

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF  FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

September 2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



A WORD FROM



**Garrett Thompson**  
Chief Executive Officer

## History of cooperatives

market conditions in the 1840s was the emergence of mass production practices and the large industrial movement. The market was flooded by less expensive and poorly made products, thus squeezing out entrepreneurs who were producing high quality goods. In one example, a large tea company began adding grass clippings to its tea to increase profits at the expense of a quality product.

An even more grotesque change in the marketplace included poor labor practices and conditions for workers within the large industries. Employees lost control of their working conditions just so quotas could be met.

In *Cooperatives and Community Development: Economics in Social Perspective*, Brett Fairbairn and his coauthors describe the situation: “The monotony and cruelty are hardest on the children; they work fourteen-, even sixteen-hour days, standing, fetching, holding, with hardly a break. It is a long time. The speed of the machinery is calculated and they [the masters] know how much work it will do; and unless [the children] are driven and flogged up, they cannot get the quantity of work from them. The average life expectancy of an urban laborer is seventeen years.”

Small companies were not on board with the poor working conditions for their workers and were not willing to resort to those terrible techniques. That coupled with the influx of poor products into the marketplace lead to the creation of cooperatives. The owners and workers needed to form an organization that created the security of a larger organization

while still maintaining each business’s autonomy.

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) was largely credited with the global rise of cooperatives. In 1895 the ICA was formed by two men, E.V. Neale and Edward Owen Greening. According to Johnston Birchall in *The Internal Cooperative Movement* these two men wanted to “end the present deplorable warfare between capital and labor and to organize industrial peace, based on co-partnership of the worker ... [and to] promote the formation of central institutions for helping people to establish and maintain self-governing workshops.”

Over the last 125 years, the ICA has flourished in Europe, Canada, and in some parts of Africa. In the United States, several cooperative business models, primarily centered around agriculture, also closely adhere to the ICA’s original founding principles. The ICA is often recognized as a leader for cooperatives in terms of promoting the values of cooperative organization.

To those 28 men of Rochdale, England, I would like to say thank you. Thank you for laying the groundwork for the seven cooperative principles we have today: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members’ Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training, and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

And thank you, to our members, who give Franklin REC the opportunity to deliver reliable and safe energy for all your daily needs!

**I**s there anyone else who enjoys the HISTORY channel or who loved their history classes in school? History to me sounds rather boring upfront, but once the facts and stories start coming, I can’t get enough of it. Which is what prompted me to look deeper into the history of cooperatives and those we must thank for the beautiful business model we have today.

Before we go any farther, let’s define “cooperative.” According to Oxford Languages (via Google) there are two definitions: 1. “(adjective) involving mutual assistance in working toward a common goal,” 2. “(noun) a farm, business, or other organization which is owned and run jointly by its members, who share the profits or benefits.”

Most scholars commonly believe the first cooperative was established by the Rochdale pioneers of England in 1844. The group was comprised of 28 men who were weavers and skilled workers in other trades. Due to the poor market conditions, these men came together and created business principles to guide their work and to establish a shop in which to sell their goods.

One of the reasons for the poor

## Prepare for fall energy surge

Even if the days of remote school are behind you and the kids are leaving the house every morning, your energy bills could still surge.

If your family wakes up earlier than the sun comes up, the lights go on. Students are using the computer and printer more for homework assignments. Shorter days mean the lights go on earlier in the evening.

Plan for what could be a bump in energy use by teaching your children how to conserve electricity and to create less waste overall. A few tips:

- Teach your children how to put the computer into sleep mode when they are finished using it, even if they plan on returning later. Electronics in sleep mode use about 80 percent less electricity than when operating at full power.
- Buying new computer equipment this year? Computers with an EnergyStar rating use 70 percent less electricity overall, while EnergyStar monitors draw 90 percent less.
- Desk lamps and other concentrated lighting create a productive work environment without wasting excess light. Replace halogen or incandescent bulbs desk lamps with LED bulbs.
- Unplug electronics when not in use or they have finished charging.
- Turn off the lights when no one is in the room.
- Consider a programmable thermostat that will adjust to your lifestyle.
- Use your crockpot, air fryer, or Instant Pot for meals.
- If possible, program your dishwasher to run overnight rather than after supper when energy use is generally higher.

## Considering insulating your home?

Making sure your home is properly insulated can go a long way toward making your home more energy efficient and comfortable.

Before you attempt to replace insulation, however, there are some tasks of the job to consider, including location and your comfort level with starting and completing the job correctly. If you will be installing batt insulation, check to see if it is labeled with an R-value or find an online value chart by zone.

Consider the following before purchasing insulation.

Should I do the job myself?

Whether you take it on depends on several factors, according to the Insulation Institute, including:

- If the space you want to insulate is open and accessible, such as an attic or basement.
- The type of material you want to use. Batts or rolls are often installed by homeowners.
- Your skills and comfort level.
- Any safety issues that might make the job more suitable for a professional.
- How much time will be needed to address air leaks.

Can I complete it safely?

A professional should be called in to correct problems and complete the job if you find these conditions or issues, according to the institute:

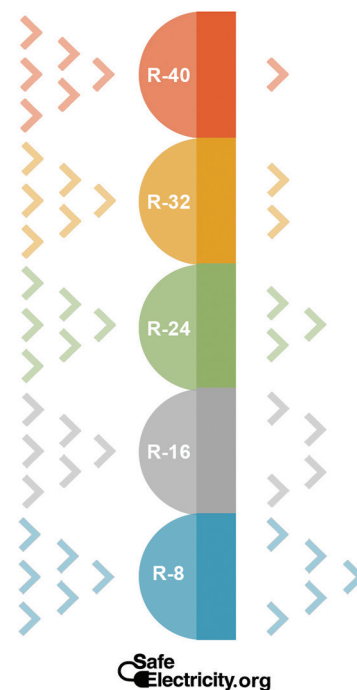
- Wet or damp insulation.
- Moldy or rotted attic rafters or floor joists.
- Vents that exhaust moist air directly in the attic space instead of outdoors.
- A history of ice dams in the winter.
- Little or no attic ventilation.
- Knob-and-tube wiring (homes pre-1930).
- Unsealed and uninsulated recessed (“can”) lights (special care must be taken when insulating around these).
- Possible presence of asbestos (see next tip).

What is the age of my home?

If your home was built around 1975 or earlier, the insulation may be vermiculite, which can contain asbestos. It is a lightweight, pea-sized, flaky gray material, according to the institute. If you suspect you have this type of insulation, do not disturb it and hire a professional to test it. Your local health department might be able to help locate a reputable testing company. If asbestos is found, the insulation will need to be removed by a professional.

For more tips on efficiency and electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

**the higher the R-value, the more efficient the insulation**



# Keep food safe when the power goes out By Abby Berry

We understand power outages of any length can be frustrating, especially when your fridge is stocked.

Here are a few food safety tips for before, during and after a power outage.

## Before an outage

Keep an emergency supply kit on hand, and be sure to include nonperishable food items. If you have advance warning that a long outage is possible, fill a cooler with ice for your refrigerated items.

## During an outage

Do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless absolutely necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for about 24 hours and a full freezer for about 48 hours. If it looks like the power outage will last longer than four hours, move your important perishable items to an ice-filled cooler.

## After an outage

If refrigerated foods have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40 degrees for more than two hours, the American Red Cross recommends discarding the items—also if foods have an unusual color, odor, or texture.

There are a few items that are safe to consume after a two-hour exposure to 40+ degrees:

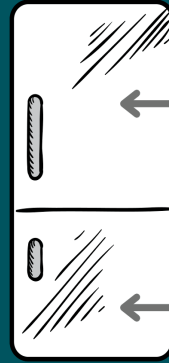
- hard cheeses that are properly wrapped
- butter or margarine that is properly wrapped
- taco, barbecue, and soy sauces
- peanut butter, jelly, mustard, ketchup, and relish

After an outage, always smell and inspect foods before consuming and remember: when in doubt, throw it out.

To learn more about food safety after an emergency, visit [www.ready.gov/food](http://www.ready.gov/food).

## Keep Food Safe During and After a Power Outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.



Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

24 OR 48

Food in a **half-full** freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a **full** freezer will last 48 hours.

## Food Safety Tips

1. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
2. Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
3. Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source (like a cooler with ice).

When in doubt, throw it out!



Failure to notice overhead power lines  
could be a **deadly oversight**.



## Is it OK to switch between a/c, heat during the fall?

Warm late summer and early fall days can turn chilly once the sun goes down.

If it's hot enough during the day for the air conditioner and cool enough at night for the heat, here are a few tips for a good transition:

- Before you turn off your a/c, listen for it to complete its cycle.
- Wait five minutes after you turn the a/c off before you switch on the heat.
- Avoid drastic thermostat changes to prevent your heating system from overworking.

## Shine the Light nominee recognized

Pastor G. Kim Wills, Hampton, has led Zion St. John Lutheran Church, Sheffield, since the spring of 2009. His reach, however, has extended beyond his parishioners.

Pastor Wills and his wife Diane were the driving force behind the creation of The West Fork Food Pantry. Approximately six years ago, the Wills heard a public service announcement on the radio about food insecurity in their area. After asking area churches to participate, a once-a-month food distribution and mobile food pantry were established.

Serving as chair of the food pantry board from the beginning, "his leadership, commitment, and strong faith toward the mission of the food pantry established lasting relationships with other church volunteers and community members to make this food pantry an integral asset to the West Fork school district," stated Allen Nickerson, Clear Lake, who nominated Pastor Wills for the Shine the Light contest.

With the guidance of Pastor Wills, the pantry now has a permanent site in a former restaurant. In May of 2021, the building was purchased by the food pantry with a loan of \$85,000. The loan has since been paid off and the mortgage burned. Those involved have now set their sights on a generator and walk-in freezer for the pantry. "Because of his leadership the pantry will be a community asset for years to come," Nickerson said.

In addition, Pastor Wills is a member of the Lions' Club, and he and Diane have fostered leader dogs for the blind for over 10 years. Congratulations, Pastor Wills, on your nomination and thank you for your dedication.



### SPARKS of news

#### Board room highlights

At their July meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved work orders and special equipment capitalization totaling \$28,683.66
- Approved 10-year financial forecast
- Approved Construction Work Plan for 2022-2025
- Approved renewal of agreement with FCDA for 2023
- Approved changes to tariff as it applies to idle services
- Approved patronage retirements of the presented estates

## High school students: Are you interested in leadership?

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities, and the cooperative business model with a three-part webinar series in October. The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is open to any high school student in the Franklin REC service area, and they are invited to register at [www.iowayouthtour.com](http://www.iowayouthtour.com) by Oct. 1, 2022.

"This program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, leadership, or government," remarked Garrett Thompson, CEO of Franklin REC. "We want to raise students' awareness of how local electric co-ops power people's lives and empower communities. We also want to talk about exciting cooperative career paths available in smaller communities."

Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- Thursday, Oct. 6, 7:00 p.m. – Cooperative Business Model
- Tuesday, Oct. 18, 7:00 p.m. – Rural Iowa Advocacy
- Thursday, Oct. 27, 7:00 p.m. – Civic Involvement and Leadership

At the end of each live session, one lucky attendee will be selected at random to **win a pair of Apple AirPods**. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random **drawing for two \$1,000 college scholarships**. All students who register online by Oct. 1 will receive a special box of co-op swag in the mail.

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our lineup of speakers and presenters, including former Iowa Youth Tour students who pursued their passion for government service and leadership after attending the weeklong trip to Washington, D.C. The 2023 Youth Tour is slated for June 17-23.

Learn more at [www.iowayouthtour.com](http://www.iowayouthtour.com). Contact us at 641-456-2557 if you are interested in participating.

**WANTED:**  
Rural Iowa high school students who have a passion for leadership

Attend our webinar series in October for a chance to win Apple AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship! Learn more at [iowayouthtour.com](http://iowayouthtour.com)

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