

InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF  FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

September 2021

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



A WORD FROM



Garrett Thompson
Chief Executive Officer

Managing physical threats to grid reliability

about being served by an electric cooperative is that you also have an ownership stake in the way the cooperative operates. Electric cooperatives know our communities. We live and work in the neighborhoods and towns we serve. You know many of Franklin REC's board members and employees. And, in turn, our board members and employees are a part of the organizations to which you belong.

We know that emergencies can happen at any time, and these relationships are important in urgently responding to unplanned events or in preparing for more predictable events, including winter storms or summer flooding. For example, when the derecho hit in August of last year, Iowa's electric cooperatives responded. That's because we're part of one large cooperative community and cooperation among cooperatives is an essential principle of providing reliable electric service.

2. Planning, preparing, and practicing.

There is a well-known saying that it's not *if* a crisis will occur, but *when* it will occur.

We test our disaster and business continuity plans regularly and pride ourselves on being prepared. Our plans not only focus on how to prevent threats, but also how to respond and recover in the event of an incident. Business activities,

such as vegetation management or pole inspections, may seem routine; however, they are strategically performed to proactively reduce threats. Trees that are too close to power lines can cause major damage during a storm and may result in a lengthy outage.

3. Coordinating with stakeholders.

Franklin REC places a high importance on partnerships with fellow cooperatives, our state and national electric cooperative associations, industry partners, and government agencies to mitigate the potential impacts of all types of threats to our system. Electric cooperatives work closely with the rest of the electric industry, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Energy, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on matters of critical infrastructure protection – including sharing needed information about potential threats and working together to avoid disruptions to the extent possible.

Although the grid is incredibly resilient and can withstand many physical impacts, it's also a dynamic infrastructure that requires constant attention. We are vigilant in ensuring we protect the grid from physical and cyber threats in order to power your lives!

While the threat of cybersecurity attacks on the electric grid gets a lot of attention these days, physical damage from storms or critters is much more likely to disrupt power.

There are many physical threats to our power delivery system that your cooperative works hard to manage on a daily basis. From weather events (such as ice storms, tornadoes, and flooding) to criminal activity (including copper theft and shooting at a substation), it takes proactive commitment to consistently deliver reliable service. Even something as small as a squirrel can damage infrastructure and cause outages.

If the lights do go out, we're ready to restore power as quickly and as safely as possible. Here are three key ways that we work to keep your power as reliable as possible:

1. Being part of the community.

One of the most valuable things

Ways you can help with grid reliability

Report suspicious activity

We ask our members to be mindful of unusual situations and to immediately report them to us or local authorities. If you see something that doesn't seem right, we ask you to say something so that it can be investigated.

Check for damage

If you have tree branches or other vegetation growing too closely to power lines or utility poles, contact us so we can keep our lines clear to provide the most reliable service. If you come across damaged poles or equipment, please call us to report it.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Why do we advertise?

Your electric cooperative's unique relationship with its members goes beyond the mere flip of a light switch and can be traced back to decades of serving consumers with unmatched integrity and accountability.

As a Touchstone Energy cooperative, we are part of a national alliance of more than 700 local, member-owned electric co-ops that pool together to advertise and communicate at a fraction of the cost that it would be if each co-op did them independently.

We are your local electric cooperative that operates to efficiently deliver reliable and safe energy to everyone we serve. Whether through radio, newsprint, television, or newsletters, it is our responsibility to inform the public and provide answers about the services we offer.

- **PUBLIC SAFETY** – How is power restored? How can I protect my family during a severe storm? What should I teach my kids about electrical safety? Why should I “look up and live” around power lines?
- **EDUCATION** – What is clean energy? Is solar energy right for me? What scholarships and programs are available for my family? Why should I attend my co-op's annual meeting? How do I choose a heating and cooling system? What is budget billing and how can it help me?
- **ENERGY EFFICIENCY** – How can I reduce my energy use and save money? What rebates and incentives are available? What is load management? Can my electric co-op give me more control over how I use energy?
- **FEDERAL AND STATE MANDATES** – How do I file a complaint? What are the requirements for a grain bin? If I cannot pay my bill, is help available? Is my co-op helping low-income families?

Advertising can help answer your questions

What should I teach my children about electrical safety?

Is solar energy right for me?

How can I reduce my energy use?

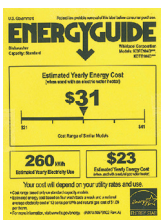
If I cannot pay my bill, is help available?



Rebates for appliances

Contact us for information on our rebates for new, ENERGY STAR rated appliances installed at members' locations:

- Clothes dryer - \$50
- Clothes washer - \$50
- Dishwasher - \$25
- Freezer - \$25
- Refrigerator - \$25



Check the Energy Guide for the Energy Star label on the bottom right.

Inspect your outdoor home maintenance electrical equipment



It's leaf-blowing season. Is your blower in good shape?

Don't use it until you find out. Same goes for your lawn mower, shrub trimmers, and winter equipment like the snowblower.

As you dust off equipment that's been in storage all summer, check for:

- *Worn parts and power cords.* If you find them, don't try to eke one final season out of the tool. Have the parts repaired or replaced.
- *Caked-on dirt or sap on blades.* A blast of water from your garden hose should loosen and remove it. A stiff-bristled brush will help, too.
- *Rust.* That might take more elbow grease and some steel wool to remove.
- *Splintered wood on handles and shafts.* A light sanding can remove splinters. Apply boiled linseed oil to prevent the handles from drying out.

Once you finish your fall chores, clean the tools so they'll be in good shape next year. And store them in a dry, clean place. The electrical parts of tools that get wet while in storage can corrode.

Tips for a Safe Harvest By Abby Berry

Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous—even deadly—when farming near electrical equipment.

Every year, we see collisions where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- **Maintain a 10-foot clearance** around all utility equipment in all directions.
- **Use a spotter** and deployed flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.
- If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, **contact 9-1-1 immediately and remain inside the vehicle** until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it), and hop away to safety.
- **Consider equipment and cargo extensions** of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

September 19-25 is National Farm Health and Safety Week but practicing safety on the farm year-round yields positive results. We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, we hope you'll remember these safety tips.



Let's beat the peak together By Abby Berry

You know how to make smart energy choices that help you save money. But did you know that when you use electricity can be just as important as how much you use?



Throughout the day, energy use fluctuates based on consumer demand. Typically, most households use larger amounts of electricity in the morning when most people are getting ready for their day, and in the evenings when people return from work, cook dinner, wash clothes and watch television.

These times are called "peak" hours. Your electric cooperative's cost to provide power is higher during these times because of the additional demand for electricity.

By shifting some of your energy use to hours when demand is lower, also known as off-peak hours, you can save money on your energy bills and help keep rates lower for our community.

Here are a few easy ways you can shift energy use to off-peak hours:

- Adjust your thermostat. During summer months, raise the thermostat a few degrees during peak hours.
- Wash full loads of clothes in cold water during off-peak hours.
- Run the dishwasher right before you go to bed, or air-dry dishes by opening the dishwasher instead of using the heated dry cycle.
- Turn off lights and electronics when not in use. (Try to make this a daily habit, whether during peak or off-peak hours.)

We're here to help. Contact us with questions about your energy bill or for additional energy-saving tips.



SMALL SAVINGS
LEAD TO BIG ONES

At your electric co-op, we help you find more ways to save energy, save money and help the environment. So small savings today lead to big savings tomorrow.

High school students: You could win AirPods!

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to offer a new 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 our service area - just register online at www.IowaYouthTour.com.

Then, attend the webinars from a computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- Tuesday, Oct. 5, 7:00 p.m. – Cooperative Business Model
- Thursday, Oct. 14, 7:00 p.m. – Rural Iowa Advocacy
- Tuesday, Oct. 26, 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 a \$1,000 college scholarship!**

Learn more at www.IowaYouthTour.com or contact us at 641-456-2557.



SPARKS of news

Board room highlights - July & August

- Approved work orders and special equipment
- Reviewed financial reports
- West Fork Food Pantry donation
- Appointed voting delegates
- Reviewed Basin Electric Power Cooperative load forecast
- Discussed meter exchange company for updating the metering system
- Reviewed and discussed current after-hours service provider

Put DIY projects to work for you

DIY projects can add up, but in a good way. According to Energy.gov, sealing uncontrolled air leaks can save from \$83 to \$166 a year. Weather stripping double-hung windows can save \$42 to \$86 annually. And insulating your electric water heater tank can save \$20 to \$45 a year. Additional easy-to-do projects or steps that could save you money include:

- **Turning down your hot water heater to 120°F.**

Reducing the temperature setting can slow mineral buildup and corrosion in your hot water heater and pipes, according to Energy.gov.

- **Insulating your hot water pipes** to help reduce heat loss and raise your water's temperature.
- **Insulating and reducing air leaks** in floors over garages.
- **Adding more attic insulation** if you don't have enough. Energy.gov and Energystar.gov publish maps outlining recommended R-values.
- **Applying frosted contact paper** to the windows in or by your front door. Not only will you increase privacy, but you will decrease heat transfer.
- **Installing a programmable thermostat or a smart thermostat.** Either improvement can make a difference on your energy bill, especially if you select a higher temperature in the summer and lower temperature in the winter when you won't be there.

For more information and energy-saving DIY ideas, contact us at 641-456-2557.



Congratulations!

Franklin REC is excited to announce the addition of a baby boy to the family of Tom Demro (lineman) and his wife, Tanya. Christopher Paul was born on July 6. Christopher's older brothers are Cooper, Camden, and Corbin.

Welcome to the Franklin REC family, Christopher!

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