

Southwest Lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

Corning | Mount Ayr | Stanton

September 2025

Operation Round-UP® 2025



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 \$344,425 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 5,770 accounts, we’re excited that 4,210 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 UP

Board Approves \$384,000 Patronage Refund

The Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors has approved payment of patronage dividends in 2025. We will return 100% of the remaining dividends allocated to the members for the year 2007, 85% of the dividends allocated for 2008, and 10% of the current allocation for 2024. The total payment will be approximately \$384,000.

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.

2025-2026 Iowa Home Energy Assistance Program

WHEN TO APPLY:

- Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled: Oct. 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026
- All other households: Nov. 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026

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 bring 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, Family Investment Program (FIP), Veteran’s Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please bring 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

Employees Vote to Join Labor Union

At Southwest Iowa REC, we are committed to keeping you informed about the developments that shape our organization. As a member-owned cooperative, transparency is one of the values we hold most dearly. Recently, our employees participated in a formal election to determine whether they would like to be represented by a labor union. After careful consideration and a majority vote, our line foremen, linemen, apprentice linemen, and member service technician have chosen to be represented by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local #55.

This decision marks a new chapter for our cooperative. We respect our employees' right to organize and recognize the importance of open and constructive dialogue between management and staff. Our employees are the backbone of our operations — from restoring power in storms to maintaining the systems that keep our communities running — and we deeply value their work and dedication.

What does this mean moving forward? In the coming months, we will begin the process of negotiating a collective bargaining agreement with representatives of IBEW Local #55. This will be a collaborative effort, and we are committed to working in good faith to reach an agreement that is fair to both our employees and the members we serve.

Rest assured, our mission remains unchanged: to provide you with safe, reliable, and affordable electric service. Our employees will continue to do the outstanding work they've always done, and we will continue to support them in that effort.

We appreciate your ongoing support and trust. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. As always, we remain focused on serving our members and strengthening the communities we call home.

Getting Ready to Move into New Facility

I'm excited to share that the Corning and Stanton employees of Southwest Iowa REC will soon be moving into a new to us facility located at 2248 Avenue of Industries just a few miles west of Corning. This move is an important step forward as we continue to grow and improve the service we provide to you, our members.

The newly remodeled facility will allow us to operate more efficiently, improve safety for our employees, and better serve your needs with updated technology and improved workspace. While our address is changing, our commitment to reliable, responsive service remains the same.

We expect the move to take place in mid to late September, so look for further updates on our website www.swiarec.coop and Facebook where we'll keep you informed every step of the way. There may be some minor disruptions during the transition, but we're working hard to ensure a smooth process.

Thank you for your continued support — we're excited to welcome you to our new home soon!



Phil Kinser CEO



NEW PAY-BY-PHONE NUMBER

📞 855-936-3657

🌐 swiarec.smarthub.coop



SOUTHWEST IOWA
RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative





TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS ⚠️

Solar energy is rising in popularity, and so are solar scams. If a salesperson knocks on your door promising free solar panels at zero cost or that you'll never have to pay your energy bill again, it's likely a scam. If you're interested in solar panels for your home, do your research, get multiple quotes from licensed providers who are reputable, and most importantly, take your time to ensure a smooth process.

Source: Federal Trade Commission



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!

Guided by our cooperative commitment to 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 swiarec.coop/youth-tour.

"This program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, leadership, or government," remarked Phil Kinser, SWIAREC General Manager/ CEO. "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:

- Thursday, Oct. 2, 7:00 p.m. – Cooperative Business Model
- Tuesday, Oct. 14, 7:00 p.m. – Advocacy
- Thursday, Oct. 23, 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 30th 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 dynamic 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 2026 Youth Tour is slated for June 14-20 next summer.

Learn more at www.IowaYouthTour.com or contact Suzy Olson, SWIAREC Administrative Assistant, at 888-220-4969 ext.1 for more information.

Celebrating the Retirement of Two Incredible Team Members



We are honored to recognize and celebrate the retirement of two remarkable women who have dedicated decades of service to Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative.

Denise Hallquist (pictured left) retires after more than **48 years** of service as a Customer Service Representative. Her dedication, warm personality, and tireless commitment to helping our members have made her an invaluable part of our team. Denise has been a familiar and friendly voice to so many of our customers, and her knowledge and care have helped shape the excellent service we are known for today.

Marilyn Rubel (pictured right) retires after over **38 years** of service as an Accountant. Her attention to detail, steadfast reliability, and deep understanding of our financial operations have been crucial to our success. Marilyn's work behind the scenes ensured that our cooperative ran smoothly and efficiently year after year.

Their combined 85+ years of service represent more than just time—they represent dedication, community, and excellence. While we will greatly miss their presence in the office, we are excited for both Denise and Marilyn as they enter this new chapter of well-deserved rest and adventure.

Please join us in thanking them for their incredible service and wishing them all the best in retirement!

Touchstone Energy booth



Pictured: Ryder and Lainey, future lineworkers in training, suited up in their hard hats with Dad (Cody Stackhouse) at the Touchstone Energy booth during the Iowa State Fair! Smiles, lollipops, and a whole lot of energy fun. Cody is a lineman at SWIAREC, Mt Ayr.



Reduce Energy Use During Peak Hours

PEAK ALERT!

Please help reduce
energy usage 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.

Baked Parmesan Zucchini Fries

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lbs. (680 g) zucchini, cut lengthwise into wedges (about 3 medium zucchini)
- 1/2 cup (50 g) freshly grated Parmesan
- 1 teaspoon (5 ml) dried herbs – thyme, oregano, basil, rosemary, etc...
- 1/2 teaspoon (2.5 ml) smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon (2.5 ml) garlic powder
- Kosher salt, to taste
- black pepper, to taste (freshly ground if possible)
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) olive oil
- 3 tablespoons (45 ml) chopped fresh parsley leaves



Instructions

- Preheat oven to 400° F. Line baking sheet with parchment or aluminum foil. Spray with non-stick cooking spray.
- In bowl, combine Parmesan, dried herbs, smoked paprika and garlic powder salt and pepper, to taste.
- Toss the zucchini with olive oil and roll in parmesan/herb mixture to coat all sides. Place zucchini onto prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle with extra parmesan/herb mixture if needed.
- Bake until crisp, about 15 minutes. Then broil for 2-3 minutes, or until golden brown. Garnish with parsley. Serve warm.



Bravo.....

Dear Southwest Iowa REC,
Thank you for the scholarship. This will greatly help me as I start my college journey.
Ambrose Savage, Lamoni

Rec,
Thank you for sponsoring the Champion Senior Showman for poultry at the Montgomery County Fair. I am so grateful.
Sincerely, Conor Nippert

SWIAREC,
I would like to thank you for being a big part of our Work Experience program this year. Our school really appreciates the support of our local businesses and hopes that we can continue this learning venture.

Respectfully, Steve Sonntag, AgEd instructor, Southwest Valley

Dear REC,
We are sincerely grateful for your generous donation to the Cooperative Family Fund. Your support means a great deal and will make a positive impact on the cooperative children we serve.

Warmest Regards, Emily, CFF Board member

Dear Southwest Iowa REC,
I am incredibly thankful of your support toward my academic career. This scholarship will give me the financial relief I need to focus on my studies.

Thank you, Olivia Huntington

Thank you for the scholarship! It will be very helpful.
-Josh Schaefer

Southwest Iowa REC,
Thank you for the opportunity and consideration for this scholarship. I'm extremely grateful and appreciative. I am headed to ISU in the fall!
-Morgan Shuler, SWV

Dear SWIAREC,
Thank you for the scholarship I received at the SWV scholarship night. I plan to attend SWCC in the fall, majoring in Ag Business. Your support for my college education is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely, Reagan Sonntag

Scholarship Committee,
I am incredibly honored to be selected as a recipient. This fall I will be attending Iowa State University to major in Elementary Education.

Sincerely, Anna Bolinger, Creston

Thank you so much for choosing me to receive an REC scholarship. I appreciate the help the scholarship will give me.

-Anna Peterson

REC,
Thank you for the scholarship. I will use the money towards tuition at Northwest Iowa Community College while I attend the Powerline Program.

-Devin Greenwalt

Dear Southwest Iowa REC,
Thank you so much for presenting me with this amazing opportunity to attend Iowa Youth Tour. My favorite part was the snack cooperative. It taught us a lot about what it takes to run something like a cooperative. Thank you again,

-Ray Helvie

Dear REC,
Thank you so much for your generous support through your scholarship. I will be studying political science at the University of Iowa. I'm truly grateful for believing in students like me.

Sincerely, Olivia

AUTUMN BEGINS SEPTEMBER 22ND



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SOUTHWEST IOWA
RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Find us on
Facebook

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.

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