

## Upgrades coming for Prairie Energy members

Exciting upgrades are coming to your cooperative! Over the next five years, Prairie Energy will be replacing the communications modules in our meters. This is to help our current meters communicate better to our facility, which will give us, as well as our members, more accurate daily reads.

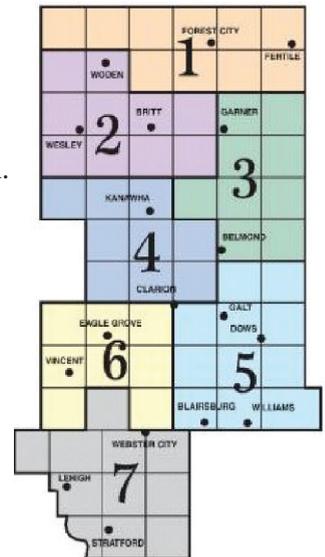
By giving us 24 reads a day, it will help us better identify when usage is high or low. Not only that, but it will help us recognize and restore outages faster and more efficiently helping us give you more reliable power and service. Stay tuned for more updates as we move toward this exciting new chapter!



## Seeking candidates

At the June 5, 2019, annual meeting of the members, director terms in Districts 3 and 7 will expire. To be considered eligible for election, members must reside or receive electric service from Prairie Energy at a location within the district in which they are seeking election. If you are interested in serving on the board of directors, contact or send information to one of the following nominating committee members:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>District 3:</b> Leroy Cooper<br>1575 130th St.<br>Goodell, IA 50439<br>641-762-3542  | Gary Steenblock<br>1465 130th St.<br>Kanawha, IA 50447<br>641-762-3238     |
| <b>District 7:</b> Darrell Moenck<br>2809 270th St.<br>Lehigh, IA 50557<br>515-570-6005 | Sharon Mitchell<br>2496 Swallow Ave.<br>Duncombe, IA 50532<br>515-351-7281 |



## Prestage nearing completion

Prestage Foods of Iowa's pork processing plant is rapidly approaching completion, and Prairie Energy is proud and honored to be a part of that process as the electrical providers, along with Corn Belt Power Cooperative.

Pictured here are left to right: Steve Jackson, Jared Hannasch, Scott Muhlenbruch and Wes Held testing voltage on the Prestage campus.



# Farm Bill provision supports rural economic development

The 2018 Farm Bill was signed into law in late December, providing some certainty and stability for the years ahead.

One provision within the \$867 billion Farm Bill is helpful to electric cooperatives as we work to fund economic development efforts.

Iowa's electric co-ops have been working with the USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program, or REDLG. The REDLG program provides funding for rural projects through zero-interest loans to electric cooperatives that they, in turn, pass through to local businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. The businesses repay the lending co-op directly, and the co-op is responsible for repayment to USDA.

Because of the 2018 Farm Bill, electric co-ops can continue to provide financing for projects within and

beyond our service areas. After the current formula for REDLG funding expires in 2021, the \$5 million of mandatory funding that Sen. Joni Ernst helped secure will kick in. These funds will be in addition to the funds typically marked for the program.

This is great news for your cooperative and for the Iowa Area Development Group, the business and community development organization for Iowa's electric cooperatives that provides technical assistance and development services to Iowa businesses and communities. Participating in the REDLG program is a major component of our core cooperative principle to invest in the communities we serve.

In addition, we want to recognize the efforts of Sen. Ernst, who served on the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee, for her tireless work in securing key provisions. We are also thankful to the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives and to the



*Prairie Energy Cooperative, Clarion, partnered with the City of Woolstock, loaning \$140,000 toward an additional building for the fire department. (L to R): Sarah Olson, Prairie Energy administrative assistant/office manager; Bruce Rhol, mayor of Woolstock; Robert Hisler, Woolstock council member; Todd Foss, Prairie Energy key accounts director*

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for their advocacy efforts on our behalf.

Contact us to learn more about the REDLG program.

## Would your home pass an electrical inspection?

If you're getting ready to sell your home or just wondering how electrically sound it is, there are some guidelines to assess the condition of your home's wiring and electrical bones.

Most local codes follow the National Electric Code (NEC). Check with your qualified electrician or building department (start with your city or town) for code requirements.

If your home has any of the following defects, it may not pass an electrical safety inspection:

- New lights and receptacles installed into old wiring
- Spliced wires illegally installed
- Broken or missing carbon monoxide detectors or smoke alarms
- Non-insulated/non-contact-rated recessed lights touching insulation

- A breaker or fuse that is too large for the wire rating
- Improper grounding and bonding of electrical panels and devices
- Kitchen: Does your electric stove have a dedicated 240-volt circuit? Is the the breaker sized correctly?
- Bathroom: Do the light fixtures in the shower or tub area have a "lens" cover?
- Other rooms: Does each room have a wall switch beside the entry door? Are outlets installed no farther than 12 feet apart?

There are also hallway, staircase and garage code requirements, as well as those for the electrical service panel and wiring. For more about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

### Home Electrical Inspection:

**Pass or Fail?**

Would your home pass an electrical inspection? Local electrical codes vary, so check with your qualified electrician, but here are **five things your home should have:**

- Wiring should be sound (not overcrowded or knob-and-tube wiring used in old homes).
- Ceiling fixtures should be controlled by a wall switch and not just a pull chain.
- Outlets near water should have GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters).
- Your refrigerator, microwave and garbage disposal should each have its own circuit.
- Your island should have its own outlet.

# Energy-saving DIY projects

**Make the most of your water heater.** If your water heater is warm to the touch, it needs additional insulation. Purchase a pre-cut jacket or blanket. First, turn off the water heater. Wrap the blanket around the water heater and tape it to temporarily keep it in place. Use a marker to note the areas where the controls are so you can cut them out. Once the blanket is positioned correctly tape it permanently in place, then turn the water heater back on.

**Seal air leaks with caulk.** Applying caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing can save energy and money. Before applying new caulk, clean and remove any old caulk or paint. The area should be dry before



you apply the new caulk. Apply the caulk in one continuous stream, and make sure it sticks to both sides of the crack or seam. Use a putty knife to smooth out the caulk, then wipe the surface with a dry cloth.

**Weather strip exterior doors.** One of the best ways to seal air leaks is to weather strip exterior doors. Before applying the new weather stripping, clean the molding with water and soap, then let the area dry completely. Measure each side of the door, then cut the weather stripping to fit each section. Make sure the weather stripping fits snugly against both surfaces so it compresses when the door is closed.

Completing these efficiency projects can save you energy (and money!) while increasing the comfort level of your home.

To save even more, contact us for insulation and weatherization rebates.



## HELP KEEP ELECTRIC LINE WORKERS SAFE



**Be patient** when the power goes out. Workers need to work efficiently and **safely** to restore power.



### ZONE IN ON SAFETY



1 work zone crash occurs every **5.4 minutes**



70 work zone crashes result in **injuries each day**



Respect **roadside** work crews.



Don't drive distracted.  
Reduce your speed.  
Change lanes.

12 work zone crashes result in at least **1 fatality each week**



**Never plug a generator into a wall outlet** in your home or garage. The power that back feeds into the electric line **could electrocute a utility worker** or neighbor.



**DON'T** post signs on **utility poles.**

Foreign objects can **tear** utility workers' **protective clothing**, which is the first line of protection from an **electric shock.**



Electric line workers **RANK 15** on the list of **25 MOST DANGEROUS JOBS** in America. Help keep them safe!



Learn more at  **Safe  
Electricity.org**



From left: Allyn Waddingham, Senator Amanda Regan, Jim Wellik, Donald Christopherson

## Legislative reception held

Over 150 directors, managers and staff members from Iowa's electric cooperatives discussed priorities with nearly 100 state legislators and policy makers on Jan. 15 during the annual Welcome Back Legislative Reception at the State Historical Building in Des Moines.

The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, the Iowa Communications Alliance and the Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores of Iowa, hosted the annual reception.

In the coming months, the Iowa



From left: Scott Stecher, Ted Hall, Allyn Waddingham, Sen. Larry Guth, Donald Christopherson, Josh Amonson, Tim Marienau, Jim Wellik



From left: Tim Marienau, Josh Amonson, Jim Wellik, Donald Christopherson, Rep. Linda Upmeyer, Allyn Waddingham, Ted Hall, Marion Denger

General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including items central to Iowa's rural economy. Beginning with the reception, the directors, managers and staff will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues allowing Iowa's member-owned electric cooperatives to continue providing

safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible power to more than 650,000 Iowans.

Electric cooperative representatives from all parts of the state will visit Des Moines in March to meet with their legislators once again. The annual REC Day on the Hill will be held on Mar. 20, 2019, at the Capitol.

## Save the date: June 5, 2019

Prairie Energy Cooperative's annual meeting for members is set for **June 5** at the Belmond-Klemme High School.

Enjoy a great meal and entertainment by Neil Hewitt, enter for a chance to win an all-expenses paid trip to go on the Energy Trail Tour and hear updates from your co-op's leaders.

**We look forward to seeing you!**

## Energy Trail Tour 2019

Prairie Energy Cooperative and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative invite you to join us for the Energy Trail Tour being offered this summer, July 10-12. This 3-day adventure will allow you to view, first-hand, how your power providers convert energy from water, wind, and coal into electricity. View coal being mined and see how those mines are, then, returned to productive farm and native grass lands. Learn how the energy industry is evolving to become more dependent on renewable power generation and glimpse into the future of carbon capture technology. Enjoy the fellowship of other cooperative member-owners on a comfortable motor coach journey to North Dakota's Energy Loop. This all-expense paid trip covers your lodging, meals and entry fees. Two lucky couples from Prairie Energy's members will be selected at random from those who sign up at our Annual Meeting on **Wednesday, June 5, 2019**. Candidates **MUST BE PRESENT** to win.



Photo credit: Chelsy Ciavarella, Basin Electric Power Cooperative

## A Powerful Experience

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.