and the business meeting of your Cooperative. **The main business item was the election of four (4) directors to a 3-year term each. Incumbents Jason Smith, Dale Walkup, and Dana Morgan were re-elected to the Board of Directors and Adam Boswell was elected to fill the Region 2, District 5 position.** Congratulations to those candidates for being elected to the board and to the other candidates who ran for a board seat. A special thank you to outgoing director Deena Moore for her 9 years of service to the membership.

A big thank you to the Nominating Committee of John A. Overholtzer, Charles Abarr, Jack Stephens, and Jamie McManis for selecting the slate of candidates and to the Election Committee of John A. and Mary K. Overholtzer, Jamie and Jason McManis, John Allen, Joe and Lisa Kernen, and Charles Abarr for counting the ballots and certifying the election.

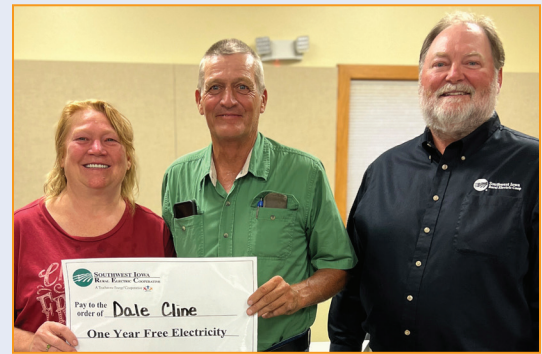


CIPCO's Executive Vice President & CEO, Andrew St. John, was the guest speaker at the Annual Meeting. He discussed CIPCO's role in energy production and distribution and the future of electrical cooperatives.

Congratulations to all our door prize winners and the winners of the free electricity drawings.



Phil Kinser, SWIAREC General Manager/CEO, and the winner of the 6 months of free electricity, Roger Reed, and Connie Cress.



Pictured: Grand prize winner of 1 year Free Electricity- Sharon and Dale Cline, both being congratulated by Phil Kinser- Southwest Iowa REC General Manager/CEO.

Congratulations!



Terry Barnes, Southwest Iowa REC Board Member, received a 5-year service award at the Annual Meeting. Pictured SWIAREC Board President, Marlyn Werner, Phil Kinser SWIAREC CEO/GM, & Terry Barnes



Employee and Board member updates

Cacey Quick, Southwest Iowa REC Accountant in the Mount Ayr office, received her 5-year service award. Congratulations!



Dana Morgan, Southwest Iowa REC Board Member, received his 10-year service award. Congratulations!



OCTOBER IS CO-OP MONTH COOP MONTH

Landowners: Know the facts before signing a solar project lease

If you're a landowner in rural Iowa, you may have received solicitations in the mail offering land lease options for proposed solar projects. Often, these letters offer attractive per-acre rental payments for various phases of a long-term proposed project, promising steady and predictable income. However, like with all contracts, the devil is in the details. Before signing an agreement, we encourage you to do some homework and seek legal counsel to protect your rights.

Most of these letters are coming from companies outside of Iowa looking to lease land for future solar projects. We have noticed that many of these letters refer erroneously to Iowa law; referencing legislation (Senate File 2356) that did not pass last session. In fact, Iowa's electric cooperatives and other groups registered in opposition to the legislation due to its likely negative impact on electric co-ops and our members.

Some solicitations falsely claim local support for their solar initiative or that the electric output would somehow benefit your neighbors or the local electric cooperative. We have also seen letters that deceptively include endorsements attributed to the Iowa Farm Bureau. IFB's legal team is working to remove these perceived endorsements.

Please consult your legal counsel before signing any agreement or contract. Your legal counsel can help explain the benefits and disadvantages of these agreements, answer any questions you have, and help negotiate fair and equitable terms. These are long-term agreements that can give the solar company exclusive options and control of your land for decades. Spending some extra time up front to better understand the terms and conditions of the proposed agreement can save you significant time, money and headaches in the future.

For more information, we encourage landowners to reach out to Southwest Iowa REC at 888-220-4869



Phil Kinser

FEMA Mitigation Projects

[From the Desk of Justin Murphy, Director of Operations](#)

In 2019, Southwest Iowa REC started the application process for FEMA Mitigation funding to rebuild certain distribution lines. In general, if awarded, FEMA funds 75% of the cost, the State of Iowa funds 10%, and Southwest Iowa REC funds 15%. These funds are designated for line and system hardening to help against storms and natural disasters. Southwest was very pleased to find out that we were awarded funds in the summer of 2023. The award included 34 miles of 3-phase lines across the entire system. The lines that have been chosen are crucial ties between several of our subs. The rebuilds will increase line capacity and reliability so we can better serve our members. The lines that are in the process of being rebuilt are in Decatur county near the town of Lamoni, a line south of Mount Ayr in Ringgold county, a line north and west of the town of Clearfield in Taylor county, a line east of the town of Corning in Adams county and lastly a line that runs near the town of Imogene in Mills county and by the town of Coburg in Montgomery county. With the FEMA funded lines, we opted to hire a contractor to build these lines because there is a tight timeline on completion. IES Commercial & Industrial from Holdrege, NE is the contractor that was awarded the contract to build the 34 miles of line. They expect to have all the line rebuilds completed by June of 2025.



Substation Rebuild & Upgrades

Southwest Iowa REC was also tasked with several substation projects to be completed in the next couple years. These projects are a result of our power provider (CIPCO) needing to upgrade the incoming voltage to our subs from 34.5KV to 69KV. Upgrading the voltage provides increased capacity and better reliability. CIPCO also needs to upgrade a few of their own substations and many miles of lines to accommodate the larger conductor and larger clearances needed for the higher voltage. This means that the lines will be more robust and should result in less outage time for our members. With this upgrade, Southwest Iowa REC will be retrofitting in two substations (Carbon and Bluegrass), a replacement transformer in our Stanton substation and a complete rebuild of the Corning substation. Work began on the Corning substation in late spring this year. Contractors are completing the foundation work, grading and the installation of the fence while the rest of the substation build will be completed in house by our own crews. The plan is to have the new substation, and the upgrades completed before the voltage conversion by CIPCO in the spring of 2026.



Corning substation foundations

Take Survey for Chance to Win one of 2 - \$100 Bill Credits!

We want to hear your voice – visit this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H2PXSJY> or scan this QR code to participate in our member feedback survey. In celebration of National Co-op month, the survey will only be available through the month of October. If you don't have internet access, stop by one of our three offices to fill out a paper survey or request to have one sent to you. Two lucky members will have their names randomly drawn to win a \$100 bill credit!



2024-2025 IOWA HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

ATTENTION: RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING BILL?

The 2023-2024 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.

If you are not sure where to apply, **Dial 2-1-1**, or visit <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply> to contact your local community action agency, or write to:

LIHEAP
Iowa Department of Health & Human Services
Capitol Complex
Des Moines, IA 50319

INCOME MAXIMUMS

<u>Household</u> <u>Size</u>	<u>Annual</u> <u>Gross Income</u>
1	\$29,160
2	\$39,440
3	\$49,720
4	\$60,000
5	\$70,280
6	\$80,560
7	\$90,840
8	\$101,120

For households with more than eight members, add \$10,280 for each additional member.

2024-2025 IOWA HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WHEN TO APPLY:

- Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled:
October 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025
- All other households:
November 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025

WHAT TO PROVIDE:

- Proof of Income (for all household members age 18 and over) Depending upon your household income type, income documentation from the past 30 days, the last 12 months, or last calendar year, whichever is easier or more beneficial for you.
- Proof of Social Security Numbers for all household members (documentation required)
- Most recent heat bill
- Most recent electric bill

WAGE EARNERS:

Please provide copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

FIXED INCOME:

This income may include Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please provide copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS:

Please provide a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

Note - Additional countable income and/or income verification not listed above may be required for eligibility determination

Board Approves \$359,000 Patronage Refund

The Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors has approved payment of patronage dividends in 2024. We will return 100% of the remaining dividends allocated to the members for the year 2006, 80% of the dividends allocated for 2007, and 10% of the current allocation for 2023. The total payment will be approximately \$359,000.

Dividends will be distributed to you in October and will appear as a CREDIT ON YOUR ELECTRIC BILL for those who are still active members of the cooperative. Former members will receive a check. There are substantial savings to the cooperative in applying these dividends to your account versus mailing out checks.

If you have questions regarding the taxability of these dividends, please consult your tax preparer. Patronage dividends reduce the net cost of electricity to members. It is one of the principles that provide the basis for the cooperative business model.

Our current policy on patronage dividends allows the board flexibility in the amount of patronage that will be returned to the members. There are several factors to be considered when determining this amount, such as the co-ops current cash position, equity level and major improvements needed to keep the system in good condition and provide all members with reliable electric service. Deferred patronage dividends are used by the cooperative to help finance major construction and maintenance projects. This allows us to reduce the total amount of long-term financing that is required, thus reducing the total interest expense.

2024 Pole Inspection

SBS Inspections, Inc. will be inspecting and treating poles in the following areas:

Adams County – Lincoln and Washington Township

Decatur County – Bloomington, Burrell, Fayette, and New Buda Townships

Ringgold county – Athens and Riley township

Mongomery County – Douglas and Scott Townships



Trick or Treat



Carmel Apple Poppers

Ingredients

- 2 green apples
- 1 pkg. square pretzels
- 1 pkg. Rolo candy
- toothpicks

Instructions

Preheat oven to 250F.

On a baking sheet, lay out pretzels in a single layer and place a Rolo candy on each pretzel. Put these in the oven for about 3-4 minutes, or until the candy is soft but not melted. Chop the apple into small chunks. Squeeze a little lemon juice on them if you would like to help keep them from turning brown. Place one apple on the end of a toothpick and push it into one of the Rolo pretzels. Serve immediately and enjoy!



Bravo.....

Dear Southwest Iowa REC,

Thank you very for sponsoring the State Fair t-shirts. This was my first year of 4-H and I participated in the Share the Fun with my club.

-Payton

Southwest Iowa REC,

Thank you for donating my Iowa State Fair 4-H exhibitor t-shirt. My working exhibit with fellow 4-H club members received a seal of excellence with "Craft Stick Catapults"

Sincerely, Bay Erickson



RECare Customer Contribution Fund

Southwest Iowa REC's RECare program makes it easy to help Cooperative neighbors in need this winter. With rising heating fuel prices this season, more and more Iowans are seeking assistance with energy, heating and weatherization costs. While some federal and state dollars exist to help those in need, there are still shortfalls.

Consider a monthly contribution to Southwest Iowa REC's RECare program. Your contribution – whether it is \$1 or \$10 a month – when combined with those of other generous members, can go a long way in helping those who can't afford winter's heating bills. To help, fill out the form:

Consumer Authorization Form

Yes, I want to be a part of "members helping members" and contribute to RECare.

____ I will make a 1-time contribution to RECare. My check is enclosed.

____ I will contribute \$____ per month to RECare. I understand that this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill.

Name _____ Account # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Mail to: RECare – SW Iowa REC

1801 Grove Avenue; Box 367; Corning, IA 50841

OR RECare – SW Iowa REC

1502 W South Street; Box 391; Mt Ayr IA 50854

OR RECare – SW Iowa REC

415 Broad Avenue; Box 460; Stanton, IA 51573

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you recently made or plan to make energy efficiency improvements to your home, you may be eligible for federal tax credits. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 empowers homeowners to save money on energy efficiency improvements and upgrades. Homeowners can save up to \$3,000 annually to lower the cost of efficiency upgrades by up to 30%.

A few upgrades covered through the IRA include new exterior doors, windows, insulation, heating/cooling equipment and other major appliances. If you completed an upgrade this year or you are considering one, visit www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits to learn if you qualify for a tax credit.

Source: energystar.gov



Corning
1801 Grove Ave., Corning, IA 50841

Mount Ayr
1502 W. South St., Mount Ayr, IA 50854

Stanton
415 Broad Ave., Stanton, IA 51573

Phone Number: (888) 220-4869

Southwest Iowa REC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board of Directors

Marilyn Werner, President
Mark Herzberg, Vice President
Kay Fast-Deyoe, Secretary
Jason Smith, Treasurer

Alan Spencer Adam Boswell
Dana Morgan Terry Barnes
Bonnie Larson Dale Walkup

Phil Kinser, CEO