

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF  FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

October 2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



## Iowa's cooperatives team up to celebrate Iowa Co-op Month

A WORD FROM



**Garrett Thompson**  
Chief Executive Officer

To celebrate National Cooperative Month in October, Iowa's electric cooperatives are partnering with the Iowa Credit Union League and the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives on an Iowa Co-op Month campaign to raise awareness about the positive impact of cooperatives in our state. Governor Kim Reynolds recently signed a proclamation declaring October as Co-op Month in Iowa.

The Iowa Co-op Month campaign works to educate Iowans about the "co-operative advantage" through a landing page at [www.IowaCooperatives.com](http://www.IowaCooperatives.com), media outreach, and coordinated social media posts. Here are some co-op facts you might not know:

1. Nearly one in two Iowans is a

member of a cooperative, including credit unions, electric distributions co-ops, and ag services co-ops.

- If all of Iowa's 12,000 cooperative employees were grouped together, they would be one of the top 10 largest employers in the state. Co-ops offer stable careers with top-tier benefits in communities of all sizes.
- Iowa's locally owned cooperatives generate more than \$60 million in yearly property taxes, which directly benefit Iowa communities, counties, local schools, and hospitals.

We're proud of our cooperative heritage of being locally owned and governed with a mission to improve quality of life for our member-owners. At Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative, we are democratically controlled by our members through an elected board of directors who make long-term decisions for the cooperative. All co-ops are guided by seven cooperative principles, which is a key reason why electric cooperatives operate differently from other electric utilities; we always put the needs of our members first.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to watch new videos this month celebrating the cooperative difference featuring Iowans just like you. Learn more about the cooperative advantage at [www.IowaCooperatives.com](http://www.IowaCooperatives.com).



### BOARD ROOM highlights

At their August meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved work orders and special equipment capitalization totaling \$195,995.23
- Approved CFC voting delegate
- Approved Co-Bank Sharing Success match
- Approved new facility charges
- Approved employee benefit plans
- Established a new estate patronage retirement rate

### CO-OPS ARE GUIDED BY 7 PRINCIPLES

- |                             |                           |                                 |                         |                                    |                                |                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                           | 2                         | 3                               | 4                       | 5                                  | 6                              | 7                     |
| Voluntary & Open Membership | Democratic Member Control | Members' Economic Participation | Autonomy & Independence | Education, Training, & Information | Cooperation Among Cooperatives | Concern for Community |



# What makes your electric utility special

Your electricity comes from a utility that follows a “cooperative” business model. Like a food co-op or a housing cooperative, your electric cooperative is guided by seven principles that non-cooperative utilities don’t follow.

The three with the most impact on consumers are:

1. Electric cooperatives consider their consumers to be “members.” The principle of “open and voluntary membership” means you are a member, not just a customer.
2. All of the people on your electric cooperative’s board of directors are consumer-members like you. The principle of “democratic member control” means that you may run for a seat on the board; you may vote for which board candidates may be on the board; and you may be asked to vote on other important utility matters. Every household/business gets a vote.
3. By paying your electric bill every month, you contribute to the financial success of the cooperative. Under the principle of “members’ economic participation,” if the cooperative collects more revenue than it needs to operate and serve its members, you may get a sort of refund—called a capital credit, a dividend, or patronage.

The remaining four principles are “autonomy and independence,” which makes sure the utility is democratically controlled; “education, training, and information” means your utility helps everyone understand the benefits of a cooperative; “cooperation among cooperatives” encourages your utility to help nearby electric cooperatives during storms and other emergencies; and “concern with community” is a principle that involves your utility in economic development and volunteerism that help members and their communities.



## Remodeling isn’t just about looking good

If you’re planning to do some home remodeling, it’s a good idea to think beyond new kitchen countertops and bathroom tile. Consider:

- Replacing an older refrigerator, dishwasher, washer/dryer, or other major appliance with a model that is more energy efficient. Energy Star appliances use between 10 and 50 percent less energy than other models.
- Swapping out older, single-pane windows for double-pane windows with low-E, argon-filled glass will keep heat out of your home during the summer and keep it in during the winter. Some windows also have Energy Star approval.
- If your furnace is on its last legs, consult with an expert before replacing it with something similar. One of the most important features for energy efficiency in a furnace is its size.
- When you replace light fixtures, choose LED lighting. Over the years, lighting manufacturers have added different styles. They’re long-lasting, energy efficient, hard to break, and cool to the touch.

**REMEMBER:** Your cooperative has rebates for many qualifying, efficient updates to your home. Be sure to contact us or visit our website for more information!

**Focused on YOU.**

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because we’re a co-op, we’re able to adapt to our community’s unique needs. That’s the power of co-op membership.

**OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH**

### Our Touchstone Energy Values



Touchstone Energy®

**Integrity | Accountability | Innovation |  
Commitment to Community | Teamwork**

# It's only October: Should you turn on the heat?

It's tempting to declare the first downright chilly evening of the autumn the official first day of heating season. Before you turn the heat on at home, however, consider:

- **Bundling up in layers** of clothing, a sweater, or a cozy throw while you're watching TV in the evenings.
- **Throwing a couple of extra blankets on each bed** to keep everyone toasty warm overnight.
- **Running ceiling fans** in the bedrooms. If you reverse the spin of the blades to clockwise, they will push warm air—which rises—back down into your room.
- **Opening window coverings** on sunny days to let the sun's

warmth into your rooms. The fabric on furniture and carpets will absorb and retain some of the heat into the evenings. Close the window coverings once the sun goes down, though, so cool air can't get into the house.

- **Gathering everyone into a single room** for some family fun and running a space heater in that room only.
- **Wearing socks or shoes** indoors. Keeping your feet warm will help your whole body feel warmer.
- **Doing household chores after dark.** The movement involved with the work will keep you warm. And running your dish-



washer, washing machine, and clothes dryer after dark will add a bit of heat to the air.

- **Resisting the temptation to warm up your home by lighting a fire** in your wood-burning fireplace. Most of the heat it produces goes up the chimney, along with any warm air that's already in the house.

Don't turn on your heater until you really need it this fall. Instead, conserve some energy by keeping your family warm in other ways.



## HALLOWEEN COSTUME SAFETY

- Wear flame-resistant costumes.
- Wear bright, reflective costumes or add strips of reflective tape.
- Do not wear decorative (colored) contact lenses unless you have seen an eye care professional for a proper fitting and instructions.
- Wear makeup and hats rather than costume masks that can obscure or obstruct your vision.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

## RECare MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

Your rural electric cooperative continues to extend a helping hand to members in need. In response to actions by the Iowa General Assembly, your REC has established RECare, a program of members helping members.

RECare will provide funds to be distributed by local community action agencies to help pay winter heating bills and to assist in weatherization of homes of low-income consumers.

You may make a one-time contribution or a monthly pledge that will be automatically added onto your electric bill. Even a dollar a month pledge will help others. **You have the power to make a difference.**

### RECare CONSUMER AUTHORIZATION FORM

- I will contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month. I understand this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill.
- I will make a one-time contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to RECare. My check is enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_



Return to your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Pastor G. Kim Wills (left) and Diane Wills (right), representing the West Fork Food Pantry, Sheffield, accept Franklin REC and CoBank donation checks from Garrett Thompson, Franklin REC CEO.

## Cooperative Principal #7: Concern for Community

In September, Franklin REC lived out the seventh cooperative principal when we donated \$2,500 to the West Fork Food Pantry in Sheffield to assist in the purchase of a new 36 kW generator. This generator will help power the food pantry, including their freezers, should they experience a power outage.

A portion of this donation was made possible through CoBank, an organization working to provide credit to the U.S. rural economy through loans, leases, and other financial services. Franklin REC applied for CoBank's Sharing Success program. Through the program, established in 2012, tens of millions of dollars have been donated to numerous organizations.

Franklin REC is proud to have partnered with CoBank to present this donation to the West Fork Food Pantry. We hope they never have to use it, but mother nature may have other plans!

## First Class Lineman Al Fink retiring: "It's been an honor"



For more than 33 years First-Class Lineman/Crew Chief Al Fink has been powering Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) member's lives. In June of 1989, Al accepted an apprentice lineman position at Franklin REC, beginning his unwavering tenure with the cooperative. On Oct. 31, Al will be removing his climbing belt and hanging up his hard hat one final time to launch his new journey, retirement.

As a first-class lineman/crew chief, Al's job has encompassed many tasks including supervising line builds, installing new services, restoring outages, and maintaining power to our members. For Al, the most important task is being a reliable mentor to the younger linemen and teaching the apprentice linemen safety when on the job site. Al's amiable relationship with the line crew brings him comfort as his retirement date nears.

Through the years, Al has experienced extensive changes to the electrical utility industry and technological advancements the cooperative has implemented. Al's most admired improvement to line work has been the cordless tools, making everything quick and easy.

Al plans to spend his retirement enjoying time with his wife, Janelle, and his family as well as work on his acreage. When asked what he would like our members to know, Al's response was "It's been an honor to help keep the lights on. I'm leaving knowing you are in good hands with our current line crew." All of us at Franklin REC would like to thank Al for his leadership; loyalty; and, most importantly, helping to keep the lights on for the last 33 years.

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