

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

July 2021

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



## Annual meeting held, watch online

The Board of Directors of Prairie Energy Cooperative (PECO), your member-owned electric utility serving north central Iowa, changed how it held the 84th Annual Meeting of its membership. In order to protect the members, communities, special guests, and staff to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, there was no in-person meeting of the membership, held on June 2, 2021.

PECO's bylaws require a meeting of the membership in June and an election of the Board of Directors. For purposes of the election, a limited meeting was held on June 2, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. Board elections took place by mailed-in ballot only. Ballots were sent to the membership on May 18 and were required to be returned by 2:00 pm on June 2 to be counted.

Each year, two or three of PECO's seven board seats are up for election. In 2021, there were elections in District 1, 4, and 6. In District 1, Ted Hall ran unopposed; District 4



## Annual Meeting 2021

election had three choices: the incumbent, Scott Hasty was challenged by Barb Moore of Clarion, and Jeremy Brogaard of Kanawha; and in District 6, Josh Amonson ran unopposed.

In lieu of the traditional in-person gathering of the membership, a business meeting of limited scope was held. The order of business was limited to the election of Directors.

Members can go online now to watch the short video in lieu of our in-person business meeting. Director elections, pandemic response, and this year's margin allocation are among topics discussed. The video can be found on our website or on our Facebook page.



## Vote is in for District 4 director

Prairie Energy would like to congratulate Director Scott Hasty, who was re-elected for a three-year term at last month's limited annual meeting. Scott has been a member of the cooperative for 13 years. He farms near Kanawha and also has his own farm equipment repair shop, where he works primarily on John Deere equipment, mostly combines. He and his wife Dina have four children: Mackenna, Clarissa, Kayla, and Ethan.

Scott is a member of the Kanawha Lutheran Church and also serves on the board for the Liberty School Museum in Kanawha.

## Member wins Editor's Choice Contest

Congratulations go out to Prairie Energy member Emily Mikesh of Belmond, Iowa! Emily was randomly chosen as one of 10 winners from the Editor's Choice Contest from the May issue of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine. The May prize was a one-year membership to the Arbor Day Foundation and 10 shade trees. The Editor's Choice Contest changes monthly and is free for members to enter for a chance to win – visit our Facebook page or go to [www.livingwithenergyin-iowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyin-iowa.com) to see what the current month's contest entails.



Prairie Energy currently has an opening at our Clarion location for a lineman or apprentice lineman.

Visit our website to learn more!

# How renewable energy helps power our world

Renewable energy is continuous energy supplied by natural resources. Although endless, the amount of renewable power produced in a specific period is restricted.

According to the University of Michigan Center for Sustainable Systems, about 80% of the nation's energy comes from fossil fuels, 8.4% from nuclear power, and 11.4% from renewable sources. Wind and solar are the fastest-growing renewable sources; however, they provide just 3.8% of the total energy used in the U.S., according to the Center.

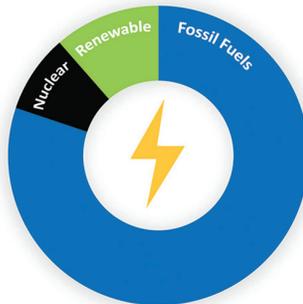
In 2019, renewable energy sources accounted for about 17% of energy generation, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). The administration projects that the share of renewables used for U.S. electricity generation will increase to 42% in 2050.

Types of renewable energy include:

**Biomass:** An organic material that comes from plants and animals. Examples of biomass include wood, agricultural crops; food, yard, and wood waste in garbage; and animal manure and human sewage.

**Geothermal:** Garnered from the heat of the earth. It can heat and

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**Safe Electricity.org**

Source: University of Michigan Center for Sustainable Studies

cool homes and buildings through heat pumps, generate electricity via geothermal power plants, and heat structures directly.

**Hydroelectric:** Relying on the water cycle for power. According to the EIA, hydropower was one of the first sources used for electricity generation, and it is the largest single renewable energy source for U.S. electricity generation.

**Solar:** The most abundant energy resource on earth according to the Department of Energy, with 173,000 terawatts of solar energy striking the earth continuously. That is more than 10,000 times the world's total energy use.

**Wind:** Wind occurs because the sun cannot heat the surface of the earth evenly. Today, wind energy is mainly used to generate electricity.



*70% of lightning fatalities occur June through August - National Weather Service*

*There is no safe place from lightning when you are outside. If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat. That is why the National Weather Service advises, "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!" Lightning can strike up to 10 miles away from rain, even if you don't see clouds.*

Learn more at

**Safe Electricity.org**

## LEDs = Energy savings

What makes LEDs different? LED light bulbs work when an electrical current passes through a microchip, which illuminates the tiny light sources we call LEDs, and the result is visible light. LED light bulbs produce light up to 90 percent more efficiently than traditional incandescent light bulbs.

Moreover, many LEDs are rated with a lifespan of 50,000 hours. That means if one is used 8 hours a day, it is projected to last 17 years!

LEDs help the environment while reducing energy costs. According to the Department of Energy, use of LEDs is on track to save the equivalent annual electrical output of 44 large electric power plants, with a total savings of more than \$30 billion, by the year 2027!

## MAKE THE SWITCH

SAVE MONEY and REDUCE ENERGY USE by replacing outdated lightbulbs with newer, more efficient LED lights.

CONTACT US for rebate information!

**Safe Electricity.org**



# Don't fall victim to utility scams

By Abby Berry, NRECA

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers.

We want you to be aware of two trending scams. One is the overpayment trick, where a scammer contacts you and claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your banking information to deposit the credit to your checking account. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, we will automatically apply the credit to your account, carrying over to your next billing cycle.

Another trending scam is smishing (short for SMS phishing). Many consumers know to watch out for suspicious emails, but we tend to trust text messages sent to our smartphones. At this time, your electric utility does not send text messages to members.

Here are a few reminders on how to take control of the situation when you've been targeted by a scammer:

- **Take your time.** Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency. Think about the situation before acting.
- **Be suspicious.** Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Remember, if the request seems out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.
- **Confirm before you act.** If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent us but you're unsure, hang up the phone and call us directly to verify the situation.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers. Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to us so we can let others in our community know.



- Our employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.

## Tornado Safety Tips

### Practice and Prepare

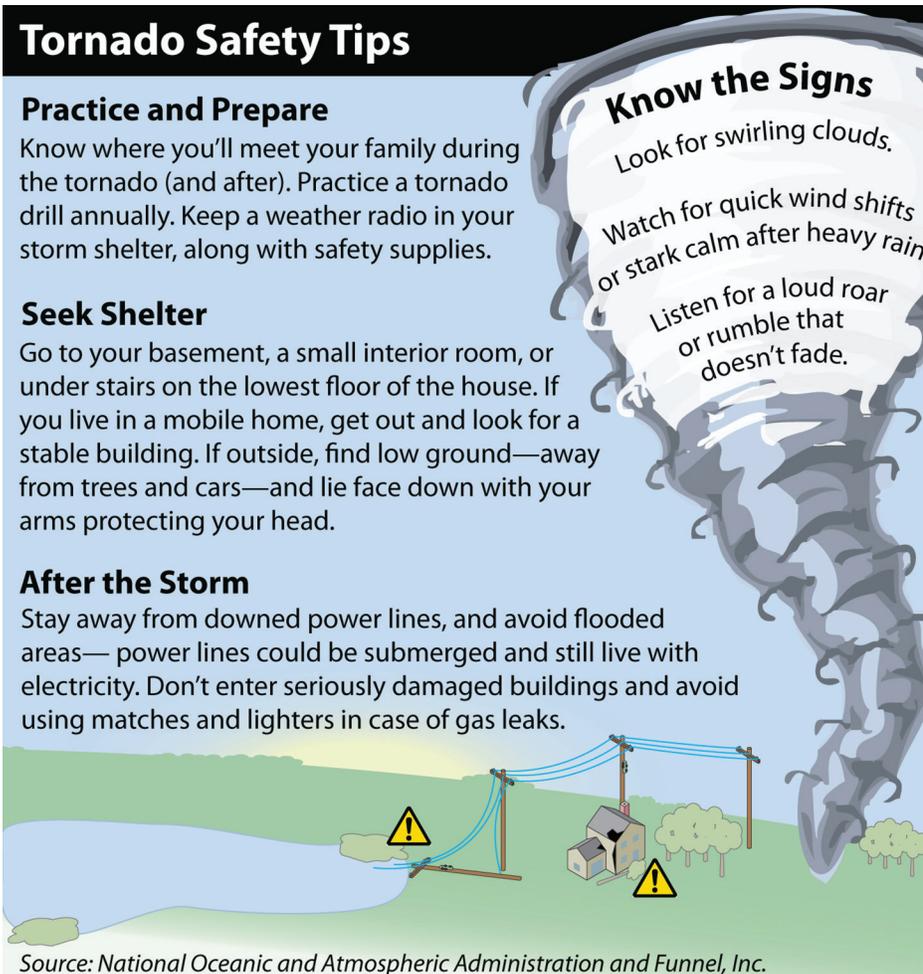
Know where you'll meet your family during the tornado (and after). Practice a tornado drill annually. Keep a weather radio in your storm shelter, along with safety supplies.

### Seek Shelter

Go to your basement, a small interior room, or under stairs on the lowest floor of the house. If you live in a mobile home, get out and look for a stable building. If outside, find low ground—away from trees and cars—and lie face down with your arms protecting your head.

### After the Storm

Stay away from downed power lines, and avoid flooded areas—power lines could be submerged and still live with electricity. Don't enter seriously damaged buildings and avoid using matches and lighters in case of gas leaks.



Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Funnel, Inc.

## Join us at the Iowa State Fair!

At the Iowa State Fair August 12-22, 2021, the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa are again sponsoring the Rastetter 4-H Building on the south side of the fairgrounds.

Look for our August newsletter and watch our Facebook page for more information on how you can **WIN ONE OF THREE PRIZES** when you visit us at our booth.

We can't wait to see you at the Iowa State Fair next month!

# Prairie Energy Cooperative, Corn Belt Power, Basin Electric, and CoBank make donation to art museum

A 1930s-era steam engine power plant may soon be making its way to Belmond. Prairie Energy Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative recently made donations to the Jenison-Meacham Memorial Arts Center to help bring the 1,000-horsepower, 750-kilowatt generator to the area. Basin Electric Cooperative and CoBank matched the donations, which totaled \$2,500.

The steam engine, built by Murray Machine Works in Burlington, Iowa, generated electricity for the Iowa State Penitentiary at Fort Madison. It was retired in the early 1950s and donated to the Waukee Tractor Club by the state in 1982, where it was on display until 2008.

The Belmond Arts Center received the opportunity to acquire the generator last fall. It is currently the largest engine on display in Iowa and has never left the state since the day it was built. The arts center is in the process of raising money to move and house the generator

at the Jenison-Meacham Memorial Art Museum and Farm. The engine is nearly 30 feet long with a 15-foot diameter flywheel. The flywheel weighs 27 tons by itself. When put together, the generator weighs 150 tons.

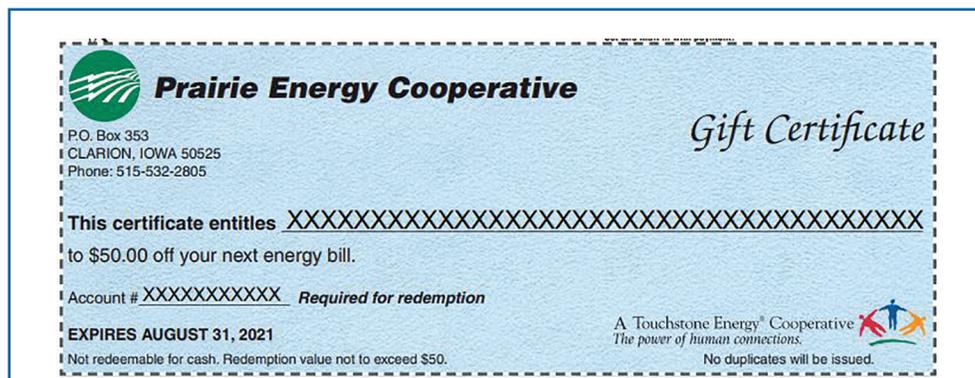
“This is a great project to participate in,” said Tim Marienau, chief executive officer, Prairie Energy. “Two of our core principles are commitment to community and education, training, and information. This project will go a long way in educating youth about how we historically generated electricity. It will also be a nice addition



Photo L to R: Tim Marienau, Todd Foss, Darren Johnson, Karen DeKuiper, Vern Anderson, Diane Martens, Jerry Holmes

to an already fantastic arts center.”

Money raised for the project will go toward transportation from the Des Moines area and construction of a 9-foot deep concrete pad. To get involved with the project, contact the Jenison-Meacham Memorial Arts Center.



## Thank you to our membership

Have you mailed in your gift certificate yet? Even though we here are Prairie Energy missed seeing everyone at the annual meeting, we still want to thank you for your membership. Make sure to clip the gift certificate from the annual report that was mailed to you in May, fill it out and mail it back or drop it off in our 24/7 drop box at the office to redeem your \$50 bill credit.

## Members make it possible

We here at Prairie Energy would like to take a minute to say THANK YOU to our membership! Whether it's participating in feedback such as the ACSI survey sent out this spring, liking/commenting on our Facebook page, or taking part in the democratic process of voting in the director elections that happen every June, it all makes a difference. We are always grateful for the best part of the cooperative, you, the member-owners!



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