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# Southwest lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

July 2017

## Nominating Committee Meets

The Board appointed Nominating Committee of John A. Overholtzer, Tony Mercer, Marie Weddle, and Cathi Fulton met on Friday, June 23 to nominate the following members of the Cooperative for the office of Director for the ensuing term of three (3) years each, all to be elected at the Annual Meeting to be held September 7, 2017:

Region 1, District No. 2: **Curtis Greene; Marilyn Werner** (incumbent)

Region 1, At-Large: **Tony Mercer; Ken Peppmeier** (incumbent)

Region 2, District No. 6: **Kay Fast, Brian Schafer**

John A. Overholtzer  
Chairman, Nominating Committee



John A. Overholtzer and Cathi Fulton. Not pictured is Tony Mercer and Marie Weddle.

## SBS Inspections, Inc., Testing and Treating Poles This Fall

Southwest Iowa REC has contracted with SBS Inspections, Inc., from Olathe, Colo., to perform pole testing and treatment in 2017 on one-tenth of our system; approximately 5,000 poles or 250 miles of line. SBS Inspections, Inc., will test and treat poles in the following areas:

**Adams County:** Quincy and Washington townships

**Cass County:** Pleasant and Noble townships

**Fremont County:** Monroe township

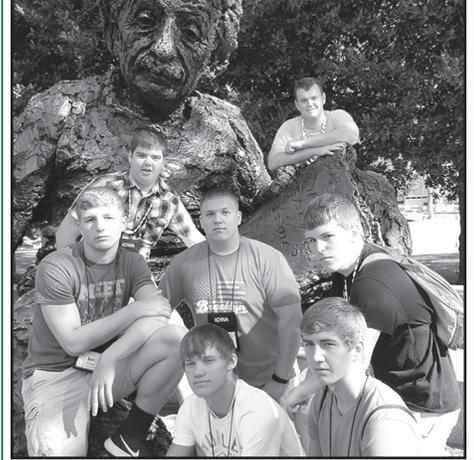
**Page County:** Pierce township

**Taylor County:** Clayton, Gay, Grant and Marshall townships

**Ringgold County:** Benton, Grant and Washington townships

SBS Inspections, Inc., inspectors will dig a hole at least 18 inches deep and wide enough to ensure a proper inspection and treatment of the pole. After exposing the wood, the poles are inspected and treated with a wood preservative, and then the hole is backfilled and the dirt tamped into place. This ground line treatment with wood preservative should extend the pole's life at least another 10 to 20 years. Poles that fail inspection are scheduled for replacement by our crews in order to provide you with even more reliable electric service in the future.

## YOUTH TOUR 2017



“ Having gone to Washington D.C. in previous years doesn't compare to the “special treatment” that you receive on Youth Tour, the sites that you visit, the meeting with congressmen, running with Senator Grassley, learning the cooperative difference, and especially the overall adventure of being with the Youth Tour people that you travel with.

I would encourage everyone to apply for the Youth Tour Trip – it will definitely be one of the most important and incredible experiences of your life. I can't thank Southwest Iowa REC enough for providing this opportunity for me!

-Aaron Armstrong, pictured above, bottom center

CEO's COMMENTS:

# How Local Ownership Works for You

In recent years, there has been a resurgence in the appeal of buying locally. It's evident by the increased popularity of farmers' markets across Iowa with shoppers wanting to buy produce or goods that have been grown by their community members. People have a desire to know more about how their food is grown and raised, and buying it from a local farmer helps to bridge that gap. It's also visible with the promotion of Small Business Saturday in November and the "shop small" movement, which encourage shoppers to return to Main Street and support the local small businesses they know and trust. People of all ages and walks of life prefer to buy locally when given the choice.

For electric cooperatives, it doesn't come as a surprise that there is a renewed commitment to supporting local communities and economies with purchases. Local ownership and local control are hallmarks of the cooperative business model, which has served our member-owners well during our 80-plus years of operation.

Member-owner involvement was the key to our formation decades ago, and it's what continues to fuel how we serve you today and the way we plan for the future.

Local ownership and democratic member control – one of the seven key cooperative principles – distinguishes us from other utilities. Every single member of the cooperative has a voice in how we do business. As a member-owner, you elect directors – who also are cooperative members – to represent your interests when it comes to setting policies or making decisions on issues that impact you. One member equals one vote, and every vote

counts. The board-appointed Nominating Committee (see article on pg. 1) has met and completed its task of nominating a slate of candidates for this year's director election. Soon it will be your turn to perform one of your most basic and vitally important duties as a member-owner; voting for the candidate of your choice. And, why not take it one step further and join the hundreds of other members and guests on September 7 at the Annual Meeting which will take place at the Lenox Community Center? The Annual Meeting is a great opportunity to socialize with other members, enjoy a great meal, entertainment, possibly win a prize and hear reports on the current and future operations of your electric cooperative.

Because your electric cooperative is owned by your fellow neighbors, friends and community members, decisions are made in the best interests of the needs of the communities we serve. We don't take a one-size-fits-all approach. We know that what works well for a cooperative in northeast Iowa

may not work as well for a cooperative in southwest Iowa. Because Wall Street investors are not making decisions for the cooperative on your behalf, we can remain flexible and adapt to the unique needs of our region. We can pursue economic development opportunities that are complementary to existing businesses in our area and provide for sustainable growth of local communities.

While Southwest Iowa REC's core purpose is to provide electricity that is safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible, we're also committed to making our communities quality places to live. We do this in many ways, such as by providing good and stable jobs; offering educational

opportunities on programs and services such as energy efficiency and safety; encouraging student leadership and education; paying local, county and state taxes; and distributing patronage back to members based on our not-for-profit business model.

Across the country, America's 838 locally owned electric distribution cooperatives provide electricity to an estimated 42 million people in 47 states, covering three quarters of the nation's landmass. The endurance of the cooperative business model is a testimony to the success of local control and ownership by the same people who rely on electric services to power their homes, businesses and lives.



Phil Kinser



**THE POWER OF MEMBERSHIP**

**YOU'RE EVERYWHERE. SO IS YOUR POWER.**

Visit the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa booth to learn more and register to win a Nest Smart Thermostat!

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa

Iowa State Fair OFFICIAL SPONSOR AUG 10-20 2017

# 2016 CIPCO Power Supply Report



## Make Life a Little Easier with SmartHub

Southwest Iowa REC offers another convenient way to pay your electric bill – it's SmartHub. All you have to do is visit [www.swiarec.coop](http://www.swiarec.coop) – click the green Pay Online link, and you can pay your bill online. The payment site is fully secure – using state-of-the-art encryption.

With SmartHub you can:

- Make a payment
- Access payment history
- View your bill
- View your electric usage
- Update your account or contact information
- Communicate directly with Southwest Iowa REC

Once you're registered for SmartHub you will receive monthly e-mail notifications when the latest billing information is available online and when accounts are due. SmartHub is just another way your cooperative strives to provide the latest in convenience and technology for our members.

SmartHub is available for you to use to pay your electric bill online. It will cost you \$3.95 per transaction for up to \$500 maximum with a credit card (Visa/MasterCard/Discover) or by check.

All you need is your REC account number, an email address and then create your own password.

2016 was another successful and exciting year for Southwest Iowa REC and Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO). I'm privileged to serve as your cooperative's representative on both the local board of directors and the CIPCO board of directors.

As our cooperative's power supplier, CIPCO has made significant investments in emission and carbon-free resources of energy, including the development and launch of a 5.5MW utility-scale solar system, Iowa's largest. Wind, hydroelectricity, nuclear, solar and landfill gas now make up nearly 60 percent of CIPCO's total energy portfolio.

CIPCO is committed to providing electricity at the lowest possible cost to its members. While other G&Ts across the country have implemented rate increases over the past few years, the rate at which Southwest Iowa REC purchases wholesale electricity from CIPCO has remained relatively flat, even decreasing during 2016. At the same time, CIPCO continues to invest in its overall generation and transmission system to ensure our electricity is reliable. In fact, CIPCO's 2016 outage rate was only 0.22 hours per member, the lowest since 1980.

An important part of Southwest Iowa REC's budget is the money each of CIPCO's member systems receives in the form of patronage dividends. These funds represent CIPCO's margins for the year that is passed on to our member-owners.

CIPCO and Southwest Iowa REC are committed to ensuring members are using energy wisely and making the changes necessary to reduce excess energy consumption. As a result, CIPCO and its member systems issued over \$2.8 million in energy-efficiency rebates for upgrades that saved approximately 31.5 million kWh of energy.

In my role as a CIPCO director, I'm committed to guiding the organization into its next chapter while ensuring it is stronger today than ever before. I believe board actions have positioned CIPCO well to navigate the changing energy industry over the next several years, allowing both CIPCO and our cooperative to thrive. We remain steadfast in delivering safe, reliable and affordable electricity to you, our member-owners, and ensuring your needs are met now and in the years to come.



**Dale Walkup**  
Representative on  
the CIPCO Board  
of Directors

## Move Over, Slow Down: It's the Law!

Updated language to Iowa's "Move Over, Slow Down" law now specifically includes the definition of a utility maintenance vehicle.

Supported by Iowa's electric cooperatives and passed with bipartisan support, this law is meant to protect electric cooperative employees from stationary vehicle accidents while working on power lines. The new language now specifically states, "...Utility maintenance vehicle means a motor vehicle operated by an employee or contractor of an entity including, but not limited to...

an electric cooperative association...in connection with the provision of utility services."

The law states that drivers must change lanes or slow down when approaching a stationary emergency, tow or utility maintenance vehicle that has its flashing lights activated. The fine for violating this law is \$100 plus any surcharge and court costs and additional fines if someone is injured or killed as a result of violating this law.



# Bravo!

Thank you for awarding me the Southwest Iowa REC scholarship. It will help greatly toward my college expenses.

- Clay Wimer

Thank you for believing in me and awarding me the \$500 scholarship. It was an honor to receive this award. The scholarship will be applied toward my college education at Indian Hills Community College.

- Katie Walter

On behalf of the American Cancer Society, I want to extend our sincere gratitude for being a 2017 Hour of Hope sponsor at the Relay For Life of Montgomery County.

- Suzanne Mages

Senior Community Manager & The Relay for Life of Montgomery County Event Leadership Team

Thank you for your generous scholarship award to me of \$500. Your support will help me reach my college goals.

- Connor Hultman

Thank you for supporting our 2017 After Prom.

- Lenox Community Schools

Thank you so much for donating items for the BBQ in Ellston. The teams loved everything.

- Lywanda

Ellston Jamboree Chairperson

## Chocolate Chip Pecan Blondies

1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, melted

1/2 cup packed light brown sugar

1/3 cup granulated sugar

1 large egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 cup all-purpose flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled-off

1/2 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips

1/2 cup chopped pecans (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spray an 8-inch square baking pan with non-stick cooking spray, then line the pan with an 8x11-inch piece of parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on two sides. Spray the paper with non-stick cooking spray.

In a large bowl, beat the melted butter with the sugars until well combined, about 2 minutes. Beat in the egg and vanilla. On low speed, mix in the flour and salt until just blended (do not over mix). Gently stir in the chocolate chips and nuts. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan.

Bake for 25-30 minutes; until the top is lightly golden and a toothpick inserted into middle comes out relatively clean (ignore any melted chocolate). Set the pan on a wire rack and cool completely. Using the parchment overhang, lift the blondie cake from the pan and transfer it to a cutting board; cut into 16 squares.



The RECipe

## Bravo...continued

I would like to express my appreciation for being selected as a \$500 scholarship recipient. This scholarship will be used to help pursue my double major of global resource systems and agronomy at Iowa State University.

- Mara Weis

Thank you for the Operation Round-Up pledge of \$2,500.00 to our center for expansion.

- Lenox Neighborhood Center

Debbie Tillman, Center Director



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Let the sun work for you!

Consider solar lights for

outdoor lighting. Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity that can be stored in a battery and tapped at night to make light. Check manufacturers' instructions to make sure your solar lights are situated to receive sufficient sunlight to recharge during the day. *Source: U.S. Department of Energy*



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