

# living with energy

IN IOWA



Guthrie County REC

A TradeWind Energy Cooperative

JANUARY 2017

Win an early-warning emergency crank radio for your storm preparedness kit! ▶ See page 5

## Eat healthy:

Recipes from Iowa's co-op cooks

Iowa's electric co-ops support your interests in the state legislature

Pinpointing outages: How do they do that?

We're celebrating a 75-year legacy of cooperative values

Visit our website at [www.guthrie-rec.coop](http://www.guthrie-rec.coop)



## Knapp recognized for 25 years at co-op

Guthrie County REC journeyman lineman Curt Knapp received special recognition for 25 years of service to the cooperative. The announcement was made during the Annual Meeting of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) Dec. 1-2.

"It's an honor to have received this recognition from our statewide association," Curt said. "The presentation during the annual meeting was a truly rewarding experience for my years of service to Guthrie County REC." ⚡



Shown during the presentation are (from left) Chuck Soderberg, IAEC executive vice president and general manager; Curt Knapp, Guthrie County REC; and Steve Seidl, IAEC board president and District 5 board member.



**Guthrie County REC**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

# Smart choices are part of the co-op business model

BY COZY NELSEN

In today's world, we're constantly inundated with "smart" options. You probably have a smartphone, and your office might have a smart board. But just because an item or action is promoted as "smart," doesn't make it the right action.

Guthrie County REC recognizes the importance of making smart choices for our membership. Co-operatives are unique in the utility world because we're member controlled. Our board of directors consists of elected individuals who are directly impacted by the decisions of the cooperative. This connection and commitment aids us in making smart decisions regarding cooperative resources and the programs we initiate. All of the decisions made by Guthrie County REC – from replacing old lines to assigning patronage – are the smart choices we make on behalf of our members.

The cooperative strives to make smart decisions in the community too, including awarding scholarships to graduating seniors, supporting students on Youth Tour, donating

resources to local community organizations and supporting local economic development efforts.

Ensuring our linemen have appropriate safety training is one of the smartest steps we take as a cooperative.

Guthrie County REC is dedicated to providing useful resources for our members. In 2016, this included the launch of a new website with easy access

to SmartHub for online account management solutions. We continue offering energy efficiency incentives so our members can make smart energy usage decisions for their home. Finally, we use our advocacy efforts, both in Iowa and at the national level, to urge lawmakers and regulatory bodies to make decisions in the best interest of our membership.

As the world rapidly changes, including within the energy sector, Guthrie County REC is committed to utilizing innovative solutions and sound reasoning to make smart decisions for our members. ⚡

Cozy Nelsen is the CEO of Guthrie County REC.



FACT OR MYTH?

## Electricity!

**1. Birds land on wires, so they must be safe to touch.**

*Myth.* Birds don't get electrocuted when they land on wires because they don't represent a path to the ground. Electricity wants nothing more than to go to the ground and will always do so by the easiest, most-direct route. A bird on a wire doesn't give electricity anywhere to go but back to the wire, so it's easier for the current to stay right where it is in the wire and continue on its way.

**2. As long as my ladder isn't touching the line, I'm safe.**

*Maybe.* It depends on how far away your ladder and you are from the line. Electricity can jump and often does when a potential conductor like a metal ladder comes within a certain proximity. Be safe, and always keep well away – at least 10 feet – from overhead power lines. ⚡



# Linemen practice rescue techniques during safety session

Every day, Guthrie County REC linemen put their lives in each other's hands as they perform their duties. If something goes wrong, they know they can trust their fellow linemen to get them home safely. One of the reasons they have that trust is the rigorous safety training procedures our linemen practice regularly.

Time is a critical factor in these circumstances, so it is important linemen know what to do and be able to do it quickly if one of their coworkers is rendered unconscious from making contact with an energized line. To ensure the quickest response and increase the likelihood of survival, our linemen work in pairs, so there is always someone watching out for potential dangers.

The linemen must successfully demonstrate pole top rescue skills during annual testing at the cooperative with the assistance of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative's safety and loss control instructors. ⚡



**Curt Knapp (top) and Jalen Spack practiced pole top rescue, a very real scenario depicting a lineman in trouble while working up the pole.**

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win an early-warning emergency radio!

Your list of things to keep handy in case the power goes out should include a flashlight with fresh batteries, an AM/FM portable radio and a fully charged backup battery for your mobile phone or tablet. The Midland ER310 emergency radio incorporates all of these things – plus weather alerts, an SOS beacon and an electronic, ultrasonic whistle rescue dogs can hear.

Suggested retail is about \$70; go to



[www.midlandusa.com](http://www.midlandusa.com) for more details. Enter the contest by Jan. 31, 2017, at the all-new *Living with Energy in Iowa* website: [www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com). ⚡

## 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. ⚡



## 2017 rebates are available now



Be more energy efficient in your home or work life and save! Guthrie County REC offers rebates to our members for upgrading to energy efficient products. It's one more way we help our members keep their electric bills low.

Anything from making the switch to LED lightbulbs at home to large industrial equipment purchases can be eligible for these rebates. For instance, by purchasing an ENERGY STAR® replacement electric clothes washer and dryer, you can receive \$60 back per unit from your cooperative.

And remember we also offer an incentive for picking up and recycling your old, working appliances. The "Pull the Plug" program offers \$35/unit for refrigerators, \$25/unit for freezers and \$25/unit for window air conditioners.

If you're a business owner, Guthrie County REC has custom commercial incentives available to help you save on industry-specific or facility-specific applications not covered by other incentives. Engaging your cooperative during the early planning stages and completing the necessary application forms will ensure your project meets program requirements and helps estimate the financial return on your investment. Agriculture incentives are also available for many products, including ventilation and circulation fans, dairy operations, lighting, livestock equipment and more.

Be sure to check all the Guthrie County REC rebates on our website ([www.guthrie-rec.coop](http://www.guthrie-rec.coop)) – and give our office a call at 888-747-2206 to find even more ways to save. ⚡

## Pinpointing outages: How do they do that?

BY ELDEN WOLFE

It's unlikely we'll be able to make it through a winter season without some level of outage affecting our members. Rest assured, when the power goes out, so do our linemen – no matter the time or the weather conditions.

There are several things Guthrie County REC checks when power outages are reported. The better we are able to pinpoint the trouble areas, the faster and more efficiently we can respond and get the power flowing to our members as quickly as possible.

If the outage is a major one – that is, one affecting 100 people or more – we begin by checking that the highline is on in our substations. An outage here could affect a large number of people, so if that is the source of the problem, it can be corrected and we can return service to many people at once. If that is OK, we check the 3-phase lines coming out of the substations next. These are higher-voltage lines that carry electricity to our bigger load members, such as industrial businesses.



As the voltage is stepped down, we'll check single-phase lines next, which carry electricity to our individual members.

For smaller outages, our crews verify that the members affected are on the same line or check to see if the outages are scattered across many lines. If they are all on the same line, crews will be able to tell which breaker to start

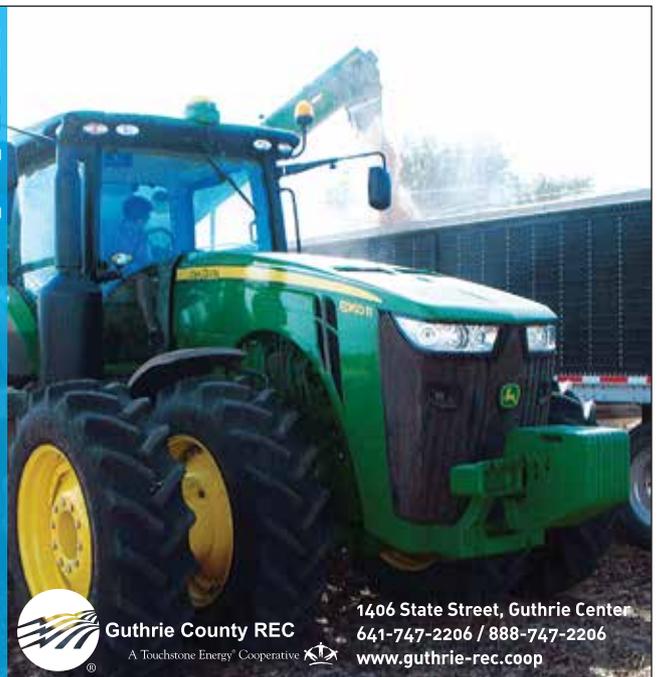
testing for the source of the outage. If they are scattered, we can use a digital system that allows us to "ping" meters to pinpoint how far back an outage is on the line (how far away it is from the starting point).

If you experience an outage, first make sure that your neighbors are experiencing one as well. Then check your breakers or fuses in your home. If there is still a problem, call our dispatch at 888-747-2206; have your account number or map location number handy. We'll do our best to restore your power as quickly as possible. ⚡

Elden Wolfe is the line superintendent for Guthrie County REC.

## GROWING AMERICA'S FUTURE

Guthrie County REC member Sonny Kolbe and his business, Rose Avenue Farms, have 1,750 acres of row crops as well as cattle. Sonny has been a member of the cooperative since 1951.



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