



Tessa Warnke



Jadyn Jondle

## Youth Tour winners announced

Tessa Warnke, daughter of Craig and Katy Warnke of Clarion, along with Jadyn Jondle, daughter of Jodi and Darren Johnson of Clarion were chosen to attend the 2019 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. June 14-20. Both girls are sophomores at Clarion-Goldfield-Dows high school.

To be eligible for the Youth Tour, students must be members of Prairie Energy Cooperative and either a sophomore or junior in high school. Along with an application, they were required to write a short essay in response to the question “What point in American history would you like to have been a part of and what would you have contributed?”

To hear about Tessa and Jadyn’s trip, be sure to attend your 2020 annual meeting to hear their presentation on their time in D.C.



Jace Prignitz

## Scholarship awarded

Jace Prignitz, son of Karrie and Jerry Prignitz of Garner, was chosen as Prairie Energy’s winner of the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship.

Jace is a senior at Garner-Hayfield Ventura High School and participates in FFA, football, track, wrestling, soccer, 4H and Faith Formation Youth Ministry, as well as several community service projects. He plans on attending Dordt College in Sioux Center to approach a degree in ag business/agronomy.

## Iowans advocate for electric co-ops in D.C.

Last month, 40 Iowa electric cooperative representatives flew to Washington, D.C., to participate in the 2019 NRECA Legislative Conference. Together with more than 2,000 of their fellow cooperative representatives from across the nation, Iowa managers, directors, and employees spent three days sharing the electric cooperative story in Washington.

Advocates heard speeches from high-ranking policymakers including several Members of Congress and Chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Neil Chatterjee. They also participated in breakout sessions in which NRECA staff gave policy briefings and tips on how to effectively advocate on Capitol Hill.

In addition to NRECA-sponsored activities, advocates were able to lobby members of the Iowa Congressional Delegation and their staff, staff from the Executive Office of the President, and USDA Under Secretary Bill Northey. Issues discussed include protecting cooperatives’ not-for-profit status, rightsizing pension premiums, protecting Iowa’s power supply and improving rural infrastructure and broadband access.

The group was well received in every meeting, underscoring the continuing success of Iowa electric co-



Senator Joni Ernst (second row, far right) sits with advocates from Iowa’s electric cooperatives.

operatives’ advocacy efforts. Not only were advocates successful in sharing the cooperative point of view on important federal issues, but we were also effective at maintaining and building relationships with Washington policymakers. Iowa’s electric cooperatives will return to Washington, D.C., in September for the IAEC fall fly-in.



## Think summer storms are harmless?

If you think you have a better chance of being hit by lightning than winning the lottery, you are right.

According to National Weather Service (NWS), there are an estimated 25 million lightning flashes in the United States each year, killing 28 people and injuring 252 annually (averages based on data from 2008-2017).

Your odds of being struck by lightning are 1 in 1,171,000 in any given year. When you consider a person's average lifespan (estimated at 80 years), the odds drop to around 1 in 14,600.

The odds of winning the Mega Millions jackpot is 1 in 302.6 million and the Powerball, 1 in 292.2 million, according to Lottery USA.

Safe Electricity offers these weather-related reminders from FEMA, the Red Cross and other safety organizations:

- Never seek shelter under an isolated tree, tower or utility pole as lightning tends to strike tall objects.
- Immediately vacate elevated areas, such as hills.
- Get away from bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity, including wires and fences (and golf clubs!).
- Never lie flat on the ground.
- Learn about your community's emergency warning for severe thunderstorms.
- Never talk on a landline telephone during a thunderstorm. Electricity will look for the quickest route to the ground via wiring. Although many homes don't have landlines anymore, many businesses still do.
- Know the difference between a watch and a warning. A *severe thunderstorm watch* means that they are possible in and near the area.

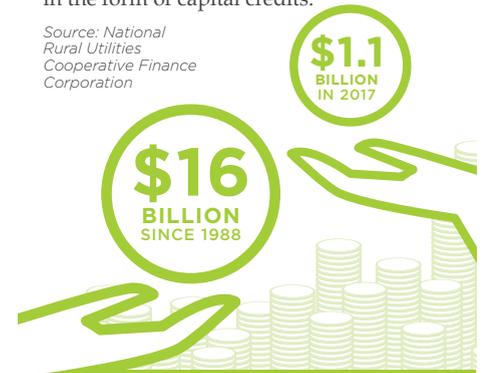
A *severe thunderstorm warning* means that severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. A warning is serious and means that there is imminent danger to life and property.

The best way to protect yourself against lightning or other storm-related injury or death is to monitor the weather. Lightning can strike from 10 miles away, so if you can hear thunder, you are at risk for being struck by lightning.

## Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$16 billion to members since 1988 – \$1.1 billion in 2017 alone. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation



## Help keep Iowa's roads safer

We are committed to the safety of our employees and members and support Iowa's Move Over or Slow Down law. In fact, we encourage motorists to move over AND slow down when approaching utility vehicles on the side of the road with activated flashing lights.

According to the Iowa law, motorists must move over or slow down when approaching any vehicle stopped on the side of the road with its flashing lights activated, including passenger cars with hazard lights. Those who don't obey the law could receive a ticket or even lose their driver's license.

Please give our employees the room they need to work safely, so they can go home at night. Their jobs are dangerous enough.

## IS OWNING A HOME YOUR DREAM?

Contact Homeward, Inc.!

515-532-6477 [homeward@mchsi.com](mailto:homeward@mchsi.com)



**MOVE OVER**  
**SLOW DOWN**

# Tips for maintaining an efficient HVAC system

Ah, summer. Cookouts, swimming pools, camping—it's the perfect time to enjoy the outdoors. And when it's time to come back indoors, there's nothing better than that cool blast you feel from your air conditioning unit.

Your heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system is essential to keeping your home comfortable during summer months, and if it breaks down, it's also the most expensive equipment to repair or replace. Luckily, there are simple steps you can take to lengthen the life of your HVAC system.

**Change or clean filters.** Dirty filters block airflow, which can greatly decrease the efficiency of your system. The Department of Energy recommends changing or cleaning filters at least every month or two during the cooling season.

**Clean the HVAC unit.** Outdoor condenser coils can become clogged with pollen, dirt and small debris. Use a hose to spray the HVAC unit once each season to ensure maximum airflow. (Warning: Do not use a pressure washer to do this, as it can damage the equipment.)

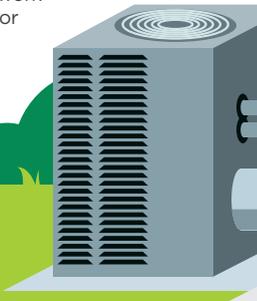
**Clear space around the HVAC unit.** Dryer vents, falling leaves and grass left behind from the lawnmower can create buildup. Remove any debris around the HVAC unit. If you have foliage near the unit, trim it back at least 2 feet around the condenser to increase airflow.

## 3-Step HVAC Test

As summer temperatures rise, so do electric bills. Follow these steps to test the efficiency of your HVAC unit.

The outdoor temperature should be above 80 degrees, and you should set your thermostat well below the room temperature to ensure the system runs long enough for this test.

1. Using a digital probe thermometer (about \$12), measure the temperature of the air being pulled into your HVAC filter.
2. Measure the temperature of the air blowing out of your A/C vent.
3. Subtract the A/C vent temperature from the HVAC filter temperature. You should see a difference of about 17 to 20 degrees. If the difference is less than 17 degrees, you may need a licensed technician to check the coolant. If the difference is greater than 20 degrees, your ductwork may need to be inspected for airflow restrictions.



If you want to evaluate the efficiency of your HVAC system, follow the steps in the graphic shown on the left.

You should also have your HVAC system periodically inspected by a licensed professional. The frequency of inspections depends on the age of your unit, but the Department of Energy recommends scheduling tune-ups during the spring and fall, when contractors aren't as busy.

When HVAC equipment fails, it's inconvenient and uncomfortable—especially during the dog days of summer. Remember, your HVAC system runs best when it's regularly cleaned and serviced. With a little maintenance along the way, you can add years to your system's lifespan.

## What are power surges, and what can I do about them?

A power surge is an increase of power. Minor surges may cause no apparent damage, but over time they can take their toll on devices. Major surges can damage or fry your computer or TV.

Devices that require a lot of power to switch compressors or turn motors on or off – air conditioners, refrigerators and space heaters, for example – call for sudden, brief draws on power. These power demands upset the steady flow of volts in the electrical system. Power surges can also be caused by faulty wiring and overloaded outlets or circuits.

Safe Electricity suggests these

options to protect electronics and appliances:

1. **Use surge protector strips or devices.** During a severe storm, unplug your electronics.
2. **Consider investing in uninterruptible power supply devices.**
3. **Consider having a whole-house surge protector installed** by a qualified electrician.
4. **Consider updating outlets** with those that feature ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), if you haven't already



*A surge protector can keep your expensive electronics safe.*

done so.

People who choose whole-house surge protection can still use the individual plug-in versions for their most sensitive electronics, providing two levels of protection. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

# June is National Safety Month

June is National Safety Month, and safety starts at home. Join the observance by checking for electrical accidents waiting to happen in your home. Here's how:

- Inspect every appliance in your home to determine if it is still in working order. Turn each one on and then off as you listen to the sound of the motor. Inspect plugs and cords for damage.
- If you have young children at home, plug wall outlets with child-safety caps.
- When you replace appliances, buy the ones with a rating from a testing laboratory like UL.
- Choose light bulbs with the correct wattage for each lamp and overhead light fixture. You'll find the maximum safe wattage imprinted on the fixture.
- Put away extension cords. They're designed for temporary use.
- If you're hiding any cords under the carpet, move them. Covering cords can cause them to overheat and start a fire.



*Thank you to those who attended the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Members!*

## Member wins \$25 bill credit

Congratulations go out to Barbara Ainger of Eagle Grove, Iowa! Barbara's recipe was featured in the May issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa*, featuring "Best Beef Recipes" for National Beef Month.

See Barbara's recipe below in case you missed it and submit your own recipes to *Living with Energy in Iowa* by following the directions found in the magazine.

### Slow Cooker Maid-Rites

- 3 pounds ground beef
- 2 eggs
- 16 oz can tomato sauce
- 2 beef bouillon cubes, dissolved in ½ cup hot water
- 2 slices of bread, cubed

Brown and drain beef. Put in slow cooker and add remaining ingredients. Stir well and cook for 4 hours on low. Stir once per hour. Add more water if too dry.



**CRIME STOPPERS**

**800-452-1111**

**COPPER THEFT IS A SERIOUS CRIME. YOU CAN HELP PREVENT IT!**

If you see suspicious activities at an electric substation or around other equipment, please call Crime Stoppers. Your information and identity will remain anonymous, and you could earn a reward if the perpetrators are caught and a crime is solved.

**iNtouch**® is the official publication of Prairie Energy Cooperative  
2099 Highway 3W • Clarion, Iowa 50525-0353  
Phones answered 24/7: (515) 532-2805 • Pay-by-Phone: 844-241-0265  
Offices hours: Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Tim Marienau, CEO



Follow us on Facebook at  
<https://www.facebook.com/PrairieEnergyCooperative>

**smart choices**

See the latest issue of our e-newsletter at [www.prairieenergy.coop](http://www.prairieenergy.coop)



Pay your bill online  
with SmartHub

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.