



# CLARKE REC Headlines

The official publication of Clarke Electric Cooperative

**SAFETY DRIVEN | ENERGY SMART | COMMUNITY INVESTED** **Volume No. 77 No. 3 | March 2017**



## Community Invested: Co-op Staff Attends Energy Efficiency Conference



**T**HE MOMENTUM IS BUILDING CONFERENCE IS AN annual event that highlights the latest in energy efficiency practices, technology and products.

Manager of Member Services Jason Gibbs attended the conference in February on behalf of Clarke Electric. Since 1993, Momentum is Building has provided a forum for energy efficiency and electric technology education. The statewide conference seeks to build relationships with trade professionals who influence electric co-ops members' decision-making about home building/remodeling, heating, cooling, water heating and energy efficiency. 19-17-07-00

"This conference gives our staff an opportunity to find out what's new in the industry so we can turn around and assist our members with any questions they might have regarding the latest energy efficiency practices," said David Opie, general manager. "We also have staff attend in order to obtain the continuing education credits they need to stay current in their profession."

Support for the conference comes from Iowa's rural electric cooperatives, along with sponsorship from the Iowa Energy Center.

## Water Heaters No Longer Available

**C**LARKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS IN THE BUSINESS of selling electricity and to improve our members' quality of life. Sometimes improving the quality of life has been choosing to add products or services that help meet a need that isn't readily available to our members otherwise. After many years of selling electric water heaters, effective immediately, Clarke Electric will no longer sell or service them. Please check with your local hardware and appliance store, lumber yard or your plumber for availability.



**JASON GIBBS**  
Manager of  
Member Services

### IMPORTANT:

If you purchased a Vanguard or Rheem water heater from Clarke Electric in the last 10 years, it may still be covered by the factory warranty. You can call us at (641) 342-2173 to find out when you purchased your water heater and whether it is still under warranty. Repairs will need to be done by you or a qualified plumber. We no longer work on water heaters.

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The Clarke Electric Cooperative office will be closed Friday, April 14 for Good Friday. We wish all our members a safe and happy Easter!



Reading pays! We have hidden two of our members' account numbers in this issue. If you find your member location number, call during March to have \$10 deducted from your monthly energy account.



**CLARKE**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

PO Box 161, 1103 N Main, Osceola, IA 50213-0161

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Paying for a System that Works Around the Clock

**Y**OUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HAS BEEN AROUND A long time – 77 years to be exact. We’ve witnessed the many ways electricity has transformed the communities we serve and our rural landscape. Before electricity, today’s household tasks were hard work and dangerous. For example, cooking and washing clothes involved a lot of manual labor. Thankfully, practically everything we do today – from entertainment to our jobs – is impacted by the ease of electricity.

A lot has changed since electric cooperatives first turned on the lights for rural Iowa. One thing that hasn’t changed is our mission to provide electricity to you. Because we’ve been reliably, efficiently and affordably delivering electricity to homes and businesses for decades, some of our member-owners ask why they still need to pay for a system that should have been paid for by now.

The truth is, most of the original system was paid for many years ago. With a few exceptions, the original infrastructure, such as poles and wires, has been replaced. When you have a system that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, equipment needs to be replaced at regular intervals. Imagine if you had a car that was 77 years old and it was driven all day, every day. By now, either the car would not be operating, or every part of the car – from the tires to the engine – would have been replaced many times. The same is true for utility infrastructure. While poles and wires generally have a life span of 30-40 years, some may not last as long due to a variety of conditions. For example, a major ice storm can cause power lines to snap and poles to break regardless of their age. A good share of aged infrastructure was replaced after the 2007 ice storm. With the help of FEMA we were able to replace a portion

of our system at a fraction of the cost to our members.

We know we have a few pockets on our system that contain the original copper wire. Those areas have been identified and a replacement plan is being developed to systematically replace the aged wire.



**DAVID OPIE**

The original co-op infrastructure fulfilled the expectations of that time in terms of reliability and affordability. Over the years, many of those needs have changed. What’s in place today is an improved distribution system that allows us to meet increasing demands for kilowatt-hours in an efficient manner. Not only has the need for electricity increased, but also our processes now result in reduced outage times. We also work to extend the life of infrastructure through maintenance at regular intervals. Poles are routinely tested for termites, and we trim vegetation throughout our system on cycles to maintain a high level of reliability. To balance reliability and safety with affordability, we upgrade our system when and where it makes sense to do so. We balance financing upgrades and replacements with debt and equity so that we can keep your rates affordable while providing power that you can count on for your home or business.

Maintaining and replacing infrastructure is always in our plans, whether it is a short range or long range plan or our construction work plan. All of our employees are committed to keeping our system as safe and reliable as we can.

We work for you, our member owners.



**CLARKE ELECTRIC is always looking for ways to help its members stay safe around electricity. If you have a civic organization or even a group of friends looking for a speaker, please, contact Jason at Clarke Electric Cooperative, (641) 342-2173. The price is right...FREE.**

## Water Heaters...from pg. 1

If you purchased a GE GeoSpring Hybrid water heater from us in the last 10 years, it may also still be covered under warranty. If you need a repair and do not remember when you purchased the unit, please give us a call at (641) 342-2173. We can tell you if it is still under warranty. For GeoSpring repairs, please call GE at (888) 443-4394.

Electric water heaters remain a great choice to meet your hot water needs. We offer a \$50 rebate for a conventional 50-gallon, 95 percent efficient water heater. For hybrid water heaters that use geothermal technology, the rebate is \$650. Please give us a call for complete details or for a full list of 2017 rebates and forms, please visit [www.cecnet.net](http://www.cecnet.net).

Thank you for your support!



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

**Believe it or not, warmer weather is on the way (we promise)! Use energy efficient window treatments or coverings, like blinds, shades and**

**films, to reduce heat gain in your home. These devices not only improve the look of your home, but also reduce energy costs. Source: U.S. Department of Energy**



# Energy Smart: Renewable Energy Program

**CLARKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OFFERS A RENEWABLE** energy program that gives individual member-owners the ability to voluntarily contribute to a fund. All of the money collected from member-owners will be used for the development of alternative energy production facilities in Iowa. Alternative energy production facilities may include wind energy, biomass, solar, and other nontraditional generation technologies.

Through this program, member-owners will not be directly purchasing alternative energy, but rather participating in the development of these resources. Contributions may be retained until they reach a sufficient level to pursue a particular development, make a grant to another entity pursuing alternative energy development in Iowa, or arrange for purchases from alternative energy production facilities. 50-26-02-54

The Renewable Energy Program is:

...**available** to member-owners within any of our rate classifications.

...**flexible**. Member-owners can contribute a one-time dollar

Renewable Energy Contribution Form	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I will make a one-time contribution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I will contribute \$_____ per month
Name:	_____
Account No.	_____
Address:	_____
City:	_____ State: _____ Zip: _____

amount or on a monthly basis. The minimum contribution is \$1.00.

...**convenient** with payment accepted by cash, check, credit card, ACH, or paying the additional amount with your monthly electric bill.

Once you have signed up, your participation will continue at the same level until you notify us that you wish to change the amount of your contribution or end your participation in the program.

## Winter Moratorium Ends April 3

**CLARKE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER-OWNERS** who are behind on their utility payments are urged to contact us as soon as possible to work out payment options to avoid disconnection. If your account(s) is past due and you have not made payment arrangements by March 31, you will be subject to disconnection of your electric service. Since April 1 falls on a Saturday, you must pay your bill in full by Monday, April 3, 2017 to avoid disconnection. After April 1, Clarke Electric is not required to post a 48-hour disconnection notice on your premises and disconnection will occur immediately.

Those who have fallen behind on their accounts may be eligible to enter into a reasonable payment agreement with Clarke Electric to pay accumulated debt over time and maintain electric service. We are happy to work with you to make sure your account is current to avoid any interruption in service. Please call us before April 3 at (641) 342-2173 or (800) 362- 2154 if you are behind on your payment.

For member-owners with tight budgets, seasonally high electric bills can cause financial strife. Clarke Electric offers "levelized billing" or "budget billing" payment options which ensure consistent electric bills month-to-month, making it easier to budget and anticipate

expenses. If your home utilizes electric heat and/or air-conditioning, this is a great way to avoid those larger seasonal bills that can fluctuate dramatically with changes in the weather.

Clarke Electric offers simple and convenient ways to help you pay and manage your electric account 24/7 via SmartHub, Pay Now and Pay by Phone. These provide a safe, secure way to pay your electric bill.



**STEPHANIE MOORE**  
Billing Clerk



Visit [www.cecnet.net](http://www.cecnet.net) or call our phone payment system at (844) 241-0266.

Clarke Electric Cooperative also encourages anyone who has fallen behind on payments to contact the Iowa Bureau of Energy Assistance at (515) 281-0859 or their local community action agency regarding eligibility for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is designed to assist low income families meet the cost of home heating for electric or natural gas service.

Applications are accepted at your local community action agency and if eligible may provide a one-time per year payment to assist with heating costs for eligible households.



## The Cooperative Difference: Working for You



### Out and about in February...

**Photo, left:** Clarke Electric linemen were busy replacing a broken three-phase pole when a grain truck lost control and rolled over into a ditch snapping another utility pole in the Osceola area. No one was injured in the accident.

**Photo, bottom left:** Clarke Electric linemen Eric Page and Tim Lupkes spent an unseasonably nice day working on a two-phase line in the Allerton area changing out a junction pole to improve system reliability.

**Photo, bottom right:** Clarke Electric's Jason Gibbs, Jodee Eckels and Dave Opie attended the Osceola Chamber Main Street and Clarke County Development Corporation's (CCDC) annual banquet which had a Mardi Gras theme. Jason is a member of the board of directors for the CCDC and enjoys giving back to the community in which he lives and works.



## Solar Report

**A**S OF FEB. 23, 2017, THE CLARKE Solar Farm has a total energy production of 89.8 MWh since being energized back in December.

To put this in perspective, 89.8 MWh is equivalent to:



- the carbon offset gained by planting 1,587 trees



- reducing gasoline consumption by 6,965 gallons



- removing 13 cars from the roads for one year



- recycling 22.2 tons of waste destined for a landfill

## January Outages

Equipment/Maintenance failure - 3  
Motor vehicle - 1

Looking Out for You



**CLARKE**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

David Opie, General Manager

Office Hours: Mon - Fri 7:30 am - 4 pm

Outside Depository Available 24 Hours

641.342.2173 | 800.362.2154

[www.cecnet.net](http://www.cecnet.net)

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