

**MARCH 2018**  
**PUBLIC POLICY REPORT**

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## **FEDERAL UPDATE**

### **U.S. blames Russia for cyber-attacks on electric grid**

The Trump administration blamed the Russian government for a campaign of cyber-attacks stretching back at least two years that targeted the U.S. power grid, marking the first time the United States has publicly accused Moscow of hacking into American energy infrastructure. Beginning in March 2016, or possibly earlier, Russian government hackers sought to penetrate multiple U.S. critical infrastructure sectors, including energy, nuclear, commercial facilities, water, aviation and manufacturing, according to a U.S. security alert.

### **Ryan says Congress to break up Trump's infrastructure proposals**

House Republicans will break President Donald Trump's infrastructure plan into multiple pieces of legislation to see progress this year, House Speaker Paul Ryan said. Ryan said the House will first address airports and runways as part of a must-pass reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration, then work on more traditional highway and bridge issues.

## **STATE UPDATE**

### **MidAmerican to close ash ponds at Sioux City area coal-fired power plants**

MidAmerican Energy Co. said it intends to eliminate the use of ash ponds at all of its coal-fired power plants, including the Neal North and Neal South Energy Centers at Port Neal. The utility said its ash ponds and landfills are structurally sound and compliant with the Environment Protection Agency's Coal Combustion Residuals rule. However, recent test results do require the state's largest utility to take additional action, although it maintains no drinking water sources have been contaminated.

### **Northey confirmed to USDA post**

Iowa Agricultural Secretary Bill Northey was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as U.S. Department of Agriculture undersecretary for farm production and conservation. Northey served as Iowa's agricultural secretary for 11 years. Governor Reynolds has appointed Mike Naig to fill the Secretary's term.

### **Iowa Senate's \$1 billion tax plan**

The Iowa Senate passed an overhaul plan that would potentially provide \$1 billion a year in individual and corporate tax relief. It proposes lowering the top individual tax rate from 8.98 percent to 6.3 percent beginning in 2019.

### **MidAmerican Energy completes two new wind farms in Iowa**

On its quest for 100 percent renewable energy, MidAmerican Energy has announced the completion of its two latest wind farms, which add to the state's growing wind energy generation. The Beaver Creek wind farm in Boone and Greene counties and Prairie wind farm in Mahaska County have begun operation. The two farms, which amount to 169 wind turbines, add 338 megawatts of wind generation capacity to MidAmerican Energy's grid.

**Upcoming Activities**

NIPCO Annual Meeting – Sioux City, IA	April 3
Pella Cooperative Electric Association Annual Meeting – Pella, IA	April 3
Corn Belt Power Cooperative Annual Meeting – Fort Dodge, IA	April 4
Gettysburg Leadership Experience – Gettysburg, PA	April 4 – 6
NRECA Legislative Fly In & Conference – Washington, DC	April 8 - 11
IAEC Communicators Spring Conference – West Des Moines, IA	April 18 – 19
CIPCO Board Committee Meetings – Des Moines, IA	April 23
CIPCO Board Meeting – Des Moines, IA	April 24

**Consumer Price Index**

Month	Seasonally Adjusted Change from Previous Month
February 2018	0.2%
January 2018	0.5%
December 2017	0.1%
November 2017	0.4%
October 2017	0.1%
September 2017	0.5%
Unadjusted Rolling 12 Month Average: 2.2%	