

## A WORD FROM



**Garrett Thompson**  
General Manager

As I sit down in a new office to write this column with a new job title and living in a new town, I can't help but think about all the help I received along the way to get to this point in my life.

My mom and dad raised my little sister and me on a farm near a small Kansas town. They taught me the values of always loving God, treating others

## Let me introduce myself

how you want to be treated, continually helping those in need, always looking for the positive in life, and leaving something in better shape than you found it. Those values have helped prepare me for this new role and new chapter of my life.

Amanda, my wife of seven wonderful years, deserves a great deal of credit. She is a behavioral counselor from southern Minnesota, specifically the Austin/Lyle area. If she charged her billable rate for all the counseling sessions she provided for me at the kitchen table, I would be in debt up to my eyeballs! She is a selfless helpmate who has sacrificed a lot to help get me to this point in life.

Charlie Dunn, the general manager at Farmers Electric Cooperative in Greenfield, Iowa, and my most recent boss, taught me a lot about what leadership means and how a leader acts. His daily example, guidance, and support during my years at Farmers as the co-op CFO formed me into the leader I am

today.

The Board of Directors and the entire staff here at Franklin REC have welcomed me with open arms and treated me as one of their own. I can say with 100 percent confidence that this cooperative is in great and capable hands from top to bottom.

I love this cooperative and the cooperative business model. Not because of some philosophical idea or the organizational structure, but because the cooperative membership is filled with people just like I described. The people are what make a cooperative great and I cannot wait to meet each and every one of you.

In the meantime, don't hesitate to reach out to me directly to say hello, ask about your bill, or for anything else you may need. I look forward to talking with you and serving you as the cooperative's new general manager!

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## Directors earn Gold certification

Congratulations to Franklin REC directors Don Greimann, District 2, and John Snyder, District 1, (pictured respectively right top and bottom with Gordon Greimann, board president). They recently completed their Director Gold certifications through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

To receive the certification, the directors first earned their Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership Certificates from NRECA. They then completed three additional credits from the Board Leadership series.



## Greimann honored

At their 2020 annual meeting, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) honored Gordon Greimann, Franklin REC board president and District 2 director, for his 25 years of service to the cooperative. Greimann is also the District 6 representative on the IAEC board of directors.

Thank you, Gordon, for your service and dedication to the Franklin REC members.



# Be prepared for winter storms

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm, especially during a power outage. Your Touchstone Energy cooperative cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared:

- **Stay warm** – Plan to use a safe alternate heating source during a power outage. If you are using gasoline-, propane-, or natural gas-burning devices to stay warm, never use them indoors, and make sure they are properly ventilated.
- **Stay fed** – Have on hand several days' supply of food that does not need to be cooked. Five gallons of water per person should also be available.
- **Stay safe** – If you must travel during a winter storm, take a survival kit and do not travel alone. Stay away from downed lines, and report them immediately.



## When winter winds howl, power lines can gallop

Severe weather with strong winds can cause damage to trees, buildings, and electrical equipment. While power lines can sway in high winds, add freezing rain or icy conditions and the result can be galloping power lines—the bouncing or bucking movement of overhead lines.

Galloping often results from ice buildup on one side of the power line due to strong winds. This creates an airfoil, which changes the flow of air around the line.

Unfortunately there isn't much utility workers can do until the wind subsides. Many power lines have objects, like twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal attached to the line to help reduce galloping and prevent potential danger.

### If you see galloping power lines:

- Stay away - ice can break off or power lines can break loose.
- Contact your utility as soon as possible to make them aware of the potential damage.

### If you see a downed line:

- Stay far away and warn others to stay away, too. A downed line can remain energized even if it is not sparking or arcing.
- Always report the location of a downed power line and damaged electrical equipment.



## Five ways to stay cozy this winter

By Abby Berry, NRECA

Baby, it's cold outside! When you're feeling chilly at home, there are several budget-friendly ways you can keep comfortable without turning up the thermostat. Here are five easy ways to stay cozy this winter:

1. Whether you're experiencing extremely cold winter temps or you simply "run cold," **an electric blanket or throw** can deliver quick warmth that a regular blanket or throw cannot.
2. One of the easiest ways to stay cozy at home is to **keep your feet warm**. Our feet play a critical role in regulating body temperature. Try a pair of comfortable wool socks or house slippers to stay toasty.
3. On winter days when the sun is shining, take advantage and harness natural warmth from sunlight. **Open all curtains, drapes, and blinds** to let in the sunshine.
4. Another way to make your home cozier is to **use a humidifier**. Cold air doesn't hold water vapor like warm air, so by adding humidity inside your home, you can feel a little warmer.
5. Beyond adding visual appeal to your home, **area rugs** can also provide extra insulation and a warm surface for your feet on cold winter days. Use large area rugs in rooms where you spend the most time.



*Don't forget the hot chocolate to help keep you cozy!*



# Invest in home gym equipment

If you don't feel comfortable fulfilling your New Year's resolutions at a gym during the pandemic, consider adding a few pieces of exercise equipment to your home.

It may sound expensive, but if a treadmill, stepper, or rower are out of your price range, consider some low-tech

workout aids. Start with a weight bench, and buy just the basics: dumbbells or hand weights in just a few different sizes; resistance bands, a mat, and a big exercise ball. You could also purchase a manual stationary bike.

If your budget permits and your electrical system can tolerate it, add one electrically powered piece of equipment, such as a treadmill. Some stationary bikes are electric, as well. But make that investment only if you're sure you'll use the equipment once your New Year's resolve wears off.

Add a mirror, some music, and a TV to keep you company during your workout, and you'll have everything you need to keep in shape while staying safely at home.



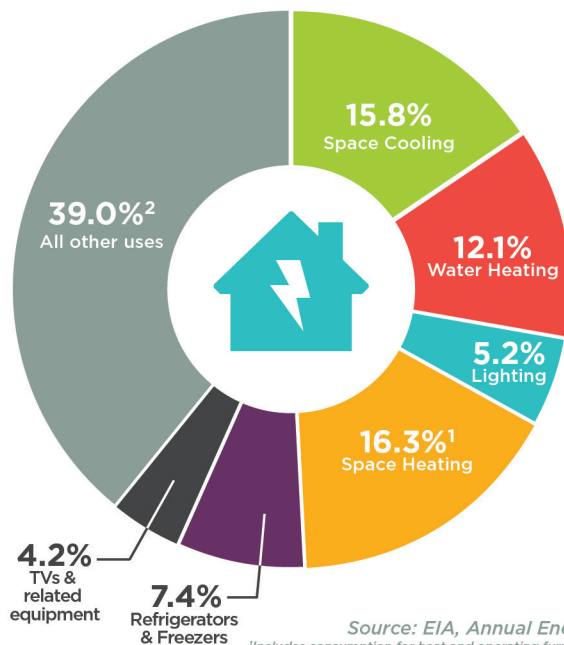
## Scholarships available

- Dependents of cooperative members are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 **Basin Electric Power Cooperative** scholarship for tuition at a two-year or four-year college.
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative partners with **Northwest Iowa Community College** (NCC) in Sheldon, Iowa, to offer four \$500 scholarships.
- Corn Belt Power also partners with **Iowa Lakes Community College** to offer one \$500 scholarship for students enrolled in the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program.

**Visit our website for more information on scholarship opportunities.**

## How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: EIA, Annual Energy Outlook 2020

<sup>1</sup>Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps.

<sup>2</sup>Includes miscellaneous appliances, clothes washers and dryers, computers and related equipment, stoves, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.

**\$2 per strand LED holiday lighting rebate**

**See our website for a rebate form.**

## REC participates in Operation Santa

One of the seven cooperative principles is Commitment to Community. Franklin REC recognizes 2020 was a hard year for many and in the spirit of giving, Christy Mason (shown), office assistant, took on the responsibility of purchasing and collecting toys for Operation Santa, an initiative organized by the Hampton Rotary Club.

Franklin REC directors and employees donated, contributing to the success of the drive. Mason commented, "Having the opportunity to be involved with Operation Santa absolutely warms my heart. Our Franklin REC board of directors and employees undoubtedly answered the call this year! With their generous donations we were able to contribute 29 gifts to local children this Christmas season."



## Leave tree trimming to us

Trees that make contact with power lines can cause power outages—both short-term and long-term. For that reason, it's important that trees are maintained year-round.

According to John Quasdorf, Franklin REC line superintendent, "Franklin REC trims trees for reliable power. When trees touch the power lines they can cause blinking lights. Trees and branches that fall onto the power lines can cause power outages." Franklin REC line crews began tree trimming last month.

Maintaining a clearance on all sides of power lines helps keep the electricity on in homes and businesses. That is why trees that grow into lines need to be trimmed and sometimes even removed.

Did you know trimming within 10 feet (in any direction) of a power line is illegal? Only OSHA-certified line clearance workers are authorized to trim near power lines.

If you notice that your trees are growing into power lines, contact Franklin REC to determine the next recommended step.



*Franklin REC's line crew works on tree trimming.*

## SPARKS of news

### Board highlights

- Awarded scholarships to the 2020 Youth Tour winner and two additional Youth Tour applicants. The scholarship money is our refunded deposit from the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives due to the 2020 trip cancellation.
- Discussed the now-cancelled 2021 Youth Tour.
- Set 2021 board meeting dates. With the exception of April and October meetings, all meetings will take place during the day.
- Established a \$100 per diem for 2021 Nominating Committee members.
- Approved donation for Franklin County Fair Queen Scholarship.



## Reminder to our members

SmartHub is a great resource to obtain your account information, including up to 24 months' billing history if you need this for contractors or taxes. Franklin REC reminds members that if you would like us to provide others with your account information, please provide us with written authorization that identifies who may access your information and what they are allowed to receive.

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