

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

February 2022 Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



December derecho knocks out power to members

The unseasonal derecho that tore through the state of Iowa on Dec. 15 was not the first time Prairie Energy employees have dealt with a winter storm, but it was the first time your cooperative has set a record for number of outages.

“Out of 5,200 total meters on Prairie’s lines, at the peak of damage almost 40 percent were without power. That’s around 2,099 meters across our 4,200 members,” said CEO Tim Marienau. “These members included residential houses but also ag businesses like poultry and hog facilities and large co-ops like Gold-Eagle and NEW Cooperative. The areas around Vincent, Duncombe, Stratford, Lehigh, Belmond, and Lake Cornelia were the hardest hit, but we had outages and damages system wide. The substations in these areas were the hardest hit as well. Corn Belt lost miles upon miles of transmission lines.”

Restoration efforts began as the storm dissipated the night of Dec. 15, and reports of outages and damages came rolling into the office that continued throughout the night into the following days. Prairie Energy crews worked nonstop to restore power to all members along with aid from Legacy Power Line and Highline Construction, both out of Minnesota. Final restorations were completed around 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 17.

“The employees of Prairie are a dedicated group when faced with a storm of this magnitude. They roll up their sleeves and restore power as safely and as quickly as possible. The members of Prairie Energy should be proud of the effort put forth by their dependable linemen and staff,” said Butch Norem, director of operations and engineering.

The employees and board of Prairie Energy would like to thank the membership for their patience and understanding during the December derecho.

Five safety tips for your home workshop

Without taking proper precautions, the enjoyment of a do-it-yourself project can quickly turn into disaster.

You may have all the latest power tools, hand tools, hardware, and materials, but if you don't put safety first, you may end up with a trip to the hospital instead of new shelves, upgraded lighting in the kitchen, or a trendy shiplap wall in the bedroom.

Here are some fundamental workshop and electrical safety tips to help keep things running smoothly:

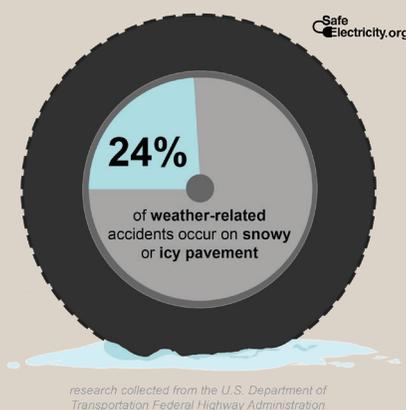
- 1. Wear safety gear, glasses, and gloves:** The first rule of workshop safety is to dress appropriately. Avoid loose clothing that can become caught in power tools. Never wear dangling jewelry or scarves. Closed-toe shoes are a must, and steel-toed boots are recommended. Safety glasses are necessary 100 percent of the time. If you wear gloves, remove them before you reach for a belt sander or scroll saw to minimize the risk of them getting caught.
- 2. Observe electrical safety:** Before you start a project, inspect your power tools and their cords for loose plugs, exposed wires, or worn insulation. If you use an extension cord, choose one long, heavy-duty (appropriately rated) cord. When you are done working, unplug everything from the extension cord and put it away.
- 3. Keep your workshop clean:** Anything left on the floor is a tripping hazard. Anything cluttering up your worktable introduces obstacles that can become caught in a saw or drill mechanism or block your ability to move your project safely as you work.
- 4. Keep tools in good condition:** Everything works better in the workshop if you have clean, sharp, and well-lubricated tools.
- 5. Know your limits:** Read instructions. Look up reputable guide videos. Most importantly, recognize when you are in over your head and leave those non-DIY projects to the professionals.

DIYers:
HOW SAFE IS YOUR WORKSHOP?

Make these tips standard practice in your workshop:

- Inspect tools for damage before using them
- Inspect cords and plugs for signs of wear
- Use electrical outlets equipped with GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters)
- Keep floors and areas as clean and dry as possible
- Ensure cords are not a tripping hazard
- Use a clamp or vise to secure whatever you are working on
- Use the right tool for the job
- Wear proper clothing for the task; avoid loose clothing or jewelry
- Make sure your work area is well-lit
- Use heavy-duty, properly rated extension cords

Safe Electricity.org®



**MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN**

Shut the Door on Energy Waste.

Did you know **25% to 40%** of energy used to heat and cool your home is wasted through air leaks? Seal all exterior doors with weatherstripping to minimize energy waste.



February

American Heart Month

For example, a multicooker like the Instant Pot can steam and air-fry meat and vegetables without oil. A slow cooker can prepare chicken and beef dishes without added fats, too, if you let them simmer in broth, juice, or another liquid and let the meal stew all day.

An electric indoor grill draws the fat from meat into a drip pan below the grate instead of using it to cook the dish. And a blender with blades sharp enough to shred ice makes it simple to whip up smoothies for breakfast and snacks so you and your family get plenty fruits and veggies, even in the morning.

This February, redefine “romance” to include helping your partner get and stay healthy. Recommit to those New Year’s resolutions and celebrate Heart Month by protecting yours and those of your loved ones.

As soon as Christmas is over, stores and businesses begin decorating with hearts in preparation for Valentine’s Day.

But American Heart Month isn’t just about romance. It’s about keeping your heart healthy by eating nutritious food and regulating blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Even if your New Year’s resolution to eat healthier and exercise regularly is already a distant memory, February is a great time to kick-start your healthy heart routine.

The electric appliances you might already have in your kitchen can help.

Wash your washer

Staying home more often than usual means you’re probably using your appliances non-stop. That also means you need to clean them more often.

Don’t overlook the appliances that aren’t in the kitchen.

It seems like your clothes washer would be a self-cleaning machine because it’s used for cleaning. But the more you use it, the more it needs a good scrubbing to get rid of built-up detergent and ward off mold.

Here are a few pre-spring cleaning tips for the laundry room:

Top-loading washers: Built-up detergent and fabric softeners can clog the machine if you don’t remove them regularly. To do that, remove the dispensers for those liquids and scrub them with soap, water, and a non-scratch sponge. Then, fill the washer

with hot water and add a cup of bleach. Let it sit for an hour before running a full wash cycle—with an empty tub. Then, fill it again, and this time add a cup of white vinegar and run a full wash cycle again. Finally, run a wash cycle with nothing but hot water.

For your first load of laundry after you clean the tub, wash whites only in case any residual bleach is still in the washer.

Front-loading washers: Get rid of mold and grime that become trapped in the door seal. Use a toothbrush and a solution of eight or nine cups of water and one cup of bleach to scrub the seal. Then, clean the tub the same way you would sanitize a top-loading washer.



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives

The power of human connections[®]

**When it comes to severe weather...
hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.**



You can begin your preparation by assembling an emergency preparedness kit, which includes items to help keep your family safe and comfortable during a power outage. Your kit should include items such as water, non-perishable food, flashlight, batteries, blankets, and a first aid kit.

 Safe
Electricity.org[®]

District 3 and 7 seats up for election

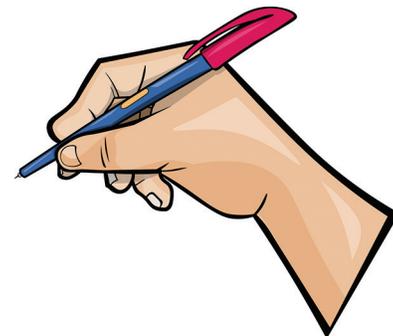
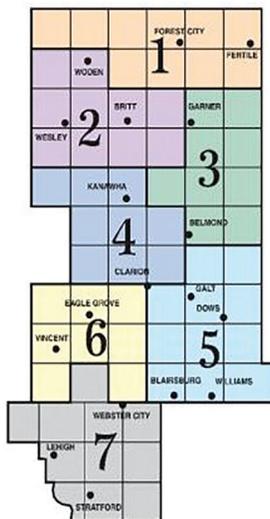
Prairie Energy Cooperative is a member-owned electric cooperative governed by a board of directors. As a member, one of your most important roles is to participate in the election of directors. You can become involved in your cooperative by serving on the board of directors.

Two positions on Prairie Energy Cooperative's seven-member board of directors will be open for election this June. The three-year terms of Allyn Waddingham, District 3, and Donald Christopherson, District 7, will expire.

If you are a member in either District 3 or District 7 and are interested in serving on the board of directors, contact one of the following nominating committee members:

District 3: Leroy Cooper 1575 130th St Goodell IA 50439 641-762-3524*	Gary Steenblock 1465 130th St Kanawha IA 50447 641-762-3238
District 7: Alice Scharf 2525 Swallow Ave Duncombe IA 50532 515-359-2043	Dan Housken 2999 Taylor Ave Lehigh IA 50557 515-571-4110

*The January issue of InTouch listed Leroy Cooper's number incorrectly.



Sign up for auto pay and win!

Sign up for auto payment between now and March 31, 2022, and your name will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 bill credit!

Contact the office Monday-Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. at 515-532-2805 to sign up.

Win a week in Washington D.C.!

High school sophomores and juniors whose parents are members of Prairie Energy have the chance to win an all-expenses paid, week-long trip to Washington, D.C. this summer, June 18 – 24, 2022.

What is Youth Tour?

Iowa's electric cooperatives have been sending high school students on the annual Youth Tour trip since 1958! Participants will learn about electric co-ops, American history and our U.S. government, participate in National Youth Day, visit with their elected legislators, and explore our nation's great capital.

What do I have to do?

Apply! The application process lets our judges get to know you and also requires answering the following question: What moment in American history do you wish you had taken part of, and what would you have contributed? The deadline to request an application is March 24, 2022. Applicant interviews will be held the week of March 28.

Sounds great! How do I apply?

Contact Member Service representatives by calling 515-532-2805 or e-mail Darren Johnson (djohnson@prairieenergy.coop) or Chad Chapman (cchapman@prairieenergy.coop), and they'll be happy to answer any questions and send application materials your way.



Scholarship deadline approaching

Dependents of co-op members are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship.

Contact Sarah Olson-McLaughlin (solson@prairieenergy.coop) at Prairie Energy for an application or go online at www.prairieenergy.coop/content/2021-scholarship-opportunity. Applications are due by Feb. 18, 2022.

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Tim Marienau, CEO



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