



# CLARKE REC Headlines

The official publication of Clarke Electric Cooperative

**SAFETY DRIVEN | ENERGY SMART | COMMUNITY INVESTED** **Volume No. 79 No. 3 | March 2019**

## Energy Efficiency



### Tip of the Month

Spring is nearly here! Now is the perfect time to test your A/C and ensure it's ready for summer. Remember to check the evaporator coil, which should be cleaned annually for optimal efficiency. Schedule with a local HVAC contractor for a more thorough annual check up and catch the small problems before they become big problems. When your A/C is running well it uses less energy to cool your house, and lower energy means bigger savings for you on your monthly utility bills. *Source: energy.gov*

## Looking Out for You: January Outages

- Animal/bird: 2
- Maintenance: 3
- Equipment failure: 3
- Unknown: 3

## Free Safety Presentations

Clarke Electric is always looking for ways to help its communities 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.



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

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

P.O. Box 161 1103 N. Main  
Osceola, IA 50213-0161  
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## Now is the Time to Take Advantage of Geothermal Tax Credits

**T**HE FEDERAL TAX CREDIT AMOUNT is scheduled to decrease each year through 2021, so act now for the most savings. In February 2018, the 30 percent geothermal federal tax credit was reinstated and can be retroactively applied to installations "placed in service" on January 1, 2017, or later.

A system is usually considered to be placed in service when installation is complete and equipment is ready for use. However, if the system is part of the construction or renovation of a house, it's considered placed in service when the taxpayer takes residence in the house.

To save the most on your geothermal system installation, act quickly – this credit will drop to 26 percent in 2020 and 22 percent in 2021.

### Plant Energy Savings

Summer	Winter
Plant deciduous trees to block heat from the sun in the summer and let sunlight in during the winter.	



## High Wire Work

**C**LARKE ELECTRIC APPRENTICE Lineman Dylan Bragg fixes what's called a "floater." A floater is caused by the contraction of a conductor (line) during extreme cold weather. As the wire contracts it gets tight and depending on the profile of the line, can pull the insulator away from the pole top assembly. As the weather warms, the wire expands and loosens, allowing the insulator to make contact with the pole, burning it and potentially causing an outage.

CEC has a dedicated program to patrol the lines during the winter months and perform line inspections and routine maintenance. This allows our linemen to proactively look for any trouble spots before they can cause a bigger problem for our member-consumers.

*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.*

# Why Stability is Key for Electrical System Performance

**THE RESILIENCY OF THE U.S.**  
The electric grid is top of mind within the electric industry at the moment. But what does it mean? The answer is many things: the reliability of your electric service, your cooperative's ability to quickly restore your power, being able to meet the demands of new technology, and how we serve you 24/7 without skipping a beat. Ultimately, resiliency is how we deliver on our promise to improve the quality of life for you, our member-consumer.

A resilient electric grid begins with a system that is designed and built to withstand high winds, powerful storms, cybersecurity threats and other disruptions that could result in outages. A resilient grid is also flexible and adaptable while using different types of generation – such as wind, solar, coal and hydro – to seamlessly work together to provide you with safe and

reliable power. The way our electric system reacts to advancements in technology – from demand response investments to serving the needs of electric vehicles – factor into the resilience of our grid.

Resiliency is a 24/7, 365-days-a-year task. Whether it's the power lines, substations or generation facilities on our grid, it takes proactive maintenance and investment to keep them running smoothly.

Similar to how we maintain our vehicles with regular oil changes, inspections and tire rotations, a grid must also be properly maintained. Throughout the year, we often conduct pole and line inspections. Our goal is to find a problem before it becomes one. For example, if we find a weak pole that has damage, we replace that pole. Doing so ensures that pole is as strong – or as resilient – as it can be.

As lowans, we know that significant power outages can occur, especially as we enter spring and summer storm season. Whether we're at the mercy of a snow storm or an outage caused by an animal, we have confidence in the resiliency of our system to recover from the situation with as little disruption as possible. 41-20-07-00

In the dictionary, resilience is defined as "the ability to bounce back, recover quickly and go back into shape or position after being stretched." When it comes to providing our member-consumers with resilient service, this is what we work toward day in and day out.



**DAVE OPIE**  
General Manager



## *CIPCO Announces Plans for Iowa's Largest Solar Project*

**CLARKE ELECTRIC'S POWER PROVIDER, CENTRAL IOWA POWER** Cooperative (CIPCO), will partner with Clēnera, LLC, to develop the largest solar project in Iowa, and one of the largest in the Midwest. CIPCO will purchase 100 percent of the energy and capacity output for 25 years from Wapello Solar, a 100 MW solar facility to be located on approximately 800 acres in Louisa County.

The project will incorporate the latest in solar array technology to provide cost-effective, clean electric energy. Cutting-edge solar panel technology will be paired with efficient solar inverters and a single-axis tracking system to maximize energy generation. Clēnera, based in Boise, Idaho, will develop and operate Wapello Solar with the facility retaining all associated renewable energy credits. The project is slated for completion in December of 2020.



## **Energy Smart:** *Renewable Energy Program*

**IF YOU SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT** of clean energy sources to reduce Iowa's dependency on coal, consider a voluntary contribution to Clarke Electric Cooperative's Renewable Energy Fund.

Money collected in this fund will be used for the development of alternative energy production facilities in Iowa such as wind, biomass, solar, and other nontraditional technologies. Through this program, member-consumers will not be directly purchasing alternative energy, but rather participating in the development of these resources.

Contributions are 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.

*continued on pg. 3*

Program highlights include:

- Available to member-consumers within any of our rate classifications.
- Member-consumers can contribute a one-time dollar amount or on a monthly basis. The minimum contribution is \$1.
- Contributions may be made 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.

Fill out the form at right and mail it to: 1103 N. Main St., Osceola, IA 50213.

## Renewable Energy Contribution Form

YES, I will make a one-time contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

YES, I will contribute monthly in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Clarke Electric Cooperative Acct #: \_\_\_\_\_

## Hard Winters Come With a Hefty Pricetag: Here's Why

**W**OW! WHAT A WINTER WE'VE had. If you're anything like me, you can't wait for spring to get here. My electric bill has been as high or higher than it's ever been.

One of the things I do here at the cooperative is help our members understand their usage. So when I got my bill for January and it was \$480, once I picked myself up off the floor, I took an inventory of all the ways I use my electricity to see if that amount made sense.

I have a 2,100-square-foot old farmhouse with a ground-source heat pump, using my propane furnace as backup. But I also have a detached garage that is 840 square feet. I have in-floor heat that draws from an electric water heater.

I keep the house at about 71 degrees and the garage about 69 degrees. One of my adult sons is living with us right now and my daughter who is 16 is still at home, so we are a typical family of four with an electric water heater.

I have horses in the barn, so when it's

really cold I need to plug in the drop-in tank heater to keep the water open. It's a 1,500W heater that costs me about \$.17 each hour that it's running.

I needed to plow snow so I have, at times, plugged in my old IH 784 tractor at a cost of another \$.17 per hour.

My daughter surprised me with a very small baby pig one day, so I kept it warm with a heat lamp that cost me \$.03/hour.

There were several days I plugged in my F250 diesel truck. It uses 1,000W and costs about \$.113/hour.

I also have chickens. I use a 60W heated water dish for them at a cost of about \$.007/hour.

We do a lot of laundry, cooking, and dishes. As much as I hate to admit it, I really did use all of this energy.

Did I mention already, how I can't wait for spring and warmer weather?



JASON GIBBS

## **+** Safety Driven: Stay Safe During Winter Weather Emergencies

**W**HEN SNOW, ICE AND extremely cold temps are forecasted, Clarke Electric wants to make sure our member-consumers stay safe and warm, particularly in the event of a power outage.

The buildup of snow and ice, or high winds, can bring down power lines. While the inclement weather can slow down travel time, our linemen are on call 24/7 and will work to restore power as safely and as quickly as they can. However, this may make the restoration process a little longer.



**1. Stay warm however you can.** Use an alternate heat source such as a wood burning fireplace or stove, or space heater inside. Any propane or gasoline generators or heat sources must be placed outside for proper ventilation. Not even inside the garage is safe. Always follow the manufacturer's safety instructions.

**2. Avoid traveling the roads** if you don't have to be out.

**3. If you do have to drive,** and you encounter downed power lines, always assume they are live and pose a risk of electrocution. Call Clarke Electric to report the downed lines and then steer clear.

**4. Preparation is key.** Create a survival kit that includes food and water; necessary medications; information on your insurance policies, first-aid supplies; blankets and flashlights; and extra batteries. Make sure the proper supplies are in your car as well.

# Winter Moratorium Ends April 1

**IF YOUR ACCOUNT IS PAST DUE, AND** you have not made payment arrangements by April 1, you will be subject to disconnection of your electric service. To avoid disconnection, you must pay your electric bill in full by April 1 or request a reasonable payment arrangement for your past due account(s). On and after April 1, we are not required to post a 48-hour disconnection notice on your premises. Call our office today to make arrangements or to request information at (641) 342-2173 or (800) 362-2154.

**Payment Plans:** 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 services. If you are past due on your account, contact me or Cori to discuss payment plan terms. 16-10-02-00

**Budget Billing:** For member-consumers with tight budgets, seasonally high electric bills can cause financial difficulties. Clarke Electric's budget billing payment option makes it easier to budget and anticipate. To enroll, contact me or Cori to discuss whether budget billing is right for you.

**State of Iowa Resources:** We also encourage anyone who has fallen behind on payment 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.

We are happy to work with you to make sure your account is current to avoid any interruption in service. If your account is past due and you have not made a payment arrangement, please call us before April 1 at (641) 342-2173 or (800) 362-2154.



**KIM GRIFFIN**  
Billing Specialist



## BENEFITS OF TREE TRIMMING

Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our consumer-members.

We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as rights of way, to:

- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

**Vegetation management improves service reliability for you - our members!**

## SmartHub Mobile App

**DON'T FORGET WE OFFER QUICK** and easy access to your account information with our SmartHub mobile app or on-line account.

Member-consumers can go to the app store for iOS users or the Google Play store for Android users or go to [www.smarthubapp.com](http://www.smarthubapp.com) to download the SmartHub app. Once downloaded, you can search by cooperative name or by location to locate your electric provider (Clarke Electric Cooperative, Osceola, IA). If you are a current e-bill user, you can access your account information by logging in with your current username and password. If you are a new user, click "new user" to set up a new account, then click register. You will need your billing account number, your last name and an email address to register. You will need to answer a security question and confirm zip code. A temporary password will be emailed to you. Enter the temporary password at login and then you can change the password to one you want. Then, launch the app.

On the app, members can:

- Check their kWh usage (for the week, year or previous year)
- See your current and past bills
- View the outage map
- Contact Clarke Electric
- Pay your bill on-line
- Report an outage
- Access several other reports and features.



**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  
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**641.342.2173 | 800.362.2154**

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