

● APRIL 2025

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**Honoring the heroes  
who keep the lights on**

**Ways co-ops build  
effective boards**

**Recipes with an  
international flair**

**PECO scholarship winner announced ▶ See Page 12**

# RECOGNIZING OUR LINEMEN

Linemen Appreciation Day is April 14, and Prairie Energy Cooperative salutes our linemen.

- Levi Bolinger**
- Jesse Furman**
- Wes Held**
- Nate Hughes**
- Steve Jackson**
- Brayden Leerar**
- Scott Muhlenbruch**
- Jade Pringnitz**
- Pat Reiland**
- Scott Scheffel**
- Cole Schisel**
- Tim Slaichert**
- Andrew Stupka**
- Hunter Venz**
- Asa Wayland**

*Thank you!*

# HONORING THE HEROES WHO KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

When storms rage and darkness falls, electric cooperative linemen answer the call. Their work is more than a job – it’s a commitment to service, safety and resilience.

This dedication was on full display during Winter Storm Lola (photos below), which swept through Iowa early last month, bringing heavy snow, fierce winds and widespread power outages. With zero visibility and brutal conditions, linemen faced near-impossible challenges, navigating icy impassable roads, downed lines and blinding whiteouts. Yet, despite the dangers, they pressed on – working around the clock to restore power to homes, farms and businesses that depend on them.

As we approach Linemen Appreciation Day on April 14, Prairie Energy Cooperative takes this opportunity to recognize the crews who sacrifice so much to keep the lights on. It’s easy to take electricity for granted – until it’s gone. But behind every flipped switch and warm home stands a team of linemen who endure the worst so we can have the best.

To all our linemen, we extend our deepest gratitude. Your hard work, sacrifice and unwavering commitment do not go unnoticed. Thank you for weathering the storms so we don’t have to.



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Closed Saturdays, Sunday and holidays

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# OUTAGE ACTION PLAN: STAY SAFE, STAY INFORMED

At Prairie Energy Cooperative, we understand how frustrating outages can be. With the most recent winter storm, hundreds of members lost power for a prolonged period of time. While we work to restore power quickly and safely, here's what you can do to stay safe and informed.

- 1 Check your breakers.** Ensure the outage isn't due to a tripped breaker in your home. Before you report an outage, reset your breaker and check if power is restored.
- 2 Report the outage.** Call us at 800-722-0013 – our phones are answered 24/7 – or report outages through SmartHub. Even if others have reported the outage, additional reports help us pinpoint the issue. Do not report outages through social media or the "Contact Us" form on our website.
- 3 Stay informed.** Follow our Facebook page for real-time outage updates and restoration efforts. Please do not use this as an avenue to report outages, as the page is not monitored 24/7.
- 4 Protect appliances.** Unplug major electronics to prevent damage from power surges. Leave one light on to signal when power returns.



- 5 Keep food cold.** Minimize fridge and freezer openings. A full freezer can keep food frozen for 48 hours if unopened.
- 6 Use generators safely.** Operate generators outdoors, away from windows and doors. Never connect them directly to your home's electrical system.
- 7 Stay safe in severe weather.** Remain indoors and have flashlights, a battery-powered radio and extra blankets ready.
- 8 Check on others.** Look out for elderly or medically vulnerable neighbors and family members.
- 9 Conserve your phone battery.** Use your phone only when necessary. Texting often works better than calling during widespread outages.
- 10 Be prepared.** Keep an emergency kit with water, non-perishable food, flashlights and batteries.

Your safety is our priority. Thank you for your patience and support when we work to restore power!

## ONE PECO BOARD SEAT REMAINS OPEN

Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO) is a member-owned cooperative governed by a board of directors that you elect. As a member, one of your most important roles is to participate in the election of directors, and you can become more involved in your co-op by serving on that board.

Two positions on PECO's seven-member board of directors are open for election in 2025. The three-year terms of Allyn Waddingham, District 3, and Donald Christopherson, District 7 will expire.

Allyn Waddingham is running for another term unopposed, while the seat for District 7 remains open. Look for the annual report in next month's issue, which will include a 2024 year end review of your cooperative, including more information on the director election.



If you are a member of District 7 and interested in serving on the board of directors, contact Sarah Olson-McLaughlin at 515-532-2805 or [solson@prairieenergy.coop](mailto:solson@prairieenergy.coop).

## NEW EMPLOYEE JOINS PECO TEAM



Kate Garner settled into her first day on the job in her new position as Prairie

Energy Cooperative's business and community development manager on Feb. 24. Originally from Kanawha, Garner is a West Hancock and North Iowa Area Community College graduate. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, camping, travel, reading, and spending time with her son Gabe and mom Misty Eivins.

"I look forward to learning and growing," Garner says. "I'm excited to be a part of an incredible group of people and an awesome organization."

**Welcome, Kate!**

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED

Gage Konz, son of Heidi and Brian Konz of Garner, was chosen as Prairie Energy Cooperative's winner of the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative sponsored scholarship. Konz is a senior at Garner-Hayfield-Ventura High School and is involved in FFA, 4-H, National Honor Society, archery, track and football. He plans to attend Iowa State University to major in agriculture business.

**Congratulations, Gage!**



## SAVE THE DATE

Plan to attend Prairie Energy Cooperative's Annual Member Appreciation Day on Thursday, July 17, in Clarion. The event will be from 4-7 p.m. at the Red Shed Event Center and it will have fun activities for the whole family! Keep an eye on future articles in this magazine and our Facebook page for teasers and more information. We look forward to seeing you!

## WINTER MORATORIUM ENDED APRIL 1 — PAYMENT REMINDER

The winter moratorium on electric disconnections ended April 1. If you have a past-due balance, please remember that you are responsible for payment to avoid service interruption. If you would like to discuss payment options, please contact our office as soon as possible. We're here to help and will assist.





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The magazine  
for members of  
Iowa's electric  
cooperatives

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