

WITH MEMBERS OF  FRANKLIN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



U.S. Senator Charles Grassley speaks with Franklin REC employees during his annual 99-county tour of Iowa.



Senator Grassley listens to a question from FREC board president Gordon Greimann.

U.S. Senator Charles Grassley visits Franklin REC

Every year since 1981, U.S. Senator Charles Grassley has visited each of Iowa's 99 counties. In August, Franklin REC was proud to host Grassley's 2020 stop in Franklin County.

Fran Buckel, interim general manager, gave opening remarks and introduced Grassley to the crowd of approximately 30 people. Due to the pandemic, the event was open only to REC board members and employees and the local media.

Grassley began his visit by stating that most of the time his county visits take place at city halls but with the virus, "I'm going anywhere I am invited." He then asked for questions saying, "There isn't such things as a stupid

question or inappropriate question."

Katie LaBree, Franklin REC economic development director, asked him if it was possible to receive more mandatory funding for the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. Grassley stated that the farm bill, through which the REDLG is funded, is a five-year bill. "If you're getting ready for the next farm bill, a year and a half before, bring that up to us," he said. He encouraged writing letters to the Appropriations Committee, but stated that at this time, the government cannot go above the current level without it being raised.

Franklin REC board president Gordon Greimann asked Grassley what he saw for ethanol in the future, to which

Grassley said he is hoping the tax credit to producers continues and that the Renewable Fuel Standard is maintained. However, he said, "We've got to get ready for the fact that we might be in trouble, so it will be a discussion."

When asked about the future of wind and renewable energy strategies, Grassley said, "I feel so good about it. The market place is going to direct it from here on out." He also reminded the crowd of the five-year phase out of the tax credit and stated that he does not think it will be extended.

Grassley's visit lasted approximately one hour, at the close of which he stated, "I love what I'm doing. Through government you can make a change."

Franklin REC welcomes new employee

Franklin REC is pleased to announce that Hunter Sutter has joined us as a 1,000-hour employee. He is a graduate of the powerline program at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon. Hunter grew up in Latimer and graduated from Hampton-Dumont High School. In his free time, he enjoys hunting. Welcome to Franklin REC, Hunter!



Power On: October is National Co-op Month

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.”

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide safe, reliable energy to you, our members. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our local communities—and this mission has never been more critical than during the pandemic.

Over the past several months, we’ve all been challenged to operate differently, and your electric cooperative has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

As an essential service, and to en-

sure reliability of your power supply, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. We limited and modified meetings and gatherings to allow for safe separation.

We adjusted our in-person service calls to ensure the health and safety of our employees and our valued members.

For our members impacted by COVID-19 who needed help with their electric bills, we waived late fees and worked with those members needing special payment arrangements.

Then. Now. Always.
We're proud to power your life.
October is National Co-op Month.



#PowerOn

While we miss visiting with you in person, we explain all of these efforts to show how much we care about this community—because we live here, too.

Your electric cooperative was built by the community to serve the community, and that’s what we’ll continue to do—Power On.

Increasing your brain power: Fun energy facts

Although Americans account for 4.25 percent of the world’s population, we use at least 17 percent of the world’s energy. Here are some other energy facts:

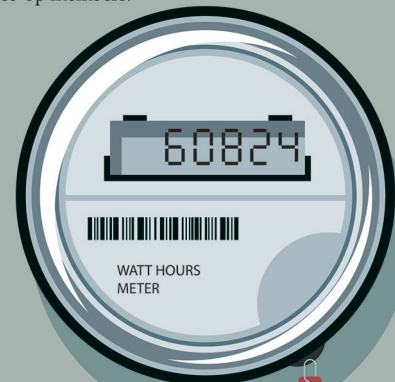
- Heating and cooling accounts for about half of the average utility bill.
- Find (and fix) sources of air leaks in your home and replace inefficient windows, especially single-paned windows.
- Lighting accounts for approximately 10 percent of home utility bills. Like your parents always said, don’t light an empty room. Also, put high-efficiency (LED) light bulbs to work for you.
- The typical U.S. family spends \$2,200 or more on home utility bills each year.
- If you have an electric or gas furnace, using a smart or programmable thermostat to adjust your thermostat 10 degrees for 8 hours a day could lower your heating and cooling costs by 10 percent per year. (Don’t heat and cool an empty house.)
- Despite previously being touted as energy saving, closing vents in unused rooms can put a strain on your HVAC system, which typically uses more energy, not less.

For more information on ways to save energy in your home, contact us today.



DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.



- ⊘ Never break a meter seal.
- ⊘ Never open a meter base.
- ⊘ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.



Make your decorations the only scary thing this Halloween

Halloween has become a time to light up electric-powered decorations and create a yard that is scare-worthy to any trick-or-treater that may stop by. But beware of the hidden electrical dangers that could spoil your holiday.



Follow these tips to make your Halloween safe and fun:

- Carefully check your decorations for cracking, fraying, or bare wires.
- Replace any damaged decorations.
- Make sure all electrical outdoor products are Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approved and marked for outdoor use.
- Follow the care and instructions that accompany your decorations.
- Don't overload extension cords or allow them to run through water.
- Plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into outlets protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If your outlets don't have them, either contact a qualified electrician to install them or use portable GFCIs.
- Keep electrical cords out of walkways to avoid tripping hazards.
- Turn off all electrical decorations and lights before leaving home or going to sleep. Consider using a timer.
- When decorating outside, always look up and check that you and any equipment, such as ladders, are at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

Avoid any tricks this Halloween by safely enjoying the holiday.

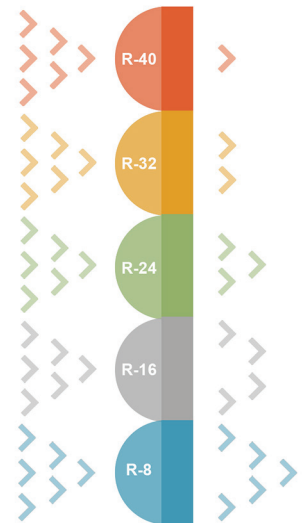
Insulation rebates available

As winter approaches, consider insulating and weatherizing your home to keep in the heat and help lower your power bills.

We have generous rebates available to add to your savings.

Call us today for information!

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



SafeElectricity.org

Helping members in need this winter

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative has always extended a helping hand to those needing it. 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 monthly pledge that will be automatically added onto your electric bill—even just a dollar a month—or a one-time contribution to help others.



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 _____



Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperatives

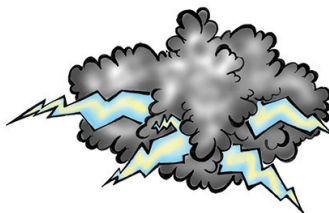
Return to your local Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative



Wouldn't it be nice to not have to think about mailing your Franklin REC payment? During the month of October, we will be holding an automatic bill payment promotion for those members currently not taking advantage of the option. As a program participant, your Franklin REC payment will be automatically deducted from your bank account each month.

We will be sending out more information, and be sure to watch our Facebook page, too.

Know what to do if you have a power outage



1. Check your fuses or circuit breakers to rule out problems with electricity inside your home. Reset breakers or replace fuses if needed. It is the member's responsibility to repair any wires or equipment located between the meter pole and their home, buildings, and/or equipment.
2. Weather-permitting, check the faceplate of your meter. **If there are no numbers on the faceplate**, you do not have power to your meter. Please call us immediately so that we can begin to restore your power. **If there are numbers on the faceplate**, there is power to your meter. You will need to call an electrician to investigate, as the issue is on your side of the meter.

What is a facility charge?

A facility charge is a monthly fee that Franklin REC members pay to help cover the cost of bringing electricity to their location. This includes the costs of meters, wires, poles, transformers, distribution and generation capacity, and other items needed to provide electricity on demand—regardless of how many kilowatt-hours are used.



When the cooperative conducts a rate study, a facility charge is established for each rate, and all members within the rate pay the same amount.

Franklin REC requests your help

In the coming weeks, Franklin REC will conduct a member survey that will be sent to each residential member via e-mail and/or regular mail.

As a member of Franklin REC, you have a voice in our organization. The information you provide by completing this survey will help us improve our services and member communications. The survey will also assist us and our power supplier with long-range electrical system planning.

Neither Franklin REC nor the survey vendor, Inside Information, will ask for credit card information or sell or share your private information. They will provide us with the survey results, and we will evaluate the information.

The name of each Franklin REC member who completes the survey will be entered into a drawing to receive a \$200 electric bill credit. Your response is an important component as we plan for the future and strive to mitigate costs.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the survey.

SPARKS of news

Board room highlights

At their most recent meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Discussed work order and special equipment approval.
- Selected board delegates for

upcoming meetings.

- Discussed equipment approval.
- Conducted the 2021 employee benefit review.
- Discussed estate patronage refunds.

Youth Tour dates announced

The 2021 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., will take place June 21-26. Read next month's *InTouch* newsletter

for more information.

Scholarships available

Dependents of Franklin REC members are invited to apply for scholarships for tuition at a two-year or four-year college for the fall of 2021 (including vocational and technical schools).

Visit franklinrec.coop for details or call us at 641-456-2557.

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smart choices

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