

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF  FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

February 2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Iowa's electric cooperatives discuss important issues at legislative reception

A WORD FROM



Garrett Thompson
Chief Executive Officer

More than 160 directors, managers, and employees from Iowa's electric cooperatives, including Franklin REC, discussed priorities with nearly 90 state legislators on Jan. 11 during the Welcome Back Legislative Reception in downtown Des Moines. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the annual

reception in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, and FUEL Iowa.

The event provided a valuable opportunity to meet with state legislators at the beginning of the 2022 legislative session to discuss issues that impact rural electric cooperatives and the communities we serve. For example, as the legislature and governor prioritize tax cuts this session, we're asking for a correction to a 2018 legislative oversight that left electric cooperatives out of a tax exemption on digital goods and services. This unfair tax burden has resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in increased taxes for rural electric cooperatives.

It was great speaking with Senator Amanda Ragan and Representative Shannon Latham to not only relay the needs of the electric cooperative,

but also hear their ideas for helping the rural communities we serve. This included daycare, housing, education, broadband, taxes, and so on, that affect our service territory. Franklin REC has a commitment to our communities, and we are always looking for ways we can help in addition to electrical distribution.

In the coming months, the Iowa General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to Iowa's rural economy. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, electric co-op directors, managers, and staff will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues. Collectively, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives provide affordable, reliable, safe, and environmentally responsible power to more than 650,000 Iowans throughout all 99 counties every day.

New apprentice lineman joins co-op

At the beginning of December 2021, Franklin REC welcomed our newest apprentice lineman, Austin Neff (pictured right), to the crew.

Austin attended Northwest Iowa Community College where he earned his diploma in the Power Line Program. After graduation, he began his lineman career as an apprentice lineman with the city of Sibley in northwest Iowa.

With a few years of line work behind him, Austin reflected on why he enjoys his career path, "My favorite part of being a lineman has to be the guys I get the privilege to work with and the camaraderie that comes with it."

Originally from Franklin County, Austin was eager to join Franklin REC's crew and knew that his safety would be a top priority for the cooperative.



Youth Tour deadline approaching

The ALL-EXPENSE PAID 2022 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. will take place June 18-24!

Eligible students must be high school sophomores or juniors.

Visit www.franklinrec.coop for more information and an application. Deadline to apply is March 1, 2022.



Five safety tips for your home workshop

Without taking proper precautions, the enjoyment of a do-it-yourself project can quickly turn into disaster.

You may have all the latest power tools, hand tools, hardware, and materials, but if you don't put safety first, you may end up with a trip to the hospital instead of new shelves, upgraded lighting in the kitchen, or a trendy shiplap wall in the bedroom.











Here are some fundamental workshop and electrical safety tips to help keep things running smoothly:


1. **Wear safety gear, glasses, and gloves:** The first rule of workshop safety is to dress appropriately. Avoid loose clothing that can become caught in power tools. Never wear dangling jewelry or scarves. Closed-toe shoes are a must, and steel-toed boots are recommended. Safety glasses are necessary 100 percent of the time. If you wear gloves, remove them before you reach for a belt sander or scroll saw to minimize the risk of them getting caught.
2. **Observe electrical safety:** Before you start a project, inspect your power tools and their cords for loose plugs, exposed wires, or worn insulation. If you use an extension cord, choose one long, heavy-duty (appropriately rated) cord. When you are done working, unplug everything from the extension cord and put it away.
3. **Keep your workshop clean:** Anything left on the floor is a tripping hazard. Anything cluttering up your worktable introduces obstacles that can become caught in a saw or drill mechanism or block your ability to move your project safely as you work.
4. **Keep tools in good condition:** Everything works better in the workshop if you have clean, sharp, and well-lubricated tools.
5. **Know your limits:** Read instructions. Look up reputable guide videos. Most importantly, recognize when you are in over your head and leave those non-DIY projects to the professionals.

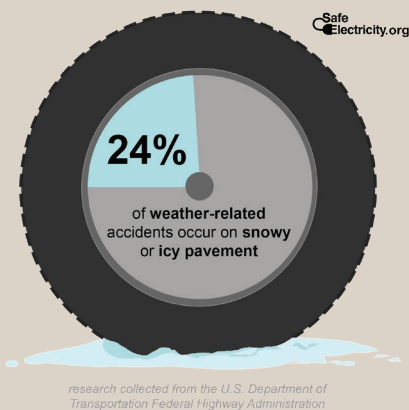
DIYers:

HOW SAFE IS YOUR WORKSHOP?

Make these tips standard practice in your workshop:

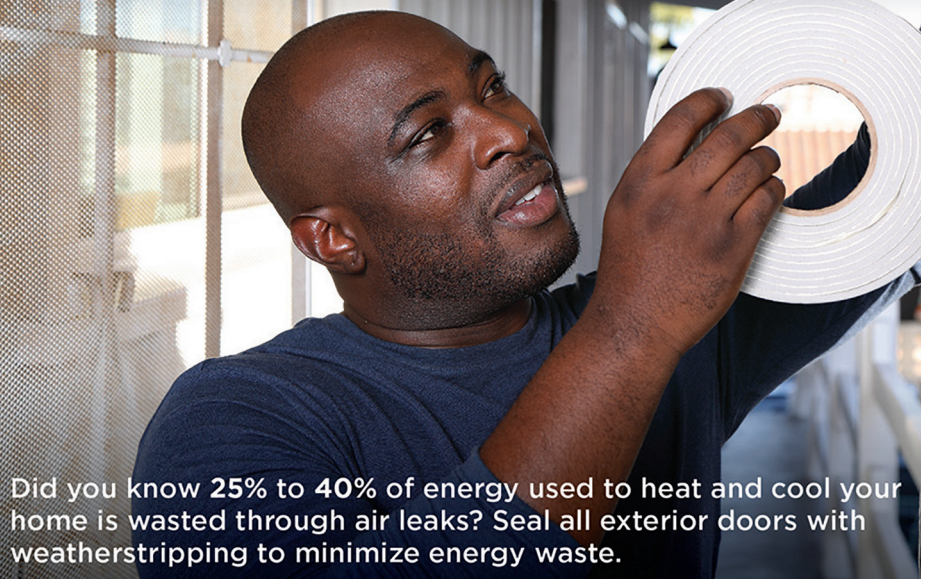
 <p>Inspect tools for damage before using them</p>	 <p>Inspect cords and plugs for signs of wear</p>
 <p>Use electrical outlets equipped with GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters)</p>	 <p>Keep floors and areas as clean and dry as possible</p>
 <p>Ensure cords are not a tripping hazard</p>	 <p>Use a clamp or vise to secure whatever you are working on</p>
 <p>Use the right tool for the job</p>	 <p>Wear proper clothing for the task; avoid loose clothing or jewelry</p>
 <p>Make sure your work area is well-lit</p>	 <p>Use heavy-duty, properly rated extension cords</p>






**MOVE OVER
SLOW DOWN**

Shut the Door on Energy Waste.



Did you know 25% to 40% of energy used to heat and cool your home is wasted through air leaks? Seal all exterior doors with weatherstripping to minimize energy waste.



February

American Heart Month

For example, a multicooker like the Instant Pot can steam and air-fry meat and vegetables without oil. A slow cooker can prepare chicken and beef dishes without added fats, too, if you let them simmer in broth, juice, or another liquid and let the meal stew all day.

An electric indoor grill draws the fat from meat into a drip pan below the grate instead of using it to cook the dish. And a blender with blades sharp enough to shred ice makes it simple to whip up smoothies for breakfast and snacks so you and your family get plenty fruits and veggies, even in the morning.

This February, redefine “romance” to include helping your partner get and stay healthy. Recommit to those New Year’s resolutions and celebrate Heart Month by protecting yours and those of your loved ones.

As soon as Christmas is over, stores and businesses begin decorating with hearts in preparation for Valentine’s Day.

But American Heart Month isn’t just about romance. It’s about keeping your heart healthy by eating nutritious food and regulating blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Even if your New Year’s resolution to eat healthier and exercise regularly is already a distant memory, February is a great time to kick-start your healthy heart routine.

The electric appliances you might already have in your kitchen can help.

Wash your washer

Staying home more often than usual means you’re probably using your appliances non-stop. That also means you need to clean them more often.

Don’t overlook the appliances that aren’t in the kitchen.

It seems like your clothes washer would be a self-cleaning machine because it’s used for cleaning. But the more you use it, the more it needs a good scrubbing to get rid of built-up detergent and ward off mold.

Here are a few pre-spring cleaning tips for the laundry room:

Top-loading washers: Built-up detergent and fabric softeners can clog the machine if you don’t remove them regularly. To do that, remove the dispensers for those liquids and scrub them with soap, water, and a non-scratch sponge. Then, fill the washer

with hot water and add a cup of bleach. Let it sit for an hour before running a full wash cycle—with an empty tub. Then, fill it again, and this time add a cup of white vinegar and run a full wash cycle again. Finally, run a wash cycle with nothing but hot water.

For your first load of laundry after you clean the tub, wash whites only in case any residual bleach is still in the washer.

Front-loading washers: Get rid of mold and grime that become trapped in the door seal. Use a toothbrush and a solution of eight or nine cups of water and one cup of bleach to scrub the seal. Then, clean the tub the same way you would sanitize a top-loading washer.



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives

The power of human connections¹

**When it comes to severe weather...
hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.**



You can begin your preparation by assembling an emergency preparedness kit, which includes items to help keep your family safe and comfortable during a power outage. Your kit should include items such as water, non-perishable food, flashlight, batteries, blankets, and a first aid kit.

Safe
Electricity.org®

Board room highlights

At their most recent meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved work orders and special equipment, totaling \$23,584.47.
- Reviewed and approved the handbook and policy changes.
- Reviewed and approved the union contract.
- Authorized payment of estate patronage requests.
- Approved write off of uncollectible debts.
- Appointed voting delegates for upcoming NRTC and NRECA meetings.
- Approved member nominating committee.
- Reviewed and approved 2022 budget.

Scholarship deadline approaching

High school seniors: Are you a volunteer in your community or church?

March 11 is the application deadline for your chance to be awarded one of three \$500 Commitment to Community scholarships. Visit us at franklinrec.coop or call us at 641-456-2557 for details.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the Franklin REC annual meeting on April 5!

Like us!

Like "Franklin REC" on Facebook and be among the first to see Franklin REC news, such as updates on major outages, energy saving tips, information on rebates, and much more.



A buyer's guide to residential generators

As Iowans, we know that rough weather happens. At Franklin REC, our goal is to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. But when a major storm hits, power may be out for an extended time. If you have considered buying a generator for extended outages, make sure you have all the facts.

First, do you want to back up your entire home or just portions? The biggest drawback to a permanently installed, whole-house generator is the cost. While the advantages are significant, it is a large expense.

Next, size the generator using an online tool. Type "generator sizing guide" into your browser. Remember that when motor loads start, they draw more power than they use while running. This "in rush" of power gets them spinning. Afterwards, their demand for electricity decreases.

The third consideration is integration. Permanent models have dedicated switching devices, while portable models require you to remove them from storage,

set them up, connect them, and start them. Here is where danger can come in to play. Improperly connected generators can back feed. As electricity flows back into the lines, the transformers boost the voltage to lethal levels. Be sure to closely follow connection instructions, and contact us if you have any questions regarding connecting your generator safely.

In addition, have a transfer switch installed by a qualified electrician. This device connects to the circuits you want to power.

Finally, let us know you have a generator. We can provide safety and connection tips, and it will enhance our line crew's safety. For more information, contact Franklin REC at 641-456-2557.

Residential Generators

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY

INSTALLATION TYPE	PRICE	OPERATION ¹	CAPACITY	LENGTH OF OPERATION ³
<i>permanent</i>	<i>expensive</i>	<i>automatic</i>	<i>whole house</i>	<i>can be indefinite</i>
<i>portable</i>	<i>more affordable</i>	<i>manual</i>	<i>typically partial ²</i>	<i>depends on fuel tank size</i>



¹ Permanent generators start upon loss of grid power. They also exercise themselves automatically.

² Frequently powered: refrigerator, pumps (well, sump, septic), furnace, some lights, stove.

³ Permanent generators use propane or natural gas, portable use gasoline. Permanent models offer significantly longer operating times.

Image of portable generator provided by SafeElectricity.org

INTouch® is published monthly for members of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative

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