

Southwest lines

Corning | Mount Ayr | Stanton

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

September 2024



Each month, Southwest Iowa REC simply “rounds up” the electric bills of participating member-owners to the next highest dollar. **All Operation Round-UP®** donations are placed in a separate fund to be disbursed for charitable purposes only. The Operation Round UP committee has donated \$326,775 to individuals and community improvements since its start in 2009.

A committee comprised of community leaders, Southwest Iowa REC employees, and directors receives and evaluates all donation requests. This committee makes recommendations for disbursements to the full Southwest Iowa REC Board of Directors. The REC Board has the final approval of all **Operation Round-UP®** disbursements.

Typically, **Operation Round-UP®** funding will be used to address individual and community needs such as food, shelter, clothing, health, education, and service projects. Operation Round-UP® funds cannot be used for political purposes.

Individuals or organizations requesting donations do not have to be members of Southwest Iowa REC. Recipients need to be a resident and located in one of the 11 counties we serve. These counties include: Adair, Adams, Cass, Decatur, Fremont, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union.

Southwest Iowa REC is committed to improving local residents' quality of life. **Operation Round-UP®** is an innovative way to continue to make a difference in our local communities. We encourage individuals and organizations with needs to apply for Operation Round-UP® donations. Applications can be requested from any of our three offices or online at www.swiarec.coop under the “Community” tab.

Of our 6,041 accounts, we're excited that 4,111 meters are signed up for Operation Round-UP®.

If you're not currently signed up – why not call today and join in?

Operation Round-UP® = Small Change That Changes Lives

ROUND 



Stanton Viking Center is taking on a major project to enhance its program for years to come. Construction has begun for the Danny Anderson Field. This sports complex for softball and baseball will be completed in the fall of 2024. Operation Round up donated \$4,000 to their project. Pictured is SWIAREC's Tim Pfeiffer and Stanton Viking Center Director, Justin Miller.



Grant Deadlines

October 20th, 2024

January 20th, 2025

April 20th, 2025

July 20th, 2025



Corning American Theater was granted \$1,000 for upgrading their theater equipment. Pictured left to right: Jim Ruppert, Donna Hogan & Phil Kinser, SWIAREC GM/CEO.



Sally's Alley is a project Corning Main Street has been working to update through phases. Operation Round up donated \$2,000 for their mural project.



Adams County Cattlemen set off to upgrade the Corning playground. Operation Round up donated \$2,000 to their project. Pictured: Dr. Ryan Shuey, Adams County Cattlemen's Vice President & Phil Kinser, SWIAREC GM/CEO.

Sounding the alarm: Federal energy policy threatens electric reliability

By Chuck Soderberg, recently retired executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives

Those of us who work in the electric utility sector are deeply concerned how federal energy policy is threatening electric reliability for the families, businesses and communities we serve. It's time to sound the alarm and raise awareness of how these misguided mandates will negatively impact our country.

In April, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its final Power Plant Rule, which includes four major environmental regulations. One regulation under Section 111 of the Clean Air Act (also known as the Greenhouse Gas Rule) will limit emissions from existing coal and new natural gas power plants. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) stands with the Iowa Attorney General, the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) and the Iowa Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) in opposing these regulations on the grounds that they are unlawful, unrealistic and unachievable.

The EPA's Power Plant Rule requires existing coal and natural gas generation facilities to deploy carbon capture and sequestration at a level that is not yet achievable or commercially viable. The other three regulations in the rule tighten already stringent standards for mercury and air toxins and wastewater and impose additional burdensome requirements on legacy coal ash sites.

Specifically, the Power Plant Rule will force the early closure of "always available" electric generation sources and limit the construction of new natural gas plants as our nation's economy will require more electric generation in the years ahead. Existing coal-fired units that plan to operate past 2032 and until 2039 must co-fire with natural gas at a 40% rate starting in 2030. To operate past 2039, existing coal-fired plants must capture or avoid 90% of their carbon emissions by 2032. The Power Plant Rule also requires the same 90% carbon capture or avoidance for new natural gas plants operating at baseload (above a 40% capacity factor). These new standards will impact electric utilities' ability to economically and reliably replace lost coal generation.

"These reckless regulations are not based in reality and pose an immediate threat to the electric grid and will negatively impact electric reliability here in Iowa," remarked Chuck Soderberg, executive vice president and general manager of IAEC. "We are sounding the alarm that these EPA mandates will drastically diminish electric cooperatives' ability to provide dependable power when our member-consumers need it most."

With the Power Plant Rule, the EPA is overreaching its legal boundaries, disregarding practicality and endangering national energy security. These new mandates jeopardize affordable and reliable electricity by forcing the premature closure of "always available" power plants while also making it harder to permit, site and build critical new generation facilities. As electric demand increases each year, replacing dispatchable electric generation sources like coal and natural gas with intermittent power sources like solar and wind is a recipe for disaster. We support an "all of the above" electric generation strategy that prioritizes reliability.

Iowa's electric utilities are not alone in our concern. In filing joint comments on the proposed EPA Power Plant Rules back in 2023, Iowa's OCA and the IUB expressed the following opposition to the mandates: "The proposed rules treat reliability as merely one of many

considerations, and do a poor job in making that consideration." ... "The proposed rules are rushed, the record does not meaningfully consider the impact of this truly essential service, and EPA myopically pursues a narrow goal at the expense of larger societal benefits like life, heat, and jobs."

National utility trade associations – including the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Edison Electric Institute and the American Public Power Association – and a coalition of 27 attorneys general, including Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird, have filed separate lawsuits in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, petitioning for review of the EPA's Power Plant Rule.

Additionally, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) has noted this growing capacity shortfall which has resulted from the reduction in reliable electric generation and the increase in electric demand. In its 2024 Summer Reliability Assessment, NERC warns that there is an elevated seasonal risk for several regions of the country, including parts of the Midwest. This means there is potential for insufficient operating reserves in above-normal peak conditions. And in 2023, NERC listed energy policy as the highest significant risk to grid reliability.

Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a regional transmission operator which covers parts of western Iowa, warns that the EPA's rule poses reliability risks. "SPP is concerned that limited technological and infrastructure availability and the compliance time frame will have deleterious impacts including the retirement of, or the decision not to build, thousands of mega-watts of baseload thermal generation."

Iowa's economy can't succeed without reliable electricity, and the EPA cannot ignore growing reliability challenges at this critical time for our nation's energy future. The EPA must follow the law and set realistic standards based on technology that has been adequately demonstrated and is achievable. With the Power Plant Rule, the EPA has set an unworkable timeframe in violation of the Clean Air Act and Supreme Court decisions.

Federal energy policy has now become a major threat to electric reliability and it's time to take a stand and sound the alarm to protect the Iowans we serve.



Chuck Soderberg

NEW PAY-BY-PHONE NUMBER

Beginning September 18th, SWIAREC is launching a new pay-by-phone number. You can still pay through the smarhub app or through our website!

855-936-3657

swiarec.smarhub.coop

SOUTHWEST IOWA RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

We're looking for students interested in public service and leadership

High schoolers who attend our Zoom sessions in October will have a chance to win AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship!

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Guided by our cooperative commitment to the community, Southwest Iowa REC has a long history of supporting students in the communities we serve through scholarships and leadership opportunities. We've also been sending deserving high school students to our nation's capital every summer for years as part of the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities and the cooperative business model with a three-part webinar series in October. The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is open to any high school student in our service area and they are invited to register at www.IowaYouthTour.com.

"This new program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, leadership or government," remarked Phil Kinser, Southwest Iowa REC CEO/ General Manager. "We want to raise students' awareness of how local electric co-ops power people's lives and empower communities. We also want to talk about exciting cooperative career paths that are available in smaller communities."

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their own computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- Tuesday, Oct. 1, 7:00 p.m. – Cooperative Business Model
- Thursday, Oct. 17, 7:00 p.m. – Rural Iowa Advocacy
- Thursday, Oct. 24, 7:00 p.m. – Leadership

At the end of each live session, one lucky attendee will be selected at random to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random drawing for a \$1,000 college scholarship. All students who register online by September 25 will receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our lineup of speakers and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a motivational speaker. Attendees will also hear about Iowa Youth Tour. Students with an interest in government and public service are encouraged to apply for this weeklong trip to Washington, DC. The 2025 Youth Tour is slated for June 15-21 next summer.

Learn more at www.IowaYouthTour.com or contact Suzy Olson, SWIAREC Administrative Assistant, at suzy.olson@swiarec.coop for more information.



County and State Fairs



Tim Pfeiffer, Southwest Iowa REC Member Service Director, taking Hazzard Hamlet display to local County fairs across Southwest Iowa. Hazzard Hamlet helps educate kids about electoral safety inside and outside their homes



Pictured is Ryder Stackhouse at the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative booth during the Iowa State Fair. Ryder is the son of Cody, Mt Ayr Lineman, and Logan Stackhouse

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Placing heat sources, such as lamps, computers or TVs, near your thermostat can result in false temperature readings, increased energy use and inconsistent cooling/heating. Make sure your thermostat is installed in an area clear of obstructions, electronic devices, direct sunlight and drafts.

Ensuring your thermostat is free from these types of interferences optimizes energy efficiency, improves indoor comfort and reduces wear and tear on your cooling/heating system.

Source: energy.gov

Reduce Energy Use During Peak Hours



Peak hours are the busiest times for your local electric cooperative, since many people are using electricity at the same time. In addition, it costs

your co-op more to generate electricity when demand soars during peak periods – and the cost of your electricity also may rise. Obviously, using less electricity during peak periods can save your co-op – and you – money.

Here’s how you can help during peak hours, which generally are on the hottest summer days between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.:

- Shift household chores and activities away from peak periods. Wait to run your dishwasher until you go to bed, for instance.
- Use the most energy-efficient appliances you have. Your microwave oven, for example, uses considerably less energy than your stove or cooktop.
- If you’re buying a new appliance, make sure you get a highly efficient one. Look for “Energy Star” labels when you’re evaluating different models.
- Be aware of your energy consumption, and try to get in the habit of using energy efficiently year-round.

Use the energy you need, but use it wisely! You’ll help your co-op avoid building expensive new power plants and that, in turn; will help keep your electric rates stable.

AUTUMN BEGINS
SEPTEMBER 22ND



Crockpot Chicken Gnocchi Soup



Ingredients

- ½ medium yellow onion diced
- 2-3 medium carrots shredded
- 2-3 sticks celery sliced
- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts
- salt & pepper to taste
- ½ teaspoon dried garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup (12-oz) can evaporated milk
- 1-2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 17.5-oz package gnocchi
- 2-4 cups baby spinach



Instructions

1. **Slow cook:** Place onion, carrots and celery at the bottom of the crock. Season chicken on both sides with salt and pepper and sit on top of vegetables. Combine broth, garlic powder, thyme, rosemary and minced garlic in measuring jug, then pour over chicken and vegetables in crock. Cook on HIGH for 4-5 hours, or on LOW for 7-8 hours.
2. **Shred chicken:** Open lid of slow cooker and remove chicken to a wooden board, then shred chicken with two forks. Whisk cornstarch into evaporated milk, then stir into soup together with gnocchi and shredded chicken. Cover and cook for another 45 minutes on high.
3. **Finish soup:** Stir spinach into soup until wilted. Check for seasoning and serve immediately.

Bravo.....

Dear Southwest Iowa REC,
Thank you very much for the 4-H Exhibitor t-shirt!
Your thoughtfulness & generosity are appreciated.
-Lucy Morrison, Page County Clarinda Classics

Dear Southwest Iowa REC,
I am honored to have been selected for your scholarship. Thank you for the generous gift. Thank you for all that you do for our rural homes. You understand the value of where we live.
-Ella Peterson

Your countless hours have not gone unseen during storm recovery.
Thank you!

Thank you so much for getting our lights on so quickly Saturday!
-Dan & Pam Jordan

Southwest Iowa REC,
Thank you for sponsoring the senior showmanship trophy for poultry at the Montgomery County Fair. This is my last year & showmanship is by far my favorite part of the show.
-Josie McCunn

Thank you for sponsoring the 2024 Miss Rodeo Ringgold County Pageant!
-Ameli Philip, Kerigaun Henson, Kenzi McAlexander, Kimmie Johnson, Chloe Gron, Ava Shields, Abbie Bruce, Shira A., Logan Stackhouse

REC Scholarship Committee,
Thank you for selecting me as a scholarship recipient. This money will be put towards tuition

fees and will allow me to attain an Associates of Science Degree. I am truly grateful!
-Dillon Starlin

Dear Southwest Iowa REC,
Thank you for your generous scholarship. I was happy and appreciative to learn that I was selected.
-Brayden Maeder

Dear SWIAREC,
Thank you for awarding me the 2024 scholarship. I will be attending South Dakota State University in the fall to study agronomy.
-Carly Green

Southwest Iowa REC,
I am honored that you chose me to receive a scholarship. Your financial support is incredibly helpful & will allow me to attend SDSU for ag business.
-Ethan James

Dear SWIAREC,
Thank you so much for the scholarship and the opportunity you give to kids to further their education. This scholarship will help me tremendously when I attend ISU in the fall.
-Dayna Robinson

Thank you for selecting me to receive your scholarship. It will greatly help me in paying for and earning a college degree at SDSU.
-Owen Paul



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

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Southwest Iowa REC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.