

Southwest Lines

Corning | Mount Ayr | Stanton

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

May 2025

2025 Annual Meeting Plans

Plans are being made for this year's Annual Meeting. Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting is scheduled to be held at the Lenox Community Center on Thursday, September 4, 2025. The general business session will be called to order at 6:30 p.m. In addition to the reports being presented that cover our 2024 operations, a major item of business will be the election of three directors to serve one three-year term each. Directors with terms expiring at the Annual Meeting in September are:

Region 1, District #4 – Terry Barnes Region 2, District #8 – Alan Spencer Region 2, At-Large – Mark Herzberg

A nominating committee will be named at the May board meeting and given the task of nominating qualified candidates to run for each of these positions. Once the slate of candidates is chosen, members will be given the opportunity to vote by mail or at the Annual Meeting on September 4th. A detailed explanation of the nominating and election process will be provided in the next newsletter. **If you are interested in being considered to serve on the nominating committee this year, please contact Phil Kinser at (888) 220-4869 before May 29th.**

2025 "REC Day on the Hill"

Severe blizzard conditions in western and northern Iowa couldn't hold back employees and elected directors from Iowa's locally owned rural electric cooperatives (RECs) as they convened at the Iowa Capitol to advocate for important issues during the annual "REC Day on the Hill" event on the last day of winter.

"Our annual advocacy day at the state house is a powerful opportunity to meet face-to-face with our state legislators and share a local perspective on issues that impact the members and communities we serve," remarked Leslie Kaufman, executive vice president and general manager for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC).

Representatives from Southwest Iowa REC joined the statewide advocacy effort. On March 19, more than 120 advocates asked elected officials to protect defined electric service territory laws in Iowa that support affordable rates, foster a resilient grid and encourage rural economic development. In place for almost 50 years, these service territories provide a high degree of certainty which enable electric co-ops to make long-term investments to best serve our members. Learn more about this issue at www.ProtectRuralIowa.com.

Additionally, electric co-op representatives talked with their legislators about the benefits of allowing Iowa's incumbent electric providers the right of first refusal (ROFR) in constructing and maintaining electric transmission projects, as included in the governor's energy bill (HF 834/SF 585).

The group also discussed concerns with a community solar bill (HF 404) that would undercut defined electric service territory and allow non-utilities to provide retail electric service within rate-regulated utility territory.

During the event, co-op advocates educated legislators on the benefits of the not-for-profit cooperative business model including local ownership, democratic governance and cost-based rates. Several electric cooperatives displayed booths in the rotunda which

provided information on topics including economic development, investments in technology, electric safety, reliable power generation and student programs.

Learn more about the legislative priorities of Iowa's electric cooperatives and Iowa Rural Power grassroots advocacy at www.iaruralpower.org.



Pictured left to right:
SWIAREC's Eric Hensley, Representative Tom Moore, and SWIAREC's Tim Pfeiffer

The growing demand on our power grid and what we can do about it



Phil Kinser CEO

Let's reflect on the systems that sustain us. This includes the power grid that keeps our homes comfortable and our modern world running. As climate patterns shift and extreme weather events increase, the grid faces new pressures to meet our growing energy demands. From heatwaves to derechos to tornados to ice storms, today's changing conditions are testing the limits of an infrastructure first built in the late 1800s.

The first power grid, developed in 1882 in New York City, laid the foundation for the modern grid that powers our world. The systems we depend on today were built for past and current weather conditions. However, these conditions are changing. Extreme weather is now the number one cause of blackouts in the U.S., accounting for 80% of major power outages.

How does extreme weather impact the grid?

Regions across the U.S. face extreme weather that strains infrastructure not built for extreme conditions. In Texas, limited winterization led to power outages and frozen pipes during the 2021 winter storm. The Pacific Northwest's record heat dome in 2021 increased electricity demand to record highs, causing grid equipment to overheat. In California, utilities implement public safety shutoffs during dry, windy conditions to prevent wildfires.

Extreme weather impacts the grid in several ways. Sometimes, power is still being produced, but it can't reach homes because power lines are downed or damaged by fallen trees and debris during storms. During

tornados, substations — facilities that control and distribute electricity — can experience damage, causing widespread outages. Other times, when demand spikes during heatwaves or winter storms, the grid can become overwhelmed, leading to rolling blackouts or outages as supply struggles to meet increased energy demands.

What is causing the increased demand for electricity?

While extreme weather is one source of growing energy demand, development and technology are increasing the demand for energy. This demand is projected to rise 15-20% in the U.S. over the next decade, according to the Department of Energy.

Significant factors impacting this growth are the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and its expanding data centers, cloud storage, communication tools and much more.

The grid faces two significant opportunities for growth: adapting to extreme weather conditions and meeting the rising energy demand. The energy industry is working tirelessly to ensure the power grid meets these ever-growing challenges and provides a more resilient and sustainable energy system that supports affordability and reliability.

Utility companies, government agencies, regulators and other stakeholders are working to increase grid resilience. Efforts include storm hardening infrastructure, deploying battery storage to supplement the grid, expanding renewable energy sources, and connecting regional grids to improve overall stability.

What can we do?

While the challenges facing the power grid are significant, there are steps we can all take to reduce strain and contribute to a more reliable energy system.

- Simple actions like running high-energy appliances during off-peak hours can ease pressure on the grid, especially during peak demand times.
- Conducting a home energy audit can identify ways to improve your home's efficiency, reducing both your energy consumption and utility bills.
- Southwest Iowa REC offers incentives for energy efficiency improvements. Contact us at 888-220-4869 for more information or go to www.swiarec.coop to access information on our energy efficiency programs and rebates.

By recognizing challenges like extreme weather, increasing energy demand and aging infrastructure, we can take action to make the power grid more sustainable. Every action, from reducing energy consumption to supporting new technologies, contributes to a more resilient future.

HEAT PLUS METER READINGS



The Heat Plus rate season will end May 31, 2025. It is important that members do not turn off the power to those meters because we still need to be able to read them each month. The Heat Plus rate will begin again on October 1, 2025.

FREE AND EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

Here are 10 easy, no-cost ways to save energy this summer:



1. Close or lower window coverings during the heat of the day



6. Unplug that extra fridge, especially older, inefficient models (they have to work even harder in a hot garage)



2. Set your thermostat a few degrees higher



7. Optimize your programmable thermostat's features (around 40% of homeowners never program them)



3. Take cooler showers (this feels better in the summer, anyway)



8. Check the airflow around windows and doors (add weather stripping if needed)



4. Use countertop appliances or a microwave instead of your oven



9. Unplug all chargers and electronics before leaving the house



5. Better yet, grill or smoke food outdoors



10. SHUT THE FRONT DOOR (don't air condition the outdoors)

Safe Electricity.org[®] Learn more at:

Board Approves Patronage Allocation

In March, the Board of Directors allocated margins for 2024. Margins are the “bottom line” on our financial operating statement when all the expenses of providing electric services to our member-owners are deducted from the revenues taken in. After the annual independent audit of the books, these margins are allocated to the various reserve accounts and also as patronage capital to the member-owners who received service from the Cooperative during the year the margin was created.

For 2024, margins of \$494,043.89 will be allocated to the member-owners based upon the amount each paid for electricity in proportion to what the other member-owners paid. The payment of patronage capital is deferred until a future point in time when the financials of the Cooperative allow a refund. Member-owners who purchased electricity from us in 2024 should receive a patronage allocation notice in the mail in late May or early June.

SAVE THE DATE
2025 Southwest Iowa REC
Annual Meeting
Thursday, September 4, 2025



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.
- If you have air conditioning, turn the thermostat up when you are gone and at night. Cool only the rooms that you are using.
- 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.

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



Our offices will be closed Monday,
 May 26th in observance
 of Memorial Day.

MOVE OVER SLOW DOWN



Please make room for roadside crews

By Abby Berry

When the power goes out, so do Southwest Iowa REC's line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve.

If you're traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, we simply ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we ask that you move over into the far lane.

Iowa's Move Over Law, which was established in 2002, requires motorists to change lanes to give space for vehicles stopped along the side of the road. Anyone who violates the law could face a fine of up to \$10,000. Utility crews aren't the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways. We ask that you follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep these crews safe.

There's plenty of room for all. Let's work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways.



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Strawberry Pretzel Jello Salad



Ingredients

- 6 oz Strawberry Jello
- 2 cups Boiling water
- 2 cups Pretzels, crushed
- 1/4 cup Sugar
- 8 tablespoon Unsalted Butter
- 8 oz Cream Cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup Sugar
- 8 oz Whipped Topping, thawed
- 1 lb Strawberries, sliced

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the jello package and boiling water. Stir until completely dissolved and allow to cool to room temperature.
3. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter and add in 1/4 cup sugar. Mix in crushed pretzels.
4. Transfer pretzel mixture to a 9 x 13 baking pan and use a fork to press mixture evenly on bottom of pan.
5. Place pan in oven for about 10 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool to room temperature.
6. While pretzel layer is cooling, mix together the cream cheese and 1/2 cup sugar using a hand held mixer until combined.
7. Fold in the whipped topping.
8. Spread mixture evenly over cooled pretzels making sure to cover entire pan side to side.
9. Refrigerate pan for 30 minutes.
10. Mix sliced strawberries into room temperature jello mixture.
11. Pour jello over cream cheese layer evenly and place in refrigerator for about 2-3 hours, or until set up.
12. Serve and enjoy!

SAFETY FIRST, SAFETY ALWAYS

MAY IS ELECTRICAL
SAFETY MONTH

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This planting season, include energy efficiency in your landscaping plans. Adding shade trees around your home can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 6 degrees. To block heat from the sun, plant deciduous trees around the south side of your home. Deciduous trees provide excellent shade during the summer and lose their leaves in the fall and winter months, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Source: energy.gov



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Southwest Iowa REC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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