



CLARKE REC Headlines

The official publication of Clarke Electric Cooperative

SAFETY DRIVEN | ENERGY SMART | COMMUNITY INVESTED **Volume No. 78 No. 11 | November 2018**

Gobble Gobble Thanksgiving give thanks

The Clarke Electric Board of Directors, general manager and employees wish you a happy Thanksgiving. We thank you for your support, and we pledge to do our best each day to serve you. Our office will be closed Nov. 22-23 so our employees can enjoy the holiday with their families.

Energy Efficiency



Tip of the Month

Got holiday leftovers? When possible, use the microwave to reheat food. Microwaves use as much as 80 percent less energy than a standard oven. *Source: energy.gov*

Looking Out for You: September Outages

- Wind: 23
- Lightning: 16
- Unknown: 8
- Equipment failure: 7
- Other: 7
- Customer caused: 3
- Animal/bird: 2
- Trees: 2
- Construction: 1
- House/road move: 1
- Maintenance: 1



CLARKE
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Safety Driven • Energy Smart • Community Invested

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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Keeping the Lights On

KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON IS A BIG responsibility, one Clarke Electric takes seriously. Cooperative employees are working on budgets and planning processes to make sure key goals and initiatives get done. Some of the line items are the same from year to year while others are new initiatives.

Operations/Maintenance

Long- and short-term plans are reviewed and updated. Through inspections, the cooperative looks at replacement of poles, wires and equipment. Annual testing of poles, meters and oil circuit reclosers fulfills our requirements to reporting agencies and helps us identify problem areas. We inspect equipment and tools to make sure our linemen are safe and efficient.



The success of our right-of-way program has set a trend of reducing the frequency and duration of outages to our members.

Contractors cleared our entire system over the last 10 years, which should now keep the cooperative on a maintenance schedule performed by both contractors and employees at a reduced budgeted amount.

Building Updates

At our annual meeting, we discussed remodeling the cooperative headquarters. Due to the age of the building, many updates need to be made. Plumbing, wiring, heating and cooling and general building layout, flooring and furniture is outdated. Trucks are no longer able to fit in the shop portion of the building and

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The Cooperative Difference: Your Payout for Membership

ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF BEING a member of Clarke Electric Cooperative is receiving money back after all expenses have been paid.



Since Clarke Electric is not-for-profit, any money left over after expenses are paid is given back to consumer-members. Your cooperative is

on a 20-year return rotation. That means if you are a long-time member you will receive a patronage credit on your electric bill in December. If you left the system before the 20-year rotation you will receive the money in a check, mailed to your last known address.

Remember to keep your address updated with the cooperative so you can receive your patronage dividend.

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

We're Thankful For Your Membership

AS WE NEAR THE THANKSGIVING holiday, I am reminded of all of the things to be grateful for in my life. Personally, I am thankful for my family, my friends and my work. However, I feel compelled to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the employees and members of Clarke Electric. Because of your connection to the cooperative, we make our community a better place.

I generally use this space to provide updates on new projects and developments, and report on the progress of ongoing initiatives. We share these updates so that our consumer-members have a window into our priorities, progress and challenges. However, during this season of giving thanks, I think it's equally important to let you know just what an impact you have on our co-op and the greater community, likely in ways you may not even realize. 12-19-03-05

As part of the cooperative business model, one of our core principles is "Concern for Community." While our priority is to always provide safe, reliable and affordable energy, we view our role in the community as a catalyst for good.

Thank
you

We are purposeful in partnering with local groups such as Clarke County Development Corporation, Osceola Chamber

Main Street, Decatur County Development Corporation, and Lucas County Development Corporation. We support our communities by offering USDA economic development programs, Co-op Connections® card, Operation Round-Up®, RECare, the Renewable Energy Fund, Toys for Tots®, and other local programs.

We work closely with our local schools and groups to provide safety demonstrations. We also annually sponsor one of our community's brightest young people to attend Youth Tour, a week-long immersion experience in Washington, D.C., where they get to see democracy in action. Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you! You empower the co-op through your membership and support of these programs.

Because we are locally governed by members of our community, we have a first-hand perspective on community priorities, which enable us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such

as community solar programs, equipment and technology upgrades other beneficial programs.

We are thankful that our co-op board members carve out time to attend important training sessions, participate in planning meetings and keep abreast of industry trends. This investment in time results in better informed advisors that serve the co-op's interests in a way that our consumer-members expect and deserve.

On a more personal note, we appreciate the countless acts of kindness our lineworkers and employees receive when they are out in severe weather and dangerous conditions. Our employees are thankful for your patience and consideration when we are trying to restore power during challenging situations and prolonged periods.

Clarke Electric was originally established 78 years ago to bring electricity to our area when no one else would. The cooperative reflects our local community and its evolving needs. Together, let's continue making our corner of the world a better place. We can't do it without you, and for that, we're thankful for your membership.

Happy Thanksgiving from our families to yours!



DAVE OPIE
General Manager

Member Leased Light Program Shines a Light on Safety

WITH THE ONSET OF SHORTER daylight hours, you might want to consider leasing a light from Clarke Electric so when you come home after dark, you won't have to worry about how to get to the door. Clarke Electric offers the leased light program to our members without the hassle of repairs or maintenance.

For a low monthly fee of \$7.50, we will install and maintain a high-pressure sodium light on your property and make repairs when needed. Sodium light bulbs are an extremely efficient, long lasting light

source. All you do is pay for the electricity. It's just that simple.

Qualifications for our leased light program:

- You must be a member
- The light must be on the meter pole, or any member-owned pole on the member's side of the meter provided the member arranges for 120-volt electric service to the pole.
- Clarke Electric Cooperative will furnish, install and maintain the light and fixture during normal cooperative working hours.

- The light will be turned on and off using a dusk-to-dawn photo cell. (cannot be controlled by a switch)
- The cooperative may remove the light at its discretion.

These qualifications are deemed to be understood and agreed to by the member upon the member's request for installation of the leased light.

Call for more details: (800) 362-2154.

Lights...from pg. 1

the physical security of the grounds is inadequate. The last remodel was done in the mid-1990s. We are currently in the process of gathering construction bids for the work that needs to be done and will continue to keep the membership updated.

Workforce Development/Succession Planning

We have succession plans in place to capture the knowledge of long-term employees prior to their departure. As retirements occur, the job is evaluated to determine if the position should be replaced, modified or dispersed to other positions. Talent within the cooperative is evaluated to see if an employee possesses the knowledge and skills needed for certain positions that are vacated due to retirements.

We strive to hire and keep a knowledgeable and dedicated workforce that promotes a safe environment. We know that happy and engaged employees are one of the keys to a successful workforce.

Member Programs

Cooperatives are known to help improve the quality of life of their members through the seventh cooperative principle, "Concern for Community." The cooperative continually evaluates prospective and existing member programs that fit our membership and impact lives in a positive way. Some programs we have implemented

are Operations Round-Up, RECare, and the Renewable Energy Fund to name just a few.

Technology

Keeping abreast of technology is a daunting task. The biggest piece of technology came in 2011 with the deployment of an automated metering infrastructure, electronically-controlled line equipment, backhaul communication system, outage management, GIS, mapping software and SCADA. We continue to leverage our technology which is improving our efficiency and helping us to better serve you.

In 2011, we began offering the e-bill online and last year we launched SmartHub to give members real-time information on the go using their smart devices. They can check their kWh usage, view and pay bills online, report outages and access several other reports and features online 24/7. Cyber security is another important initiative to Clarke Electric. With the help of CIPCO, our internal servers and computers are updated and compliant with technology designed to keep records secure.

The 2019 budget will be presented to the board of directors at the December meeting. The board and staff work to balance member satisfaction for safe, affordable and reliable delivery of power to their homes, improve their quality of life and the support of our local communities. We are looking out for you.



Energy Smart: Home Automation

HOME AUTOMATION SYSTEMS are placing the powers of control in the hands of co-op consumer-members, but many questions remain about the best ways to use them to save money and energy.



Most smart home technology is about comfort and convenience. Consumer-members

interested in saving money on monthly energy purchases should look at

internet-connected thermostats first. These devices can learn your preference and adjust the temperature when you aren't home.

With automated appliances, chores like laundry, dishwashing and using hot water can occur outside peak demand periods.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), interest in connected or smart appliances is trending upward among consumers, and manufacturers are responding with a growing list of products.

"If you are thinking of purchasing a smart appliance or thermostat, look for one that

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Community Invested: Show Your Care with RECare

AS A COOPERATIVE, CLARKE electric takes pride in being able to help our neighbors in need, and we encourage others to do the same. One easy way to make a difference is through the Clarke Electric RECare program.

What is RECare?

RECare is a voluntary program that distributes funds to community action agencies to help low income members pay heating bills or cover the cost of winterizing their homes. 37-31-01-05

Where does my money go?

Your contribution stays in your community. The area community action agencies distribute funds to qualifying families.

How can I help?

Please consider filling out the participation form below and send it to the Cooperative.

Member Authorization Form

Yes, I want to be a part of members helping members through the RECare program.

Enclosed is a check with a one-time donation.

I would like to make a monthly donation of \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Mail to: RECare,
c/o Clarke Electric Cooperative,
P.O. Box 161, Osceola, Iowa 50213

Home Automation

...from pg. 3



Building New Lines is a Thoughtful Process

LINEMEN BUILD NEW LINES IN the southern part of the service territory to increase service reliability to our consumer-members. Steps included in building a new line involves our field staking engineer physically driving over to look at the land to determine the most cost-effective route using private right-of-way. We then contact land owners to secure easements before we proceed to the next step of generating a staking sheet.

Once all these steps are done, the work is scheduled with the operations department to be completed. If this is a new service for a member, the staking sheet generates an invoice that is sent to the member for payment before the work is scheduled.

Many people and steps are involved in getting a new line to the point of actually being built. If you are considering a new home, building or service, call Clarke Electric first.

is ENERGY STAR®-certified with connected functionality," wrote EPA officials asked about the technology. "Those that meet our criteria are designed to offer the following features: low energy use, energy use reporting and consumer ownership of all data."

Besides smart thermostats, the products available now include, room air conditioners, refrigerators and freezers, laundry equipment, light bulbs and fixtures, and power strips.

"While owning a smart product doesn't automatically save you energy, if YOU are smart about using them, they can make a significant difference in your home," wrote the EPA.

That means making the investment payoff could take a few lifestyle changes. But dashboards, accessible from computers or tablets, and apps available for smartphones can help.

Not every product using artificial intelligence is designed to save energy. In many instances, energy use is secondary to convenience or connectivity features (such as monitoring from a mobile phone).

What's feeding this desire is the popularity of virtual assistant technologies, like Amazon's Alexa and Echo, or Google Assistant. Many other tech companies are currently developing hubs and platforms designed to help manage connected technology.

The bottom line is to do your research and find what kind of smart technology will work best for you in your home. No one wants a hodge-podge of technologies that can't communicate with each other.

+ Safety Driven: Thanksgiving

THE GREATEST NUMBER OF HOME-COOKING FIRES OCCUR ON THANKSGIVING DAY

Make sure smoke alarms work! Test them by holding the button on the front; you should hear a loud beep to confirm the batteries work.

Keep anything that can catch fire (oven mitts, towels, curtains, wooden utensils, etc.) away from your stovetop.

If you are simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food, check it regularly with a timer.

Remain in or near the kitchen at all times while you are cooking.

Keep children at least 3 feet away from the stove or where hot food or liquids are being prepared.

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*Source: International Association of Fire Fighters



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