

# living with energy

IN IOWA

JANUARY 2016



Guthrie County REC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Save energy (and water) in the laundry room

If you win our  
contest, we'll  
help winterize  
your home!

See page 5

Updating  
recessed lights  
to LEDs is  
as easy as  
1, 2, 3

How good are  
electric co-ops?

Ask Wall  
Street

Start the  
New Year with  
quick-and-  
easy meals



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## Operations Update

### Safety on the line: Crews practice pole-top rescues

The line crews at Guthrie County REC often find themselves in some of the most challenging, diverse, risky



work environments, both high above ground and well below it. Having a solid understanding of what it takes to get out of these difficult spots when there's a problem is critical to saving lives.

In October, Guthrie County REC line crews practiced pole-top rescue procedures. This training teaches and refreshes the skills necessary to save another person's life in the event of an emergency while working on the lines. There have been many cases of line workers being injured while working at the top of a pole or other structure.

The basic rule of rescue applies to line crews too: Don't become the second victim. That's why the rigging, lifting and power skills necessary to get a victim down from elevated heights is practiced as part of our regular safety training. ⚡



**Guthrie County REC**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



#### Office

1406 State Street • P.O. Box 7  
Guthrie Center, IA 50115-0007

#### Office Hours

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

#### Telephone Number

641-747-2206 or 888-747-2206  
Calls answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

#### Website

[www.guthrie-rec.coop](http://www.guthrie-rec.coop)

## Local Perspective

### We strive to exceed expectations

BY COZY NELSEN

In grade school, children comb their report cards for “exceeds expectations” marks. This excitement and attentiveness doesn't change, even as exceeds expectations marks turn to traditional “A” and “B” grades.

At Guthrie County REC, we also strive to exceed expectations – every single day. We don't want to simply meet your expectations for providing safe, reliable and affordable power. We aim to go farther and do better, from providing superior member service to offering programs that help save time and money.

Earlier in the year, we spotlighted Sharon Traeder and her family farm. The farm was electrified in October 1939, and Sharon lives on that farm today – making her family the longest continuously served member of Guthrie County REC. Just as Sharon's family is committed to Iowa, Guthrie County REC is committed to you, our members. When Sharon was asked about the quality of the cooperative's service, she replied, “They're always just ‘Johnny-on-the-spot.’”

As a member-owned cooperative, we're dedicated to supporting the communities we serve and improving the quality of life for all our members. To demonstrate our commitment, the

cooperative has pledged to invest more than \$795,000 in energy efficiency programs, rebates and incentives during the next 5 years.

Guthrie County REC is also invested in the future of the communities we serve. From providing educational scholarships to contributing funding toward community initiatives, we believe our area is a place to grow.

Guthrie County REC and our board of directors take the cooperative's fiscal responsibilities seriously. After all, we're managing your resources. We recently received our new annual review of financial trends that compares our cooperative to other electric cooperatives across the country. Once again, our financial strength was recognized due to a high rate of return on equity, strong margins and favorable reliability throughout our distribution system.

I'm thankful to be a part of the Guthrie County REC family. Our employees dedicate themselves to providing exceptional service each and every day. Our cooperative is a dynamic part of the economy – because we are local. ⚡

Cozy Nelsen is the executive vice president and general manager of Guthrie County REC. This article also appears in the 2015 Guthrie County REC Annual Report.



## Financial Matters

### What happens when your payment is late?

Your Guthrie County REC electric bill should arrive in the mail around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. The amount is due upon receipt and is considered delinquent if not paid by the due date printed on the bill, which is normally the last day of the month.

Guthrie County REC will give a 2- to 3-day grace period before issuing a disconnect notice with the late fee imposed. Every cooperative member is allowed one “free” late

payment every 12 months.

If you receive a disconnect notice, you then have until the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month to pay your bill in full, or disconnection will be activated.

Remember, Guthrie County REC is more than happy to work with you on your bill payments.

If you happen to find yourself strapped for cash, call the cooperative at 888-747-2206 and we'll consider an extension or enter into a payment agreement with you. ⚡



# Here's what to do if the lights go out this winter



The first thing you should do is make sure everyone in your family is safe. Then contact your electric cooperative to report the outage, even if you think a neighbor already has done so, and run through this checklist:

- Turn off the stove, oven and other appliances (except the refrigerator and freezer, unless they're empty) to prevent heavy startup loads that could cause secondary blackouts when power is restored.
- Unplug sensitive electronic equipment such as computers, TVs and other home entertainment equipment to avoid damage to them when power is restored.
- Leave one light turned on, so you'll know when the power is restored.
- Select a room on the warm side of the house away from prevailing winds to wait out the storm.
- Close curtains and window blinds.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration and the resulting chills.
- If you have an unvented, fuel-burning space heater, place it on a level, hard and nonflammable surface – not on rugs or carpets or near bedding or drapes. Cross-ventilate by opening a window on each side of the room; it's better to let in some cold air than to run the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Also, never leave a space heater unattended or within the reach of children or pets – and turn it off when you leave the room.
- If temperatures fall to near freezing in your home, open all faucets slightly so they drip. This minimal water flow will help prevent pipes from freezing.
- Close off as many rooms as possible, unless you're using an unvented, fuel-burning space heater. Then you should keep the doors open to the rest of the house, to help prevent pollutant and carbon monoxide buildup.
- Don't use your stove, oven, cooktop, outdoor grill, camping stove or any other fuel-, charcoal- or wood-burning cooking equipment to try to produce usable heat inside your home. The carbon monoxide these devices produce could be fatal within in a matter of minutes.
- Use your fireplace if you have one. Otherwise, make sure the flue is closed to prevent heated air from going up the chimney.
- Don't use candles for lighting; they can cause a fire. Use a flashlight or battery-powered camping lantern instead.
- Keep the doors to the refrigerator and freezer closed. Nonperishable refrigerated items should be safe up to 4 hours. A full freezer will stay at freezing temperatures for about 2 days; a half-full freezer will last about 1 day. ⚡

# Statement of Nondiscrimination

Guthrie County REC is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap shall be excluded from participation in admission or access to, denied the benefits of or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is the general manager. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with Guthrie County REC; the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Washington, D.C. 20250. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. ⚡

## Editor's Choice Contest

We want to help you winterize your home!



When it's cold, you may need to tackle home energy-efficiency projects from inside. So, we're going to help you get started with a \$100 *Living with Energy in Iowa* Energy-Saving Gift Card.

Enter this month's contest no later than Jan. 31, 2016, at the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website: [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com). ⚡

# Check our new website!

Guthrie County REC is proud to announce that our official website – still at [www.guthrie-rec.coop](http://www.guthrie-rec.coop) – has a new look. In the works for several months, the new site launched early in January. One of the most important factors in the redesign was a simplified look that allows quick and easy navigation to services, so members can find what they need when they need it.

“Its functionality was planned with our members in mind,” said Cozy Nelsen, executive vice president and general manager. “We know our members have busy lives, and our new site will help them with the tools they need to quickly take care of business.”

In addition to online bill pay and account information, the site has many resources regarding safety, energy conservation, member benefits and more. If you access our site with your smartphone or tablet, you’ll find our mobile site, a simplified version of the full site that takes only seconds to load.

“We strive to effectively communi-



cate with our members and we want to be sure we’re reaching them no matter what device they use to access the Internet,” said Nelsen. “Our website is oftentimes the first impression members have of us. The easy navigation elements and online resources available through our website are meant to help them understand the programs we offer that make Guthrie County REC so unique.”

The website is a product of Co-op Web Builder, offered free of charge to electric co-ops through Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. ⚡

## Supporting and Serving Iowa's Corn Growers for 78 years



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# Expecting young guests? Kid-proof your home

Whether your home will be the center of activities for a large family event or you’re just expecting the grandchildren to visit on a Saturday afternoon, make sure you check for these potentially dangerous things before your young guests arrive.



- Install tamper-resistant receptacles to prevent electrical shocks and burns – or add safety covers to unused outlets.
- Place safety gates at stairways.
- Avoid putting small, mouth-sized decorations on lower shelves.
- Put away small, shiny items – such as buttons, coins and jewelry – that could pose a choking hazard.
- Move cleaning products and other dangerous items out of reach of children or store them in a locked area.
- Make sure toys are age appropriate, and read all instructions before letting children play with them.
- Keep candles, matches and lighters hidden. Better yet, don’t use them unless absolutely necessary.

Never leave the kitchen when something’s cooking and:

- Keep children at least 3 feet away from cooking appliances.
- Don’t hold a child as you remove food from the cooktop, stove or microwave.
- Turn pot handles in, away from reaching hands.
- Use the back burners on the cooktop whenever possible.
- Once your meal is ready, turn off the stove and oven; also unplug small kitchen appliances.
- Prevent scalding from hot tap water by lowering the setting on your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees.

For more family safety tips, check the website of the Electrical Safety Foundation International at [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org). ⚡