

SOUTHWEST LINES

SOUTHWEST IOWA

RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

OFFICE HOURS 7:30 AM TO 4:00 PM Find us at www.swiarec.coop

May is National Electrical Safety Month

Make Sure Your Home is Safe!

Tens of thousands of fires are caused each year by electrical problems inside the home – but most can be easily prevented with a few simple steps. Taking a few minutes to check for and eliminate electrical hazards now – could save you headaches in the future. Overloaded outlets – misused and faulty cords – and electrical devices are leading causes of home electrical shocks and fires. Safe Electricity advises using this checklist to ensure your home is safe:

- **ELECTRICAL OUTLETS** – Check for loose-fitting plugs, which can be a shock or fire hazard. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring components are not exposed. If you have young children in the home – make sure unused outlets are covered.
- **PLUGS** – Never force them into outlets. Don't remove the grounding pin (3rd prong) to make a 3-prong plug fit a 2-conductor outlet. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.
- **CORDS** – Make sure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.
- **EXTENSION CORDS** – Use them on a temporary basis only. They are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure they have safety closures to protect young children from shock and mouth burn injuries.
- **LIGHT BULBS** – Check the wattage to make sure light bulbs match the fixture requirements. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage ratings than recommended. Make sure they are screwed in securely so they don't overheat.
- **GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS (GFCIs)** – Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement and garage as well as on outdoor outlets. Test them monthly to ensure they're working properly.
- **CIRCUIT BREAKERS/FUSES** – Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. If you don't know the correct rating, have an electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size you are removing. Check that circuit breakers are working properly.
- **APPLIANCES/ELECTRONICS** – If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or has given you an electrical shock – immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damage in wiring and connectors. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics.
- **ELECTRICAL WIRING** – Wiring defects are a major cause of residential fires. Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, loose wires or loose lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. Immediately shut off, then professionally replace light switches that are warm to the touch and lights that spark and flicker.
- **SERVICE CAPACITY** – As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances and electronics, your home's electrical service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow – or breakers trip frequently – you may need to increase electrical service and add new branch circuits. A qualified, licensed electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ELECTRICAL SAFETY – visit www.SafeElectricity.org OR our web-site at www.swiarec.coop.

“Offices will be closed for Memorial Day, May 26th”

•••••

- **BEFORE DIGGING...**
CALL 811 – Make sure underground lines are located BEFORE you start to DIG!!

•••••

- **In case of Down Power Lines REMEMBER:** no matter what vehicle you're in (tractor, car, pickup, combine) – always remember to:
 - Stay in the vehicle
 - Call for help
 - If you MUST exit the vehicle (in case of fire) JUMP CLEAR!
 - Never touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time. It could be a deadly mistake!
 - Do not touch any wires!

Corning Office

1801 Grove Avenue
Corning, IA 50841
(641) 322-3165
888-591-1261

Stanton Office

415 Broad Avenue
Stanton, IA 51573
(712) 829-2211
888-591-1260

Mt. Ayr Office

1502 W. South Street
Mount Ayr, IA 50854
(641) 464-2244
888-220-4869

Manager's Comments



Phil Kinser

Southwest Iowa REC Mission Statement:

Provide safe and reliable electric service, while also advancing community and economic development opportunities, in a manner consistent with sound cooperative business practices and values.

2014 Annual Meeting

Plans are well underway for this year's Annual Meeting. Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting will be held at the Lenox Community Center on Tuesday, September 23, 2014. The general business session will be called to order at 7:00 p.m. In addition to reports being presented that cover our 2013 operations, a major item of business will be the election of three directors to serve three-year terms. Directors whose terms expire at the Annual Meeting in September are:

Region 1, District #2 – Marilyn Werner
Region 1, At-Large – Carroll Baker
Region 2, District #6 – Richard Fast

A nominating committee will be named at the May board meeting and given the task of nominating qualified candidates to run for each of these positions. Once the slate of candidates is chosen, members will be given the opportunity to vote by mail or at the Annual Meeting on September 23rd. A detailed explanation of the nominating and election process will be provided in the next newsletter. If you are interested in being considered to serve on the nominating committee this year, please contact me at (888) 591-1261.

Considering Distributed Generation for Your Property

From time to time, we learn of member-consumers who are considering installing a distributed generation system, also known as a renewable energy system, at their home or business. With the overall public interest in renewable energy and the advancements in small scale technology, we understand why this topic interests a number of people.

Planning for a home distributed generation system is a multistep process that begins with talking to your electric cooperative, and requires significant analysis and fact-finding, and then careful evaluation of the information that you learn in the process.

If you are considering investing in and potentially installing a distributed generation system, it's important that you follow these key steps:

- 1) **Maximize energy efficiency opportunities.** Completion of a thorough energy efficiency audit is an important precursor to considering distributed generation. Implementing energy efficiency measures in advance of installing a renewable system can save you money by reducing your overall energy or water consumption, which subsequently reduces the size of the system you'll need to meet your energy needs. With high propane prices, a geothermal energy system may be a wise option for your property.
- 2) **Schedule a meeting with Southwest Iowa REC.** If you determine that you want to pursue information to purchase and install a distributed generation system, contact John Allen, Director of Member Services, at Southwest Iowa REC at 641-464-2244. We can help you to understand interconnection requirements and point you in the right direction for credible resources that can further assist with the analysis process. With any type of distributed generation system, maintaining the safety and reliability of the overall power grid is of the utmost priority. We'll walk you through a number of preliminary safety precautions that must be considered. If you decide to proceed with a system in the future, more rigorous safety information will be shared at that time.
- 3) **Analyze your electric loads.** Calculating your electricity use and overall energy needs is one of the first steps in the process of investigating whether a renewable energy system is a good investment for you. A thorough examination of your electricity needs helps you determine the size of the system you will need, how your energy fluctuates throughout the day and over the year, and energy efficiency measures you can take to reduce your energy use. This process will help you determine if a distributed energy system is right for you.
- 4) **Determine applicable codes.** Each state, county and community likely has its own set of specific codes and regulations that must be followed in the event you decide to install a distributed energy system.
- 5) **Contact the Iowa Energy Center.** The Iowa Energy Center's skilled professionals are experts in renewable energy. Once you share some of your preliminary research with them, they can advise you of additional resources; help you to understand the economics of a distributed generation system; help you to determine if a distributed generation system is right for you and what type of renewable energy technology would be best for your property; discuss financing, potential tax incentives and financial incentives; and discuss other requirements such as insurance.

After you complete the above steps, schedule a follow-up meeting with Southwest Iowa REC. Staying engaged with us during all aspects of considering a distributed generation system is critical to the success of a distributed generation project. Our priority is to help you make informed decisions and to do everything possible to ensure the safety of all parties involved with a distributed generation project and that all interconnection requirements are met.

As always, please contact a member of the Southwest Iowa REC team at any time to discuss this topic or others with us. We're here to serve you.

Corning's Ag Day

Southwest Iowa REC had an Energy Efficiency display booth at the Corning Ag Day recently. A good crowd enjoyed visiting the different vendor displays and the lunch cooked by the Adams County Cattlemen.

Prize Winner:

Our prize winner was Iona Allen of Corning! She won a surge strip protector and a home plug-in KWH meter.

Tim Pfeiffer, Member Services Representative is shown explaining Energy Efficiency to Ruth Roberts.



To see additional news stories visit our website at www.swiarec.coop

OSMOSE Utilities Services, Inc. Testing and Treating Poles This Summer

Southwest Iowa REC has contracted with **OSMOSE Utilities Services, Inc.** from Tyrone, Georgia, to perform pole testing and treatment in 2014 on one-tenth of our system; approximately 5,000 poles or 250 miles of line. Around the middle of April, their inspectors started testing and treating poles in the following areas:

Adair County

Richmond and Washington Townships

Adams County

Carl and Colony Townships

Decatur County

Grand River Township

Montgomery County

Douglas and Scott Townships

Ringgold County

Athens, Liberty, Monroe, Poe, Tingley, Union and Washington Townships

Union County

Spaulding Township

OSMOSE Utilities Services, 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 providing you with even more reliable electric service in the future.



Operation Round-UP® 2014

Each month, Southwest Iowa REC simply "rounds up" the electric bills of participating member-owners to the next highest dollar. All **Operation Round-UP®** donations are placed in a separate fund to be disbursed for charitable purposes only.

A committee comprised of community leaders, Southwest Iowa REC employees and directors receives and evaluates all donation requests. This committee makes recommendations for disbursements to the full Southwest Iowa REC Board of Directors. The REC Board has the final approval of all **Operation Round-UP®** disbursements.

Typically, **Operation Round-UP®** funding will be used to address individual and community needs such as food, shelter, clothing, health, education and service projects. **Operation Round-UP®** funds cannot be used for political purposes.

Individuals or organizations requesting donations do not have to be members of Southwest Iowa REC. They do need to be a resident and located in one of the 11 counties we serve. These counties include: Adair, Adams, Cass, Decatur, Fremont, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Ringgold, Taylor and Union.

Southwest Iowa REC is committed to improving local residents' quality of life. **Operation Round-UP®** is an innovative way to continue to make a difference in our local communities. We encourage individuals and organizations with needs to apply for **Operation Round-UP®** donations. Applications can be requested from any of our three offices or on-line at www.swiarec.coop under the "community" tab.

Out of our 5,972 accounts – we're excited that 3,684 meters are signed up for **Operation Round-UP®**.

If you're not currently signed up – why not call today and join in!

Operation Round-UP® = Small Change That Changes Lives





Employee Spotlight

Name: Denise Hallquist

Family: Married to Knute. Three daughters – Allison (Andrew) Newman who has 2 boys, Tyler and Blake; Valerie (Zach) Hensley who has a daughter Emma and a son Chase; and Carrie (Josh) Moline.



Date of Hire: April 19, 1977

Current Position: Customer Service Representative – (Stanton)

Favorite Recipe: Grape Salad

The RECipe

GRAPE SALAD

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese-softened	1/2 tsp. vanilla	1 c. chopped pecans
1 c. sour cream	4 lb. seedless grapes (variety of colors), washed & patted dry	3/4 c. brown sugar
1/2 c. white sugar		

Mix cream cheese, sour cream, white sugar and vanilla together. Add washed grapes and blend well. Place in glass serving bowl.

Mix chopped pecans and brown sugar together. Sprinkle on top of grape mixture. Cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate at least 2 hours (overnight is better).

Yield: 10 to 12 servings.

Patronage Allocation Approved

In March, the Board of Directors allocated margins for 2013. Margins are the “bottom line” on our financial operating statement when all the expenses of providing electric services to our member-owners are deducted from the revenues taken in. After the annual independent audit of the books, these margins are allocated to the various reserve accounts and also to the member-owners who received service from the Cooperative during the year the margin was created.

For 2013, margins of \$592,165.05 will be allocated to the member-owners based upon the amount each paid for electricity in proportion to what the other member-owners paid. The payment of this Patronage Capital is deferred until a future point in time when the financials of the Cooperative allow a refund. Member-owners who purchased electricity from us in 2013 will receive a Patronage Allocation notice letter in the mail later this spring.



Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

When replacing incandescent bulbs from recessed light fixtures, use energy-efficient bulbs that are rated for that purpose. For example, the heat buildup in downlights will significantly shorten the life of spiral CFLs.
Source: Department of Energy

Thanks.....

My name was drawn last September as a winner of 6 months free electricity. We want to thank you for providing this for us. It has been a long cold winter. Thank you for being there to serve our community. The staff has always been so courteous and helpful. The popcorn on Friday is always a treat. Again, heartfelt thanks!

Ardys and Myron Shervheim