



Manage your controlled burn

It's called a controlled burn for a reason. If you don't plan your controlled burn and keep it in check, it can quickly spread.

If you are considering implementing a controlled burn (also known as a prescribed fire) to address vegetation or weed management, be sure to follow several precautions to stay safe:

1. Plan your burn.
2. Check with your city hall; notify your local fire department; let your neighbors know your plans.
3. Obtain all necessary permits.
4. Check the weather conditions, such as wind direction, speed, and humidity (relative humidity should be 40 percent or higher).
5. Clear all vegetation and weeds at least four feet around the base of any nearby power poles.
6. Wet the base of poles with water before beginning your burn.

Proper planning can decrease the chances of burning a utility pole.

Fire damage to a power pole is usually evident by blackening and scorch marks, but even slight discoloration can cause serious problems. Sometimes the poles burn from the inside out, and the damage is not immediately apparent.

If you don't take the time to plan ahead, your controlled burn could get expensive. The person who causes damage to a utility pole is responsible for the fees associated with replacing it.

To inquire about controlled burns near power lines and poles, contact your electric cooperative.

FARM SAFETY

EQUIPMENT REACH

Make sure EVERYONE is trained on safe practices around electricity. Utilize these safety tips for you, your employees, seasonal workers, family members, and anyone else accessing your farm.

- Know the dimensions of any far-reaching equipment, such as chemical sprayers, tillage equipment, other extensions or augers.
- Machinery extension dimensions include length when extended horizontally and upright for transport.
- Always use the lowest (shortest) setting for extensions when moving loads.
- These power-line safety principles also apply to arms, booms, truck beds, ladders and other items or mechanisms that extend, lift, or are far reaching.

If your equipment does hit a power line, pole, or guy wire, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.



Safe
Electricity.org



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR HUNTERS

This hunting season, we encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and take necessary precautions while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.



Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.



Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.



Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.



Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.



Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.



Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazards to our line crews.

Make your voice heard

Did you know that if you don't vote, you're not only missing the opportunity to support a candidate that shares your views and concerns, but you're allowing others to chart a course that impacts your future? That's why we're encouraging all members to recognize National Voter Registration Day on September 22, 2020.

Your vision, your vote

All elections are critical. While a presidential election impacts our nation, local elections have a direct impact on your community and on your quality of life.

At every level, elections represent who we are as a community, and more importantly, where we want to go. Your vision for the community is tied to your vote.

This includes cooperative board elections. Your board members provide strategic guidance on the direction of the co-op and how it serves the community. Local board members embody the voice and identity of the community.

Staying in sync with the community

The co-op board's role is governance. While day-to-day decisions are made by our employees, bigger decisions are made by the board.

We depend on you and your neighbors to vote in board elections so that we can stay on course and ensure that we are in sync with the members that we serve.

A strong voter turnout shows investment in the community and ensures that a diverse number of views are represented. The whole community benefits when more people participate in the process.

The act of voting demonstrates your support for the community and helps officials chart a course for the future. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Research candidates, learn about issues that are on the ballot, and get out and vote!

To learn more about National Voter Registration Day, visit nationalvoterregistrationday.org.

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**NATIONAL
VOTER
REGISTRATION
DAY**

September 22, 2020

Converting your home to a smart one: Is it worth it?

A "smart home," or even a semi-smart one, can help make our chores less time consuming and more fun.

Smart houses boast a number of interconnected devices and home appliances, and performance is often more efficient than the owner-operated type. This can save money.

Smart home automation allows you to program a variety of items. If all your devices are interconnected, you can orchestrate them from one place, such as on your tablet or cell phone. And if you have voice-assisted technology, you can just use your words.

There are ways to increase a home's "smartness." Examples include installing smart thermostats; gadgets that track energy use such as individual smart plugs or whole-house monitoring trackers; and smart lighting that includes motion sensors, many with phone app controls.

Smart appliances and devices can save money because in many cases they allow you to use less energy. They're also convenient, fun to use, and can give you peace of mind. In short, some may be worth it in the long run.



Options for converting

- **Smart thermostats** usually cost in the \$200 to \$300 range. With an estimated energy cost savings of around 10 percent, this smart device could pay for itself in just a year or two.
- **Smart plugs** allow you to plug in an appliance and track its energy use. They cost around \$30 to \$50 and let you remotely control an appliance or gadget.
- **Smart lighting** allows you to take advantage of higher tech motion sensors and dimmers, which means using less energy to light your home.
- **Smart bulbs** help save money because they are internet-capable LED bulbs, allowing lighting to be controlled remotely. This enables you to turn them off from your phone, if you are away and realize they are on.



U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley speaks to a group at Prairie Energy.



Prairie Energy CEO Tim Marienau leads a Q & A with Senator Grassley.



Prairie Energy board president Marion Denger asks Senator Grassley a question.

Senator Chuck Grassley visits Prairie Energy

Longtime U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley visited with Prairie Energy, Corn Belt Power, and IAEC employees on Thursday, July 16. Several Prairie Energy directors were also in attendance. The group discussed a variety of issues including Rural Utility Service (RUS) financing, wind energy, the Paycheck Protection Plan, and economic development.

On RUS financing, cooperatives across the country lobbied elected officials in July on lowering existing RUS loan rates. Since the early days of the pandemic, bills were introduced in both the House of Representatives and Senate that would provide relief for electric cooperatives in the form of refinanced RUS loans. Proposals would allow RUS borrowers to readjust or refinance the interest rate on existing loans to the nearest treasury rate. At press time of this newsletter, no bill and/or amendment to a larger coronavirus relief bill had been passed on RUS loan rate refinancing.

The meeting was part of Grassley’s annual “99 County Tour.” Grassley visits each of Iowa’s 99 counties every year.

Share your photo and win!

Calling all photographers —hobbyist and professionals alike—to enter Prairie Energy’s photo contest now through November for a chance to win one of three \$25 electric bill credits and your photo featured in an issue of *InTouch* magazine! Contest rules are as follows:

- Each PECO member may submit up to five photos.
- All submissions must include the photographer’s name and location of the photo. For PECO contact purposes only, please include your email and phone number.
- All submitted photos must be taken within PECO’s service territory and have an electric utility theme (poles, power-lines, linemen, trucks, etc.).
- The contest is only open to PECO member-owners.
- Submissions must be high-resolution, digital images in .jpg or .pdf format.
- Prints will not be accepted.
- The contest will be judged by Prairie Energy employees.

The deadline to submit photos is Friday, November 27, 2020. Email your high-resolution photos to solson@prairieenergy.coop with subject line “Photo contest.”

By submitting photos to this contest, you give PECO the right to use those photos in the *InTouch* magazine and its affiliates, on the Prairie Energy Cooperative website, and on social media.



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