

Southwest Lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

February 2026

Electric cooperatives discuss priorities as Iowa's 2026 Legislative Session begins

More than 150 senior staff and directors from Iowa electric cooperatives, including Southwest Iowa REC, were in downtown Des Moines on January 13 to attend a legislative “welcome back” reception at the start of the 91st Iowa General Assembly. At the event, co-op advocates discussed priorities face-to-face with their state legislators.

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) hosted the reception in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and FUEL Iowa.

“Hosting this annual reception at the start of the legislative session is a way for Iowa electric cooperatives to form long-term relationships based on trust and open communication,” remarked Leslie Kaufman, IAEC executive vice president. “With many new legislators and new faces in leadership this session, we value every opportunity to talk about the cooperative business model and the needs of our member-consumers.”

Representatives from Iowa’s locally owned electric cooperatives covered several important issues that could impact the affordability and reliability of electricity for the members and communities we serve.

Electric cooperatives will again focus on protecting Iowa’s defined electric service territories, an important law that helps ensure every corner of the state receives consistent, cost-effective electric service. Another legislative challenge that could resurface involves third-party or “community solar” proposals that would attempt to allow non-utility solar developers to provide retail electric service inside an established utility’s service area, in direct conflict with service territory law.

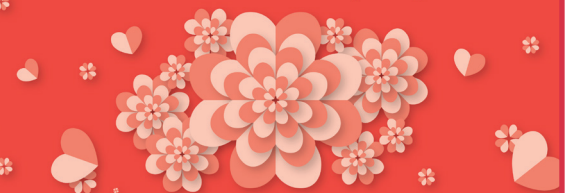


Pictured left to right, Southwest Iowa REC’s Board President Marilyn Werner, Southwest Iowa REC’s Board Secretary Kay Fast-Deyoe, Senator Tom Shipley, Southwest Iowa REC CEO/GM Phil Kinser, Southwest Iowa REC Director of Finance Sarah Newton. They were also able to meet with Senator Amy Sinclair and Representative Devon Wood.

Iowa’s electric co-ops are also seeking to further protect utility workers, who encounter threats, harassment and assaults while on the job. Strengthening penalties for violence against utility workers reaffirms our commitment to the safety of cooperative employees and our communities.

In the coming months, Iowa’s 91st General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to Iowa’s rural economy. Iowa electric cooperatives will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues as we work to power lives and empower communities. Learn more about our advocacy efforts at www.IAruralpower.org.

You're at the heart of everything we do.



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
FROM OUR CO-OP FAMILY TO YOURS!

Scholarships Reminder

Southwest Iowa REC will once again be offering scholarships for the 2025-2026 school year to graduating high school seniors. We will be awarding fourteen (14) \$500 scholarships. In addition, three (3) \$1,000 scholarships will be available for students planning to attend an Accredited Lineman School or electrical trade program.

Completed applications and a photo must be received at the REC Office by March 2nd, 2026 to be eligible.

Applications can be found on our website, swiarec.coop/scholarships



Coop Month Column

Your Cooperative Works Best When Members Get Involved

One of the things I'm most proud of as CEO is that our electric cooperative truly belongs to you. We're not owned by distant investors or shareholders—we're owned by the members who use our service every day. That's a powerful idea, and it's what makes a cooperative different.

But a cooperative only works as well as the members who choose to participate.

As we look ahead this year, I want to personally encourage you to consider getting more involved—especially by serving on our nominating committee or by exploring the possibility of running for a seat on the board of directors.

Our board of directors plays a critical role in guiding the cooperative's future. Board members help set policy, approve budgets, and ensure we're making decisions that balance reliability, affordability, and long-term planning. They don't manage day-to-day operations—that's my job and our staff's job—but they do provide direction and oversight on behalf of the membership.

The nominating committee is where that leadership journey often begins. Committee members help identify and recommend qualified candidates for board positions. It's a meaningful way to learn how the cooperative operates, meet fellow members, and make sure the board reflects the communities we serve. You don't need prior board experience—just a willingness to listen, ask questions, and represent your neighbors fairly.

If you've ever thought, "I wonder why the cooperative does things this way," or "I'd like to have a voice in decisions that affect our community," serving on the nominating committee might be a great fit.

And if you're interested in going a step further, I encourage you to consider running for the board yourself. Our best board members come from all walks of life—farmers, educators, business owners, retirees, and professionals—each bringing a unique perspective. What they share is a commitment to the cooperative and the community it serves.

I understand that stepping forward can feel intimidating. Time commitments, unfamiliar processes, or simply not knowing where to start can hold people back. Please know that you won't be doing this alone. Our staff and current board members are happy to answer questions and help you understand what's involved.

This cooperative exists because members before you chose to get involved. The decisions they made helped shape the reliable, locally governed electric system we benefit from today.

Now it's our turn to keep that tradition going.

If you're curious about serving on the nominating committee or learning more about board service, I encourage you to reach out. Additional information on board of directors' qualifications and the election process will appear in future newsletters so stay tuned. Your voice matters, and your cooperative is stronger when members like you take part. Together, we power more than homes—we power our community.



Phil Kinser CEO

Thank You Note

Dear Phil and friends at S.W. Iowa REC,
on behalf of the First Presbyterian Church, MATURA
food pantry, and those in our community
experiencing hunger and food insecurity, I want
to say thank you for your support of our annual
food pantry fundraise held on November 20th,
your generous donation, combined with the
generosity of many others in our community,
made it possible for us to present a check to
the food pantry in the amount of \$6,612⁸²!
Wishing you a blessed and Merry Christmas.
Ken Pennington

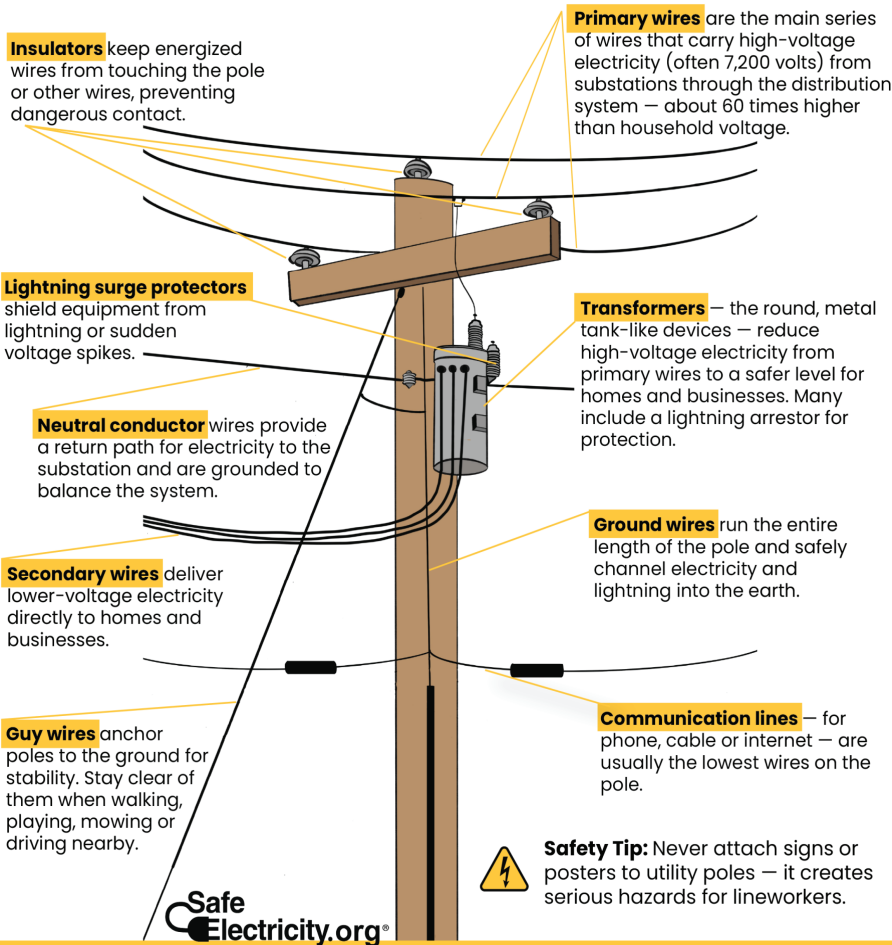
Accepting Bids for 2026 Mowing Season

Southwest Iowa REC is accepting bids for mowing services during 2026 for our substation and office locations. Please contact us at postmaster@swiarec.coop or by calling 888-220-4869 to request a bid packet. Bids are due back by April 1, 2026.

The parts of a POWER POLE

Ever wonder what's on a power pole and how it delivers electricity to your home? Learning about each part can help you and your family stay informed — and safe.

Here are some common parts found on power poles. Equipment can vary depending on location and service needs.



ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT



When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

Safe Electricity.org®

Source: Jerri Imgarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative

AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

Scammers will threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

- Our employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.



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Cheesy Pizza Casserole

Enjoy!



For the Pasta

- 16 ounces Rotini Pasta Feel free to substitute with any pasta shape.
- For the Meat
- 1 pound Ground Beef Turkey or plant-based option can be used.
- For the Flavoring
- 1 tablespoon Italian Seasoning Can be swapped for dried oregano or basil.
- 1 teaspoon Garlic Powder Freshly minced garlic can be used.
- 1 teaspoon Kosher Salt Sea salt is a great alternative.
- For the Toppings
- 1 cup Pepperoni Consider turkey pepperoni for a lighter option.
- 1 cup Green Bell Pepper Add mushrooms or zucchini for extra veggies.
- 1 medium Onion Shallots can be used for a milder taste.
- For the Sauce and Cheese
- 24 ounces Marinara Sauce Any tomato-based sauce works as a substitute.
- 2 cups Mozzarella Cheese Can mix with provolone or cheddar.

Instructions

1. Start by bringing a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the rotini pasta and cook for about 7 minutes or until al dente. Drain and set aside.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add the ground beef. Cook for about 5-7 minutes until browned. Drain excess fat.
3. Sprinkle Italian seasoning, garlic powder, and kosher salt over the cooked ground beef. Stir well and sauté for another 2 minutes.
4. Add diced onion and chopped green bell pepper to the skillet. Sauté for about 3-4 minutes until softened.
5. Pour the marinara sauce into the skillet with the beef and vegetables. Stir well and let it simmer for about 5 minutes.
6. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish. Combine the cooked rotini pasta with the beef and sauce mixture in the dish. Stir in half of the mozzarella cheese.
7. Spread the remaining mozzarella cheese evenly on top. Layer whole pepperoni slices over the cheese.
8. Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C) and bake uncovered for 20-25 minutes until the cheese is golden and bubbly.

Your Privacy is Important

At Southwest Iowa REC, we recognize that a key element of the member-cooperative relationship is the trust that you place with us to respect the privacy and confidentiality of your personal information. We are committed to providing you with the highest quality of electric service. While personal information about you is fundamental to our ability to do this, your privacy is also very important to us.

Therefore, Southwest Iowa REC will not disclose to non-affiliated third parties any information, including personal financial or consumption histories, without the expressed consent of the member/consumer. The Cooperative does reserve the right to use information for purposes relevant to prudent engineering and design practices and power procurement practices, which are consistent with the industry requirements, and for the betterment of the Cooperative and its membership, as a whole.

We restrict access to non-public personal information for all member-consumers to only those employees or affiliates who need to know specific information to provide products and services to the member/consumer. We maintain physical, electronic and procedural safeguards that, to the best of our abilities, provide prudent and sufficient protection for all non-public personal information.

Information shall not be released to any third party until such time as the member/consumer approves, in writing, such authorization. Forms for the release of information may be obtained from the Cooperative office.

Southwest Iowa REC may collect non-public personal information from the following:

- a. Information we receive from you on applications or forms.
- b. Information regarding payment histories, consumption history, demand history or capacity requirements.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Winter weather can cause your home heating system to work overtime. Check for air leaks and drafts around doors and windows, then seal them with weatherstripping or caulk. Close fireplace dampers when not in use, and consider installing insulating curtains to help keep warm air inside. You can also save energy by lowering your thermostat a few degrees. Even small adjustments like these can reduce heating costs and improve comfort during the coldest months.





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Corning
2248 Avenue of Industries., Corning, IA 50841

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Phone Number: (888) 220-4869

Southwest Iowa REC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board of Directors

Marilyn Werner, President Phil Kinser, CEO
 Mark Herzberg, Vice President
 Kay Fast-Deyoe, Secretary
 Jason Smith, Treasurer
 Alan Spencer, Adam Boswell, Dana Morgan
 Justin Akers, Bonnie Larson, Dale Walkup

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