

# ACEC NEWS

OCTOBER 2023 | VOLUME 26 | ISSUE 10

ANNUAL MEETING  
RECAP

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CYBERSECURITY  
MONTH TIP

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ACEC IN D.C.





**A MESSAGE  
FROM**  
*Your  
General  
Manager*

**Hollie McCormick**  
EVP/General Manager

## PLAYING IT SAFE ONLINE

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, at Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how ACEC is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

**1. Implement multi-factor authentication** (also known as two-step verification) on your accounts. The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled. We implemented this several months ago. In fact, our insurance rates would've increased and level of protection would be jeopardized if we



## CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

hadn't taken that step.

**2. Update your software.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.

**3. Think before you click.** Most successful cyber attacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid

emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests. These phishing attempts have gotten more refined and tricky to detect. Be extremely conscientious when clicking!

**4. Create strong passwords,** using long, unique and complex words or phrases. Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

### For the young people in your household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on, that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Plus, there's some seriously dangerous folks lurking on the internet and unfortunately, they know children make easy targets. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

### Keeping the electric grid and your data secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For ACEC, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the country to develop new technologies and infrastructure, learn from each other and keep the grid's network secure. For example, we participate in exercises with our Statewide Association and Dairyland Power to simulate realistic cyber issues and practice responding to the latest types of issues we might have to manage.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op, we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. We all want our interconnected world to be safer and more secure for everyone. ■

**ON THE COVER:** *Scott Boylen, Scott Boylen Photography, captured this autumn scene from Pikes Peak State Park.*

## BOARD BRIEFS | September 25 Meeting

- Held Re-Organizational meeting; seating re-elected directors Mike Gibbs, Cindy Heffern and Greg Formanek
- Elected Jeff Bradley to Board President, Mike Gibbs to VP, and Cindy Heffern to Secretary
- Visit and presentation with Youth Tour Participant Natalie Byrnes
- Discussed Dairyland Power's Capital Credit Retirement
- Approved the 2024 Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative's Healthcare Participation Agreement
- Reviewed details and attendance of the recent Drive-Thru Annual Meeting
- Approved a \$100,000 Revolving Loan Fund loan to the Hawkeye Fire Station
- Approved a Board Resolution to enter into a REDLG application for Summer Daycare and Learning Center
- Approved a donation request to Allamakee County Economic Development & Tourism

# LATE SUMMER HEAT WAVES TEST ELECTRIC GRID



*Dairyland Power Cooperative facilities, member conservation efforts helped keep the lights on*

A heat wave swept the nation the end of August, setting records from coast-to-coast and the Upper Midwest was not spared. Temperatures the week of Aug. 21 – primarily Aug. 23 and Aug. 24 – soared into the 90s with 100-degree temperatures peaking on Wednesday, Aug. 23. Compounding the problem were high humidity and low wind generation on the regional grid.

As the week began, the regional grid operator (Midcontinent Independent System Operator – MISO) issued alerts to power plant operators and transmission-line owners to suspend any non-essential maintenance or other activities that would increase the risk of a power outage if something went wrong (i.e., a tree branch falling into a line during right-of-way trimming). #810-8

On the morning of Aug. 24, MISO issued a Maximum Generation (Max Gen) Event. When a Max Gen Event is declared, MISO is signaling that the regional grid is at an increased risk of not being able to provide enough power to meet the needs of consumers. By issuing a Max Gen Event, MISO was able to call upon additional resources to help balance electricity supply and demand.

Dairyland Power Cooperative – our wholesale power provider – offered up all its power plants to run at full capacity. The mix included coal, natural gas and hydroelectric power (Dairyland has power purchase agreements for most of its wind and solar facilities, but does not operate the facilities). Additionally, Dairyland declared two Full Load Control events on Aug. 23 and 24, to help reduce members’ electricity use during times of both peak demand and peak prices. These coordinated efforts paid off as the grid remained stable and MISO never advanced further through its Max Gen declaration process.

In a statement issued after the heatwave, Dairyland President & CEO Brent Ridge gave credit to Dairyland’s board of directors and members “... for investing in safe, reliable power plant operations. I am also grateful for the diligence of our teams to maintain and prepare facilities for operations during the extreme weather swings we experience in our service territory.”

Ridge noted how crucial baseload generation and reliable transmission systems are to keeping the lights – and air conditioning – on during peak summer heat.

“The high demand for electricity during these extreme temperatures also reinforces the need for both the Nemadji Trail Energy Center power plant and the Cardinal-Hickory Creek transmission line. The completion of these projects is critical to strengthen reliability and help us achieve our goals to reduce carbon throughout the entire region.”

Data indicates that the Dairyland system – serving 24 electric cooperatives in a four-state region, including Allamakee-Clayton Electric Co-op – reached a record for peak demand of 1,177.5 megawatts (MW) on Wednesday, Aug. 23, between 6 and 7 p.m. The existing peak was 1,171 MW reached on June 29, 2018. Prior to August, the last time MISO declared a Max Gen Event Step 2a was on Dec. 23, 2022, during Winter Storm Elliott.

As a local, electric cooperative, ACEC remains committed to the delivery of safe, reliable and cost-effective electricity to members’ homes and businesses. We appreciate all members who participate in the cooperative’s load management/energy management program and, also, heeded calls to reduce unnecessary electricity use during times of high energy use. Our members put the cooperative difference into practice. ■



## ACEC WELCOMES KIM KLOKE

Kim Kloke has joined the ACEC team as our new Customer Accounts Representative! Kim is one of the first people to greet anyone who stops by our office or calls for assistance. In addition, Kim takes over our FirstCall Department, handling installations as well as answering any questions and providing assistance to customers.

Kim is an Ossian native who has spent the past 39 years in the customer service industry

at Monona Wire. She and her husband, Wayne, live outside Waukon. They have three children.

When she’s not helping members at ACEC, Kim enjoys kayaking the Upper Iowa River and Yellow River, reading, watching movies and spending time with her family, friends and two dogs.

Welcome Kim! ■



# We our Members!

## 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

Nothing beats annual meeting day at Allamakee-Clayton Electric Co-op! On September 11, we welcomed members to our headquarters for our 85th Annual Meeting, held in a drive-through format.

Being a cooperative means members have a voice in how the business is run by voting each year. This year, we yet again focused on getting the word out about voting. We had an increase in mail-in ballots and welcomed over 200 registered voters through our drive-through. The board of directors and employees thank all members who voted and visited with us. It truly is one of our favorite days of the year and we enjoy getting to meet you and continue to serve you with dependable, reliable and affordable electricity.



Hollee McCormick chats with former GM Paul Foxwell.



Members Paul and Danielle Bakewell bring kids Hudson, Cooper and Ella through the drive-through.



Stacy Stock welcomes a member to the drive-through.



Director Nelson Converse chats with the members as they enter the meeting.



ACEC's Donna Schultz works with members of the nominating committee to count ballots.



Members of our staff enjoyed serving a meal from the Allamakee County Pork Producers and frozen yogurt from Country View Dairy.



Steve Gehling, Andrew Henderson and Jason Troendle serve up a meal.



Hollee McCormick chats with members.



Cindy Heffern and Al Steffens welcome members to the 85th annual meeting.

# WANTED: YOUR FEEDBACK!

Loved the annual meeting? Have a suggestion?

*We want to hear from you!*

In your October statement, we included a survey on our annual meeting. Even if you didn't attend, we'd love to hear your feedback. Everyone who returns the survey will be entered into a drawing for one of two \$30 bill credits.

All surveys must be returned by November 15 to be entered for the bill credit drawing.

Want to complete your survey online? Scan the QR code.



Voting members returned incumbents Mike Gibbs, Waterville, and Cindy Heffern, Harpers Ferry, to District A. In District C, incumbent Greg Formanek, Farmersburg, was also re-elected.

On September 25, the board of directors held their reorganization meeting. Jeff Bradley was appointed president, Mike Gibbs vice president and Cindy Heffern, secretary/treasurer.

Besides a complimentary meal and gift, members who mailed their ballots or registered during the drive-through were entered into a drawing for prizes. Prize winners are listed below. Congratulations to the winners! And we look forward to hosting you again in 2024! ■

## DISTRICT A



**CINDY HEFFERN**  
Harpers Ferry



**MICHAEL D. GIBBS**  
Waterville

## DISTRICT C



**GREG FORMANEK**  
Farmersburg



## PRIZE WINNERS



### \$50 BILL CREDIT

Norman Leeman, Postville  
Albert Hanson, Elgin  
Paul Bodensteiner, West Union  
Velma Jones, Hawkeye  
Rose Lansing, Elgin

### \$20 BILL CREDIT WINNERS

George Beardmore, Dorchester  
Ernest Osland, Waukon  
William Moody, Harpers Ferry  
James Bakewell, Lansing  
Willis Ott, Elkader  
Roland Hoeger, Saint Olaf  
Michael Helgerson, West Union  
Robert Mathis, Harpers Ferry

John These, Guttenberg  
Brier Bartels, Monona  
Dennis Blumhagen, Castalia  
Sherry Priebe, Hawkeye  
Zack Bushman, Waukon  
Dennis Ney, West Union  
Linda Hauschild, Garber  
Michael Jacobson, Clermont  
Gary Spies, Elgin  
Thomas Kenney,  
Strawberry Point  
Lillian Schmieden, Waterville  
Mason Riehle, Castalia  
Patrick M. Delaney, Lansing  
John Elliot, Waukon  
Wayne L. Fish, Waukon

Randy Hover, Dorchester  
Daniel Cahoon, Monona  
Kathleen Kisner, Hawkeye  
Anthony Tague, Castalia  
Judy Ferguson, Waukon  
Cyril Vorwald, Garber  
Vaughn Drewes, West Union  
Douglas Hundt, Postville  
Burdette Sebastian, Postville  
Randy Moser, Saint Olaf  
Arlynn Lenth, Postville  
Charles C. Berns, Waterville  
Carroll Oleson, Garnavillo  
Bradley Decker, Luana  
Marvin Berg, Garnavillo  
Donald J. Wagner, Farmersburg

Troy Collins, Strawberry Point  
Mark Kruse, Lansing  
Gary Westhoff, Guttenberg  
Todd Troester, McGregor  
Gary Brink, Postville  
Wayne Schmieden, Waterville  
Diane Nolting, Waukon  
Duane Klink, Elkader  
Christina Mueller, Postville  
Steven Friederich, Postville  
Steven Enyart, Postville

### ONE 5-YEAR SOLAR PANEL SUBSCRIPTION

Robert A. Halverson, West Union  
Ruth Atkinson, Strawberry Point



# Iowa LIHEAP 2023-2024 Guidelines

## Residential Members: Help with Your Heating Bill

The 2023-2024 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

### WHEN TO APPLY:

- \* Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled October 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024
- \* All other households November 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024

### WHAT TO TAKE:

- \* Proof of Income (for all household members age 18 and over) Depending upon your household income type, income documentation from the past 30 days, the last 12 months, or last calendar year, whichever is easier or more beneficial for you.
- \* Social Security numbers for **all** household members (documentation required)
- \* Most recent heat bill
- \* Most recent electric bill

### WAGE EARNERS:

Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your federal income tax return.

### FIXED INCOME:

This income may include: Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please bring copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

### SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS:

Please bring a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

### FIP RECIPIENTS:

Please bring your current DHS Notice of Decision or contact your local office for acceptance document information.

If you receive alimony or child support, it will also need to be verified. Additional income not listed here may be required.

#C54-1

## Contact the local community action agency in your area:

### Allamakee County:

**Waukon** 955 3rd Ave NW (563) 568-4224  
**Postville** 134 W Greene St. (563) 380-2780

### Clayton County:

**Elkader** 600 Gunder Rd NE (563) 245-2452  
**Guttenberg** 514 S. River Park Dr. (563) 380-3728

### Fayette County:

**West Union** 114 N. Vine St. (563) 422-3354  
**Oelwein** 1 W. Charles St., Suite 5 (319) 283-2510

### Winneshiek County:

**Decorah** 305 Montgomery St. (563) 387-4958

## Income Maximums

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$29,160
2	\$39,440
3	\$49,720
4	\$60,000
5	\$70,280
6	\$80,560
7	\$90,840
8	\$101,120

**Note:** For households with more than eight members, add \$10,280 for each additional member.

# MEMBER RECIPES



Send your favorite recipes and/or recipe topics to Jennifer Achenbach, ACEC, PO Box 715, Postville, IA 52162 or email [jachenbach@acrec.coop](mailto:jachenbach@acrec.coop).

You'll receive a \$5 bill credit if your recipe is printed. Please note – recipes must be received by the 25th day of the month before the intended publication.

November – **CHRISTMAS TREATS**;

December – **SOUPS**;

January – **NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS RECIPES**



## THANKSGIVING FAMILY FAVORITES

### PUMPKIN CAKE

- 1 30 oz. can of pumpkin pie mix (NOT canned pumpkin)
- 1 box spice cake mix, dry
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/3 c. water

#### Directions

Mix together until well blended. Pour into a 9 x 13 greased cake pan. Bake 40 minutes in 350° oven. Cool well. Cover with mixture of large cool whip mixed with 1/3 c. brown sugar. Refrigerate.

■ *Ruthie Hilgerson, St. Olaf*

## CYBER SECURITY Tip of the MONTH

Want to boost your online privacy? Use a different search engine. Using an anonymous search engine doesn't collect or share your search history or clicks. They also block ad trackers on the websites you visit.

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## PLUGGED IN: Electric Vehicle Update



### SEPTEMBER

Number of miles driven:  
**234 miles**

kWh's Charged:  
**67 kWh**

Cost to Charge:  
**.13 x 67 kWh = \$8.71**



## DualFuel

## PLEASE BE ADVISED

The 2023 Winter Preparedness Test for Interruptible Heat (Dual Fuel) Accounts is scheduled for **Wednesday November 15**.

This load control test is performed in advance of the winter Full Load Control season to ensure member familiarity with the control sequence and to ensure that backup heating systems have been validated for proper function. The control event will start at 7 a.m. and will end by noon.

If you have any questions about the load control event or about your dual fuel account, please contact Ryan Wagner at 888-788-1551.

## FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

ACEC has hidden three Service Location numbers within this newsletter. The numbers are from different regions of our service area – **all three are worth a \$5 bill credit if found.**



The service location number must be yours to claim the credit, and you need to notify us when you find it.

## CONTACT ACEC

### HEADQUARTERS

229 Highway 51 • PO Box 715  
Postville, IA 52162

### PHONE NUMBERS

**LOCAL** 563-864-7611

**TOLL-FREE** 888-788-1551

**PAYMENT LINE 24/7** 833-284-5051

**UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATING**  
811

**SKYWAYS INTERNET SOLUTIONS**

800-864-1611

### WEBSITE

acrec.com

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### OUTAGES

888-788-1551 or 563-864-7611

### IOWA STATE ONE CALL

811

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**JEFF BRADLEY**, President, Wadena

**MICHAEL D. GIBBS**, Vice President, Waterville

**CINDY HEFFERN**, Sec./Treas., Harpers Ferry

**ROGER ARTHUR**, Sumner

**NELSON CONVERSE**, Postville

**GREG FORMANEK**, Farmersburg

**JERRY KELEHER**, Elkader

**AL STEFFENS**, Clermont

**BRICE WOOD**, Lansing

### MANAGEMENT STAFF

**HOLLEE McCORMICK**, EVP/General Manager

**DAVID DECKER**, Director,  
Finance & Administrative Services

**BRENDA HACKMAN**, Manager, Economic  
Development & Community Relations

**JENI KOLSRUD**, Manager, Information  
Technology

**JENNIFER ACHENBACH**, Manager,  
Marketing & Communications

**JASON TROENDLE**, Director,  
Operations & Engineering

**RYAN WAGNER**, Manager, Member Services

   **STAY CONNECTED**



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## Iowa's Electric Cooperatives Connect with Congressional Delegation in Washington, D.C.

More than 25 representatives from Iowa's electric cooperatives traveled to the Capitol in September to advocate for their co-op members. ACEC's manager of member services Ryan Wagner was one of those participants. While in Washington, D.C., the group attended high-level briefings on key issues impacting the electric industry and met with all six members of Iowa's Congressional Delegation to discuss priorities and concerns.

Advocates shared concerns that could impact electric cooperatives' ability to provide reliable and affordable power, including federal EPA mandates that may force electric generation plants to shut down prematurely. Additionally, the co-op representatives talked about continued supply chain challenges and how they impact day-to-day operations.

"These legislative visits in D.C. are valuable opportunities to connect with our members of Congress and their staff. They learn more about our rural Iowa priorities and ask how they can help us in our cooperative mission to power lives and empower communities," remarked Wagner. #5269A

Co-op advocates also asked their senators and representatives to support permitting reforms to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to avoid costly delays in the permitting process. The group urged the Iowa Congressional Delegation to authorize an increase in funding for USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant program (REDLG) as part of the Farm Bill reauthorization to support our rural Iowa communities.

FEMA disaster funding was also a concern, as the electric co-op group asked the Iowa Delegation to support supplemental funding for the Disaster Relief Fund to ensure that support is available should a natural disaster strike Iowa. The Disaster Relief Fund is near depletion in response to major natural disasters across the country this year, and recently imposed fund restrictions could delay or prevent necessary grid infrastructure work.



We appreciate the service of Iowa's elected officials and the tireless work of their staff who help look out for Iowans in the Halls of Congress. ■

*ACEC's Ryan Wagner (far right) traveled to Washington, D.C. in September to meet with Iowa's Congressional Delegation, including Congresswoman Ashley Hinson (red blazer).*

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