

Do your part to keep Iowa's roads safe

A WORD FROM



Garrett Thompson
General Manager

Have you ever had to stop your vehicle on the side of a busy highway to check on a flat tire or a trailer cover? Or maybe you've been pulled over by a police officer and worried about his or her safety on the shoulder of the road while hoping you can get away with just a warning!

If so, you are well aware that most drivers won't bother to move over or even slow down as they pass. But as of July 1, 2018, Iowa's expanded move over or slow down law – Iowa Code section 321.323A – requires motorists to move over or slow down when approaching ANY stationary vehicle with flashing lights activated, including passenger vehicles with hazard lights. Those who disobey

the law could receive a hefty fine or potentially lose their driver's license.

This law is particularly important to Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative because it helps keep our lineworkers and maintenance workers safe as they often need to perform difficult and dangerous work with electric equipment on the shoulder of road. And even though our employees set out caution signs and orange cones, wear high visibility gear, and turn on their vehicles' emergency lights, other motorists often fail to give them the room they need to do their job safely.

This law keeps Iowa's roads safe for everyone – drivers, emergency responders, utility workers, and others. But the law doesn't do much good if motorists don't know about it. Please make sure to share this safety message with other drivers in your family, especially younger drivers who don't have as much experience behind the wheel. We can each do our part to keep Iowa's roads safe by simply moving over or slowing down (preferably both) when we see stopped vehicles on the side of the road.

When you're behind the wheel, keep your eyes on the road and make room for utility workers and others who are stopped on the shoulder. Their jobs are dangerous enough.

SPARKS of news

Board room highlights

At their most recent meeting, Franklin REC directors:

- Approved work orders and special equipment.
- Appointed members of the nominating committee.
- Discontinued First Call service effective Jan. 31, 2021.
- Approved 2021 budget.
- Approved policy changes.
- Approved writing off of uncollectible debt.
- Approved patronage estate retirement.
- Appointed voting delegates for upcoming meetings.
- Approved bill credit for December usage. Board approved a revenue credit to membership of 3% of revenue collected from January through November, 2020.

Scholarship deadline approaching

High school seniors: Are you a volunteer in the community or your church? March 15 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.



MOVE OVER SLOW DOWN

His job is **dangerous** enough. When you see utility crews at work, slow down and move over. You have the power to protect a life.

FIRST-CALL SERVICE DISCONTINUED

After 23 years, Franklin REC discontinued First Call Emergency Service effective Jan. 31, 2021. This is due to a decrease in those using the service through FREC and more advanced options available through other vendors.

What happens behind the scenes during a power outage?

In the U.S., we are fortunate to have an advanced power grid in place. Power transmission and distribution is reliable in our country, and we are proud to deliver the electricity you depend on each day.

Excluding outage times attributed to major weather or other catastrophic events, electricity consumers in our country typically experience only about two hours of total power interruptions per year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). When outages due to major events are taken into consideration, the EIA reports the total outage time at six hours a year.

What happens on our end when your power goes out? Rest assured we swing into action in a safe and efficient manner. How long restoration takes depends on several factors: the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and how long it takes for our work crews to safely access the storm-damaged areas. We are careful to follow standard restoration procedures to ensure safety and to get the job done right by:

- Assessing damage to utility equipment.
- Addressing immediate safety risks, including downed power lines.
- Ensuring that essential public health and safety facilities are operational.
- Prioritizing repairs to restore power to the greatest number of people first.
- Assessing and repairing (in this order) substations, distribution lines, and service lines to properties.

Thank you for your patience during power outages. Know that in the event of an outage, we are working hard to restore it as safely and efficiently as possible.

HOW POWER IS SAFELY RESTORED

Please know that when the power goes out, we are doing all we can to safely and efficiently restore power. Here are the steps we take in the assessment and restoration process:



- STEP 1: ASSESS THE DAMAGE**
- STEP 2: ADDRESS SAFETY RISKS**
- STEP 3: RESTORE ESSENTIAL SERVICES**
- STEP 4: PRIORITIZE REPAIRS**

POWER OUT?

22 WAYS TO UNPLUG



If you are trying to keep yourself (or others) entertained during a power outage, save the battery power on your phones and other electronics for emergencies or weather updates, and consider some of these “unplugged” activities instead.

FUN FOR KIDS

- Read a book
- Play board or card games
- Look at old photos
- Tell ghost stories
- Make shadow figures
- Make a fort out of boxes and blankets
- Sing your favorite songs
- Play Simon Says

GET CREATIVE

- Write a story.
- Make up jokes.
- Draw or paint a picture.
- Set up an indoor bowling alley with plastic cups as pins.
- Fix something around the house.

PRACTICE SELF CARE

- Take a nap.
- Paint your nails.
- Go for a run or hike.
- Check in on your neighbors.
- Practice a skill, such as a second language, sewing, knitting, or tying knots.

AROUND THE HOUSE

- Clean and organize your house
- Rearrange your furniture
- Fold laundry or organize your closet
- Plant seeds or tidy up your yard

Safe Electricity.org®

DIYers: Call pro for electrical repairs

Working with electricity is risky business. Anyone who tinkers with wiring or circuits could suffer electrocution or shock or could start a fire. High-voltage items are especially dangerous to work on, even for professionals.

DIYers should not take any chances when it comes to electrical repairs. Licensed electricians are trained not only in the skills needed to work with electrical circuits and components, but in how to stay safe during the job, how to adhere to electrical codes, and how to prevent fires. They also know which permits are required to do the work legally.

Homeowners should also consider the following before attempting to do their own electrical repairs:

- Some homeowner's insurance policies do not cover fires that start as a result of a DIY electrical repair gone wrong.
- Electrical work requiring city or county permits can result in fines for a DIYer who does not obtain those permits.
- Selling a home whose electrical work has been done by a DIYer can be a challenge. Potential buyers usually hire home inspectors, who could flag faulty repairs and force the homeowner to pay for a professional do-over.
- Even when you hire a professional electrician, insist on a license, proper permit, and an inspection.





**WE ARE
MEMBER
OWNED.**



Prevent frozen pipes by keeping your house warm

A mid-winter getaway seems like a dream during a pandemic, but if your family has found a safe destination and is heading out of town for a couple of weeks, leave the heat on at home.

It might seem like a waste of energy and money to heat an empty home, but the cost of cleaning up after a water pipe that has frozen and burst will be far more costly than leaving the thermostat set high enough to prevent the problem.

When the water inside of a pipe freezes, it expands and puts pressure on the pipe. That pressure can cause the pipe to crack or break, and water can gush out, leading to a non-stop flood of water and massive damage to your property.

Here are some precautions to take before you leave:

- **Shut off the water** at the cut-off valve.
- **Remove garden hoses** from outdoor faucets. Then, drain those faucets and leave them in the “on” position.
- **Leave the heat set** at around 50 degrees.
- **Open cabinet doors under sinks** so the heat can circulate around the water pipes.
- **Shut off the water** to your washing machine if it is in an unheated garage.
- **Insulate pipes** in the attic and in crawl spaces using a product designed specifically for pipes.
- **Give your house key** to a trusted neighbor who can check for frozen pipes while you're away.



Let's connect *By Anne Prince, NRECA*

When we say that we live in a “connected” world, most of us think about technology—our smart phones and other devices and gadgets. But as a member of an electric co-op, there's so much more to being part of our connected co-op community.

We depend on you because you power our success, and when your cooperative does well, the community thrives because we're all connected.

We greatly value our connection to you. And we'd like to help you maximize the value you can get from us through a variety of programs, products, and services that we offer our members. For example, we can help you save money on your energy bill by asking you questions about how you use energy, and we also offer a number of rebates. In addition, when you download our SmartHub app, you can monitor and manage your home energy use, pay your bill online, and access a menu of additional options for potential savings and more.

Follow us on social media to stay up-to-date on power restoration efforts, tree trimming planning, co-op director elections, and more. You'll also see photos of our line crews in action and our employees helping with community service projects.

Your electric cooperative relies on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, and up-to-date contact information from our members helps ensure that we can provide the highest level of service that you expect and deserve.

Updated contact information can even speed up power restoration during an outage. That's because when you call to report an outage, accurate information helps our outage-management system predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

We hope you will connect with us whenever and wherever you can. Your cooperative exists to serve members, and when we're better connected to you and our local community, we're better prepared to answer the call.

We look forward to connecting with you!

2021 Annual Meeting Nominating Committee Notice

It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than thirty (30) days nor more than one hundred twenty (120) days before the date of a meeting of the members at which Directors are to be elected, committees on nominations consisting of at least three (3) persons. At least one (1) nominating committee member is to be selected from each district from which a director is to be elected. No officer or member of the Board shall be appointed a member of the committee. The committee shall prepare and post at

the principal office of the Association at least thirty (30) days before the meeting a list of nominations for Directors.

Such nominations shall be made by districts as herein prescribed to succeed the Directors whose terms will expire at the meeting of members for which such nominations are made, and the members so nominated shall be bona fide residents of the district from which they are nominated. Any fifteen (15) or more members may take other nomination in writing over their signatures not less than twenty (20) days

prior to the meeting and the secretary shall post the same at the place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted.

Nominees made by petition must satisfy the same eligibility requirements as nominees selected by the committee on nominations. The secretary shall mail with the notice of meeting a statement of the number of directors to be elected and showing separately the list of nominations made by the committee on nominations and the nominations made by petition, if any.

5 unexpected ways to keep your house warmer

You don't have to crank up the thermostat to stay warm indoors this winter. Try these easy strategies to stay warm without sending your energy bill through the roof:



1. **Add rugs to uncarpeted rooms.**
2. **Install a filter whistle on your furnace.** Dirty filters prevent air from easily flowing through your heating system.
3. **Move furniture away from air vents.**
4. **Add a humidifier.** Keeping the humidity in the home between 30% and 50% will make the air feel warmer.
5. **Insulate the door leading from the house to the attic.**

Directors recognized for years of service

Franklin REC is pleased to recognize three of our directors for their years of service to our members: Dale Schaefer, Gordon Greimann, and Dave Keninger. Congratulations and thank you!



Director Dale Schaefer, District 3, 35 years



Board President Gordon Greimann, District 2, 25 years



Board Secretary/Treasurer Dave Keninger, District 1, 10 years



**FRANKLIN RURAL
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

INTouch® is published monthly for members of Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative
1560 Highway 65 • PO Box 437 • Hampton, IA 50441
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OFFICE HOURS: Mon. - Fri., 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.
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