



Corning | Mount Ayr | Stanton

# Southwest lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

January 2019

## Werner, Sederburg Honored for 25 Years of Service to SWIAREC

Southwest Iowa REC Board President Marilyn Werner and Lineman Tysen Sederburg were honored in December for 25 years of service to the cooperative.

Each year at its annual meeting, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) recognizes electric cooperative employees and directors from across the state who have reached the milestone. In December, Marilyn and Tysen were presented with commemorative certificates by IAEC Board President Steve Seidl and IAEC V.P./General

Manager Chuck Soderberg during a special awards ceremony.

“Both Marilyn and Tysen embody Southwest Iowa REC’s dedication to providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members,” said Southwest Iowa REC General Manager Phil Kinser. “Congratulations to them for this achievement. We are proud to have them on our team.”



*Pictured, from left: Steve Seidl, Marilyn Werner, Tysen Sederburg and Chuck Soderberg.*

## Area Cooperatives Meet with State Legislators, Discuss Key Issues

Representatives from Southwest Iowa REC (Corning/Mt Ayr/Stanton), Clarke Electric Cooperative (Osceola), Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Greenfield), and Guthrie County REC (Guthrie Center) hosted a Legislative Night in Creston Dec. 3. Representatives Cecil Dolecheck, Tom Moore, David Sieck, and Representative-elect Ray (Bubba) Sorensen, along with Senators Tom Shipley and Amy

Sinclair met with about 30 attendees from these area cooperatives.

The event gives cooperative leaders a chance to discuss key issues in detail with their area representatives and for the legislators to discuss what they expect to work on in the upcoming legislative session. The biggest influence on lawmakers is their own voters and their expressed concerns. Whether you are a co-op member, director, manager or employee, you can play an important role in this process. If we don’t tell them about our issues and concerns, they won’t know we care.

Your cooperative’s future can be directly related to your active participation in the political process. There is a great deal of power behind grassroots activities and how

they can effectively influence the outcome of legislative, political and community decisions. We are there to get the best deal for Iowa’s RECs and YOU, our members.

You can help in this effort. We encourage all of you to participate.



**Apply Today!  
Youth Tour**

**June 14-20, 2019**



Contact your local Southwest Iowa REC office for an application or visit [www.swiarec.coop](http://www.swiarec.coop) for more information.

**Deadline for applications:  
March 1, 2019**

## CEO's Comments: Controlling Vegetation Key to Keeping Your Power Safe and Reliable

When electric cooperative member-owners are asked what they value most about their electric service, two things consistently rank near the top – reliability and affordability. With a 5-year annual average reliability rate of 99.9816%, we know reliability doesn't happen by chance. It takes constant effort to maintain systems, improve where necessary, and anticipate our member-owners' increasing needs for electric service.

During the winter months, reliability is under greater scrutiny from our member-owners. Old Man Winter's fury of snow and ice storms, combined with strong winds, can put our systems to the test in a significant way. When outages occur, the most frequent cause is trees or other vegetation coming into contact with power lines. These types of outages are not only inconvenient for our member-owners but also costly to your cooperative's bottom line, which impacts affordability over the long-term.

We know that vegetation – especially trees – are valued parts of our landscape. Beyond enhancing the beauty of an area, they provide important functions like cool shade, noise barriers, supplying vital oxygen to the atmosphere, and providing a habitat for wildlife. But trees also grow, which can cause problems with power lines if they are not properly planted or if volunteer trees rise in unintended areas.

When branches and limbs break off, they often land in roadways or bring the power lines down with them – posing a safety risk to cooperative employees and the public. Because our distribution system connects thousands of people across our service territory, one tree coming in contact with a power line may impact your neighbors near and far. The Iowa Electrical Safety Code requires electric utilities, including cooperatives, to have a schedule and procedures for regular tree trimming and vegetation management, which is critical in minimizing these instances.

Both federal and state policies require that vegetation must be cleared from power lines as a safety measure for member-owners and our employees. These groups also have strict guidelines, including prohibiting trees from being planted a certain distance away from power lines.

Under our vegetation management program, trees and other vegetation are inspected and trimmed on a 5-year cycle. Maintaining line clearance is our primary objective. We do this while ensuring we trim vegetation in an environmentally-responsible manner. The tree trimming process has two purposes: to remove elements that may already be coming into contact with utility equipment, such as wires and conductors and to create a clearance that will provide hazard-free operation of electric service.

Using the established standards as the guide, we also know that a methodical, proactive approach is important to ensure the safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally-responsible delivery of service. Like many things in life, preventative maintenance is a key to health – oil changes are vital to the longevity of a vehicle, regular dental visits are important in cavity prevention, and annual inspections and maintenance will likely extend the life of your furnace. Left to chance – rather than being proactive – your vehicle, teeth or furnace would likely suffer. The same is true with your cooperative's electric system. By proactively clearing vegetation before it reaches power lines, Southwest Iowa REC will be less impacted during severe weather and we'll avoid longer, more costly outages.

*See page 4 for the SWIAREC 2019 Vegetation Management Plan >>*



**Phil Kinser**

## Meter Upgrade Project Scheduled for 2019



Beginning in mid-January, 2019, and running through Aug. 1, all members of Southwest Iowa REC will have their meter(s) replaced.

Meters are being upgraded to meet our members' growing needs. The next generation of meters is capable of real-time data delivery allowing the cooperative to immediately use the information to manage outages and billing and create greater efficiencies within cooperative operations.

Updates to SmartHub, an online member portal that tracks energy use trends and helps manage energy consumption, will also be faster.

The new meters use a similar method of communication as many modern electronics, such as the wi-fi signal used in homes for wireless internet. They will also help Southwest Iowa REC prepare for the future energy demands of our members while maintaining a safe, reliable and resilient electric grid.



### What to expect

Southwest Iowa REC has contracted with Allegiant Utility Services, Inc. to perform the meter replacements. Members do not need to be present during the change.

If you have a separate heat meter located in your home, a meter technician will request to replace it if you are home.

If you are not home, Southwest Iowa REC will contact you to make other arrangements. You will experience a short disruption of power while the meter base is inspected and the new meter is installed. For more information or questions, contact the cooperative at (888) 220-4869.

# 2019 RESIDENTIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCENTIVES

Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative provides our members with ways to save on your energy budget. We offer rebates on the following products that will provide substantial savings for your home. Visit [www.swiarec.coop](http://www.swiarec.coop) for more information on how to apply!

**Appliances:** When replacing appliances always look for ENERGY STAR® qualified appliances. Appliances can account for 13 percent of your energy bill. ENERGY STAR qualified appliances incorporate advanced technologies that use 10-50 percent less energy and water than standard models.

**ENERGY STAR Clothes Washer**

With electric water heater \$40/unit

**ENERGY STAR Clothes Dryer** \$20/unit

**Pull the Plug Appliance Recycling:** Contact your Cooperative to request collection and recycling of your old, working refrigerator, freezer or window air conditioner and receive an incentive for up to three operable units per address. Curbside pick up and recycling is done by the cooperative's contractor.

Refrigerator \$35/unit  
 Freezer \$25/unit  
 Window Air Conditioner \$25/unit

**Indoor Air Quality:** Equipment must serve the entire conditioned space of the home. Limit of two air quality system per home.

Heat Recovery Ventilator (HRV) \$250/unit

**Heating and Cooling:** As much as half of the energy used in your home goes to heating and cooling. So making smart decisions about your home's heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system can have a big effect on your utility bills – and your comfort.

Geothermal Heat Pump  
 Closed loop system \$400/ton (AHRI listing)  
 Open loop system \$300/ton (AHRI listing; no "pump & dump" systems)  
 G.S.H.P. Replacement \$150/ton  
 Air-Source Heat Pump \$200/ton (ASHP units over ¾ ton, including mini-split systems)  
 Hybrid System \$300/ton  
 ENERGY STAR Bonus \$250/unit (Min. SEER 15.0, EER 12.5, HSPF 8.5)  
 ENERGY STAR Central AC \$100/unit (Min. SEER 15.0 & EER 12.5)

**Lighting:** Lighting is one of the easiest places to start saving energy. Up to 12 percent of your energy usage in a home. Replacing your five most frequently used light fixtures or the bulbs in them with ENERGY STAR qualified lights can save \$70 a year in energy costs.

Interior Lighting  
 Residential ENERGY STAR Hardwired and Screw-in Fixtures 50% of price paid for qualified products (up to \$5/fixture)

Lighting, continued...

Qualified products include: ENERGY STAR LED fixtures, and ENERGY STAR ceiling fans with light kits

Maximum incentive of \$5 per fixture and \$600 per home. Household limits applies to a 5-year period. (Installs prior to 1/1/2013 are exempt.) Minimum 4 watts per unit.

**Outdoor Security Lighting**

ENERGY STAR LED or DLC Qualified Fixtures \$10/fixture (20-34W)  
 \$20/fixture (35-49W)  
 \$40/fixture (50-74W)  
 \$50/fixture (75-124W)  
 \$60/fixture (125W +)

New lighting fixtures must be more energy efficient (lower wattage) than original installed fixtures.

**Water Heaters:** From warm showers to clean dishes, we count on hot water. In fact, the average household spends \$400-\$600 per year on water heating - making it the second largest energy expenditure behind heating and cooling. Depending on the technology you choose, you can cut your water heating costs in half!

ENERGY STAR Heat Pump Water Heater \$650/unit  
 Electric Resistance Storage Tank Water Heater \$75/unit (45-55 gal. tank-min. EF .090)  
 Electric Resistance Unit / First Time Heat Plus \$125/unit (45-55 gal. tank-min. EF 0.90)

**Weatherization:** Weatherizing your home will put money back in your pocket every month. It's that simple. On average, weatherization helps homeowners reduce their energy consumption by 25-30 percent – a savings of \$600 per year, every year. Older homes save even more – around 35 percent or more!

Requirements are you must have electric heat and/or central air conditioning.

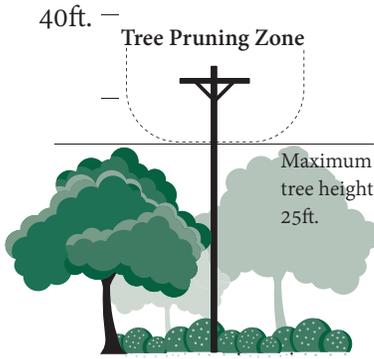
- Home must be built prior to 1996.
- Must be upgrade to existing home (new additions do not qualify)
- Project cost must be \$150 or more (labor costs for self-installed projects cannot be included).
- Maximum incentive per home \$2,200 (with electric heat; with or without AC)  
 \$300 (with central AC only and non-electric heat)

**New Home Construction:** Building an All-Star home is the maximum goal you can obtain toward energy efficiency and will result in putting the most money back in your pocket.

All-Star Home \$500/home (new construction, all electric heat, water heating and appliances)  
 Premier Electric Home (new construction, heat pump, electric water heating, and appliances) \$200/home

**Other programs:**

Electric Vehicle \$500/vehicle  
 All-electric and Plug-in Hybrid



## 2019 Vegetation Management Plans

The majority of our vegetation management program is completed during the months of January – March. **In 2019 the following areas are scheduled for vegetation management (ground cut, trim and chemical treatment):**

Midwest Spray Teams (contractor)

- Montgomery County - All townships

REC Crews

- Page County – Nodaway West township
- Montgomery County – West township
- Ringgold County – Jefferson township
- Taylor County – Washington and Holt township
- Union County – Douglas, Highland, Union, Jones, Platt, Grant, Sand Creek, and Pleasant townships

You can always feel free to contact us at any of our service locations in Corning, Mount Ayr or Stanton with any questions you might have on this process.

Or perhaps you would like to let us know about a tree or other vegetation that you think could be too close to power lines or important electrical equipment. You'll also find helpful information on our website at [www.swiarec.coop](http://www.swiarec.coop).

### Artichoke Shakshuka

- 2 T. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 (24 oz.) jar marinara sauce
- 1 (12 oz.) jar artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
- 6 to 8 large eggs
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 c. crumbled feta or goat cheese
- 2 T. chopped flat-leaf parsley

Prep: 15 min; cook: 15 min. Preheat oven to 375° with rack in center. Heat olive oil in a 10" cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. When oil is shimmering, add onion and bell pepper and sauté until beginning to soften, about 5 minutes. Remove pan from heat and add marinara sauce and artichoke hearts. Crack eggs into sauce and sprinkle with generous pinches of salt and pepper. Sprinkle crumbled feta or goat cheese over pan. Transfer pan to oven and bake until egg whites are set but yolks are still slightly runny, 15 to 20 minutes. Scatter parsley over top before serving warm from skillet, family-style. Makes six servings.



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Just like insulating your walls or roof, insulating your hot water tank is an easy and inexpensive way to improve energy efficiency and save you money. If your water tank is new, it is likely already insulated. If you have an older hot water tank, check to see if it has insulation with an R-value of at least 24.

If not, consider insulating your water tank, which could reduce standby heat losses by 25-45% and save you about 7-16% in water heating costs. It should pay for itself in about a year! You can find pre-cut jackets or blankets available from around \$20.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

### CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY REMINDERS

- Install CO alarms on every floor of your home and outside each sleeping area.
- Test CO alarms monthly.
- Replace CO alarm batteries at least annually.
- Make sure your family knows the difference between CO and smoke alarm sounds.
- If your CO alarm sounds, go outdoors immediately.



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