



Corning | Mount Ayr | Stanton

# Southwest lines

A monthly publication for members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

May 2016

## Board Approves Patronage Allocation

IN MARCH, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS allocated margins for 2015. 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 as patronage capital to the member-owners who received service from the Cooperative during the year the margin was created.

For 2015, margins of \$601,600.69 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 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 2015 will receive a patronage allocation notice in the mail in late May or early June.

### How Do Capital Credits Work?

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues, called margins, are returned to members in the form of capital credits.



Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, Updated April 2015

## Save the Date: Annual Meeting Set for September 15

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 Thursday, September 15, 2016. The general business session will be called to order at 7:00 p.m. In addition to reports being presented that cover our 2015 operations, a major item of business will be the election of three

directors to serve one three-year term each. Directors whose terms expire at the Annual Meeting in September are:

- Region 1, District #4 – Dick Ballantyne
- Region 2, District #8 – Dennis Meier
- Region 2, At-Large – Mark Herzberg

A nominating committee will be named at the May 26th 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 September 15th. 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 Phil Kinser at (888) 220-4869.

### Heat Plus Meter Readings

The Heat Plus rate season will end May 31, 2016. It is important that members do not turn off power to those meters because we still need to be able to read them each month. The Heat Plus rate will begin again on October 1, 2016.



### Energy Efficiency

#### Tip of the Month

Upgrades like adding insulation and replacing older windows with energy efficient options can make a major difference in efficiency and comfort.



Source: energy.gov

### PRIZE WINNER!

Southwest Iowa REC would like to thank all who stopped by our booth during the Ag Day Expo. Leland Shipley was our lucky prize winner!



CEO's COMMENTS:

# Electric Co-ops and a Culture of Safety



**Phil Kinser**

THERE IS A CHILDREN'S BOOK TITLED *Safety 1st, Safety Always*. As you can imagine, it encompasses many of the traditional safety lessons parents should teach their children. We drill youngsters about safety from an early age because we know how important it is to protect ourselves and those we care about. In the spirit of May being National Electrical Safety Month, let's take a look at how electric cooperatives have been stepping up to the plate when it comes to safety at the co-op.

Up until 2007, there was an alarming national trend among electric co-ops, which was the fact that the number of "lost time" accidents was increasing. Lost time is defined as anything resulting in an employee missing time at work. These accidents could range from a sprained ankle to the ultimate tragedy of a fatality.

This is why Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, which insures the vast majority of electric co-ops nationwide, initiated a campaign called a "Culture of Safety." It was designed to create a much greater awareness about safety issues at all electric co-ops.

Through the use of strategy labs across the country, Federated brought together co-op CEOs and general managers, operations supervisors, safety directors and linemen to better understand how each group viewed safety. In doing so, differences in perceptions regarding safety within cooperatives were identified, allowing for much needed conversations and evaluations of how to raise awareness and improve local safety cultures. The "Speak Up, Listen Up" program is designed to empower anyone who sees a potentially unsafe situation to Speak Up and encourages everyone to Listen Up to their concerns. The results have been dramatic, with more than a 30 percent decline in the number of accidents over the past nine years.

Southwest Iowa REC participated in Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange's "Culture of Safety" program and has also embraced the "Speak Up, Listen Up" program. As a result, a Safety Committee has been established and a much greater emphasis has been placed on safety awareness, accident/incident investigation and crew inspections/observations.

As a member, you too have a role. If you see any potentially dangerous situations or practices, you should report them as soon as possible to Southwest Iowa REC.

The implementation and success of the Culture of Safety program demonstrates a very important point. If we are intentional about our actions, we can indeed change the culture in our organizations. The same is true for our families, our teams and any groups we may belong to.

We also know that living our cooperative principles and values is equally important. We have the best business model because it puts you, the member-owner, at the center of our efforts.

We look forward to being your safe electricity provider and energy advisor long into the future. For more information about Southwest Iowa REC's Culture of Safety, visit [www.swiarec.coop](http://www.swiarec.coop).

## Sign Up Today! Operation Round-UP = Small Change That Changes Lives



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](http://www.swiarec.coop) under the "Community" tab.

Of our 5,876 accounts, we're excited that 3,779 meters are signed up for Operation Round-UP.

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

# BEAT THE PEAK

## Reduce Energy During Peak Hours

PEAK HOURS ARE THE BUSIEST TIMES for your local electric cooperative, since many people are using electricity at the same time. In addition, it costs your co-op more to generate electricity when demand soars during peak periods – and the cost of your electricity also may rise. Obviously, using less electricity during peak periods can save your co-op – and you – money.

Here's how you can help during peak hours, which generally are on the hottest summer days between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.:

- Shift household chores and activities away from peak periods. Wait to run your dishwasher until you go to bed, for instance.
- If you have air conditioning, turn the thermostat up when you are gone and at night. Cool only the rooms that you are using.
- Use the most energy-efficient appliances you have. Your microwave oven, for example, uses considerably less energy than your stove or cooktop.
- If you're buying a new appliance, make sure you get a highly efficient one. Look for ENERGY STAR® labels when you're evaluating different models.
- Be aware of your energy consumption, and try to get in the habit of using energy efficiently year-round.

Use the energy you need, but use it wisely! You'll help your co-op avoid building expensive new power plants – and that, in turn, will help keep your electric rates stable.

## Congressman Young Visits Corning Office

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE DAVID YOUNG (3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF IOWA) stopped by the Corning office of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative on April 5, 2016. He thanked our linemen for the exceptional work they do throughout the year to provide safe and reliable electric power to our members. His visit was timely as we celebrated National

Lineman Appreciation Day April 11. Congressman Young provided a legislative update to the employees and also answered a variety of questions about current political matters.

Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative linemen then showed Congressman Young the various pieces of safety equipment and clothing they use to perform their jobs, even dressing the Congressman up in typical linemen gear and taking him up in the basket to get a lineman's view of the world.

Congressman Young was asked to help keep rural America strong by ensuring that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Electric Loan Program is adequately funded. This program allows electric cooperatives like Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative to maintain critical infrastructure at a reasonable cost.



U.S. Rep. David Young

Congressman Young was also asked to support the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is an essential program that delivers aid to our nation's most vulnerable people, including senior citizens on fixed incomes and other members of Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative who often lack the resources to adequately heat and cool their homes.

Thank you, Congressman Young, for taking the time to visit Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative, show appreciation for our linemen, and listen to our concerns.



# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



**Name:** Jamie McManis  
**Family:** Jason (husband); children Aaron (16), Halle (4), Madison and Aspen (2) and Alexa (8 mos.)

**Date of Hire:** Feb. 7, 2014

**Current Position:**  
 Administrative Assistant

**Favorite Recipe:** Baked Potato Soup

*Bravo!*

"I want to thank Southwest Iowa REC for the door prize I won at the Corning Ag Day. It is very much appreciated and will be very useful."

--Sincerely, Leland Shipley

"The staff and board of directors would like to thank you for your continued, generous support of our organization."

--Dave Jennings, Executive Director  
 Montgomery County Hospital



Remember to "Like" Southwest Iowa REC's Facebook page to stay up to date with news and events and enjoy special features such as energy efficiency and electrical safety tips.



## Baked Potato Soup

Ingredients:

6 large baking potatoes

4 green onions (diced)

12 slices bacon (cooked & crumbled)

2/3 c. butter

2/3 c. flour

6 c. milk

1 1/4 c. shredded cheddar cheese

8 oz. carton sour cream

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. pepper

Bake potatoes. Cool. Cut potatoes in half. Scoop out pulp and set aside. Discard skins.

Place bacon in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium heat until browned. Drain, crumble, and set aside.

In a stock pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Whisk in flour until smooth. Gradually stir in milk, whisking constantly until thickened. Stir in potato pulp and onions. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently.

Reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes. Mix in bacon, cheese, salt, and pepper. Continue cooking, stirring frequently, until cheese is melted. Stir in sour cream and heat through.

Serve with any remaining onions, bacon and cheese as garnish.

## Putting Safety First Throughout the Year

IT'S MAY – AND SOUTHWEST IOWA REC is celebrating National Electrical Safety Month. While safety for our members is top priority year-round, Electrical Safety Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of safety excellence.

This year, we're focusing on electrical safety in the home. Electricity is the cause of over 140,000 fires each year, resulting in more than 500 deaths, 4,000 injuries and 1.6 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI).

There are many measures you can take to ensure the safety of your loved ones. Please visit [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org) or [www.swiarec.coop](http://www.swiarec.coop) for helpful tips to safeguard your home.



**Corning**  
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 1502 W. South St., Mount Ayr, IA 50854

**Stanton**  
 415 Broad Ave., Stanton, IA 51573

**NEW PHONE NUMBER FOR ALL LOCATIONS:**  
 (888) 220-4869

### Board of Directors

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 Richard "Dick" Ballantyne, Secretary  
 Mark Herzberg, Treasurer  
 Richard Fast  
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