

STORM PREPARATION TIPS & ADVICE FOR DEALING WITH POWER OUTAGE

Living in Iowa, you know you should always be prepared for the possibility of severe winter weather. Before a storm hits, gather these items: flashlight and extra batteries; battery-powered weather radio and portable radio to receive emergency information; bottled water and non-perishable food; first-aid supplies; sleeping bags, blankets and pillows; books and games to keep kids occupied; candles and matches.

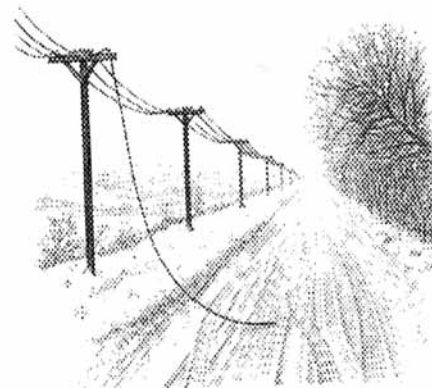
If a family member relies on life-support equipment, make sure your electric cooperative is aware of this and possible shelter options are explored.

Warn children about the dangers of downed power lines. Even though power may be out, the wires may still be energized. Don't go near them and don't let anyone else near them. Report them at once to your cooperative.

If a power outage occurs:

- Call North West REC to report the outage – even if you think a neighbor already has done so.
- Unplug sensitive electronic equipment such as computers, TVs and other home entertainment equipment to avoid damage to them when power is restored.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to prevent food from spoiling.
- Leave one light turned on, so you'll know when the power is restored.

Stay safe this winter!



Iowa representative Ron Jorgensen of Sioux City, left, District 54, talks with, from left, Gerald Klemme, director of North West REC; Darwin Dirks, assistant manager and director of operations services for North West; and Lyle Korver, North West's chief executive officer. The electric cooperatives hosted area state legislators at a dinner December 12, to discuss energy policy and other issues to be addressed in the coming legislative season.

North West Rural Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 435 • 1505 Albany Place SE • Orange City, IA 51041-0435

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Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.

Orange City office open
during noon hour

Ida Grove & Le Mars offices
closed 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.

Outside Depository Available
for After Hours Payments

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NEWS Lines

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ICON AG & TURF HONORED WITH VENTURE AWARD

The Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) on behalf of Iowa's rural electric cooperatives and member municipal electric systems has honored nine distinguished Iowa companies with the Iowa Venture Award. The Iowa Venture Award business recognition event began in 1988 and has honored over 190 of Iowa's finest business leaders and companies.

Regional John Deere dealership, Icon Ag & Turf, located its new headquarters location in Le Mars. The new facility has visibility along Hwy 60 and offers great access for serving customers and getting equipment in and out. The headquarters location provides services and support to other northwest Iowa stores in Ireton, Doon, Paullina and Lawton more efficiently. The 40,000 sq. ft. facility employs 23 people.

Icon Ag & Turf was nominated for the Iowa Venture Award by North West Rural Electric Cooperative.

"The Iowa Venture Award honors the entrepreneurial spirit of individuals and organizations. The luncheon ceremony is a celebration of the courage, contribution, innovation, social responsibility and vision of Iowa entrepreneurs. IADG has recognized Iowa's leading companies large and small and it has become evident that our honorees are among the most accomplished and successful companies in the state. Together they help sustain and grow Iowa's economy. Iowa Area Development Group on behalf of our sponsors is grateful to have the opportunity to honor and recognize these outstanding Iowa companies," said IADG President, Rand Fisher. Since 1985 the Powerful Partnerships and economic development efforts of IADG and their sponsoring rural electric cooperatives and municipal utilities have helped generate over \$6 billion of capital investment and create or retain nearly 40,000 jobs for Iowa.

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Icon Ag & Turf, of Le Mars, Iowa, received the 2011 Venture Award recognizing the company for its expansion and contribution to Iowa's economy. Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Director Debi Durham presented the award on behalf of the Iowa Area Development Group L.C., (IADG). Pictured left to right: Rand Fisher, President, IADG; Tom Wagner and Steve Brown, Directors, North West Rural Electric Cooperative; Joel Orthmann, President, North West Rural Electric Cooperative; Debi Durham, Director, IEDA; Adam Timmerman, General Manager, Icon Ag & Turf; Lyle Korver, CEO, North West Rural Electric Cooperative; Alan Lucken, Vice President, North West Rural Electric Cooperative; Lee Grage, Director North West Rural Electric Cooperative; and Gerald Klemme, Secretary, North West Rural Electric Cooperative.

FIELD FIRES TAKE OUT TRANSMISSION POLES

Two transmission poles in NIPCO's system were destroyed Nov. 16 in separate fires attributed to fence line or crop residue burning.

Potential damages from pole fires go way beyond the loss of a pole or two. The fires could have caused power outages to large areas and the fiber optic cables that carry NIPCO's system control data could have been damaged.

One pole fire was reported that morning northeast of Modale on a line that taps power from a NIPCO main transmission line for the Clay Substation, which serves members of Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative. While the pole had been burned almost completely through, it remained standing.

Had the pole fallen, it would have cut power to two MidAmerican Energy substations, three NIPCO substations and all of the members served from those stations, as well as power to three communities: Little Sioux, Mondamin and Blencoe. Harrison County REC received a report of the pole fire and passed that on to NIPCO. Power was re-routed along other lines so there was no disruption to electric consumers in the area.

The burned pole was replaced Nov. 17 with a 60-foot steel pole to eliminate future fire damage.

In the second incident, North West Rural Electric Cooperative received a report the evening of Nov. 16 that a pole was on fire near Newkirk in Sioux County. The REC crew reported the fire to NIPCO and power was re-routed around that line section. Upon arriving at the site the following morning, NIPCO linemen discovered the pole was still burning and the Hospers Fire Department arrived to extinguish the blaze. The fire was attributed to fence line burning. Two NIPCO poles suffered minor damage, but the third had major damage and fell.

The broken 50-foot pole was replaced Nov. 18 with another wooden pole. The damaged poles are part of a major transmission line carrying power from NIPCO's Eagle Substation near Hawarden, to serve electric cooperative members in Sioux and O'Brien counties.

The cost to replace a burned pole ranges from \$5,000 to \$6,600. "Electric cooperative members should not have to pay the price to repair damage caused by people who are careless with fire," said Kent Pauling, NIPCO's executive vice president and general manager. "NIPCO will assess these pole replacement costs to those who caused the damage."



A NIPCO lineman examines a fire-damaged pole on the Clay Substation tap line near Modale in Harrison County. The burned pole was replaced with a steel pole.



A fireman holds a water hose after extinguishing a pole fire near Newkirk in Sioux County. The pole had to be replaced.

LOCAL BUSINESSES ADD DISCOUNTS TO CO-OP CONNECTIONS CARD

Several local businesses are offering discounts to our members when they show them their Co-op Connections Card. Be sure to thank these businesses for participating when using your card for the discount. Watch our website www.nwrec.coop and the newsletter as we add new businesses.

Here's what we have at this time:

Pizza Ranch Restaurants

visit www.pizzaranch.com for individual location hours
Buy one adult buffet, get the 2nd adult buffet for \$5.99
Available at Akron, Hawarden, Hull, Le Mars, Orange City, Primghar, Rock Valley, Sanborn, Sheldon and Sioux Center

Malcoms Paint & Hardware – 512 2nd St, Ida Grove
10% off regular priced merchandise under \$50

Family Table Restaurant – 88 E State Hwy 175, Ida Grove
Buy a meal and get an appetizer half price

Brenners – 700 Second St, Ida Grove
Will match North West REC rebate on Energy Star appliances

Subway – 500 W State Hwy 175 in Ida Grove and Hwy 75 in Hinton
One free cookie with purchase of sandwich fresh value meal

Joe's TV & Appliance – 228 Central Ave Ne, Orange City
\$50 off total purchase of \$499 or more, \$100 off total purchase of \$1,099 or more - Discount must be mentioned at time of sale, cannot be added after sale is complete. This discount may not be combined with any other discounts or offers.

Subway – Le Mars
Purchase a footlong sandwich and receive a free 21 oz. beverage of choice

Godfather's Pizza – 625 Hawkeye Ave. SW, Le Mars
50 cents off Buffet (limit 2 persons per card), \$4 off Jumbo, \$3 off Large, \$2 off Medium, \$1 off Small (all at regular menu price)

During the first three months of using the card, North West REC members had 235 prescriptions filled for a savings of \$3,192.07. If you don't have insurance to cover your prescription medication, use your Co-op Connections Card and start saving today!

Check out all the national discounts at www.connections.coop. If you do not have access to a computer or the Internet, you can call our office or stop in to request a written listing. A participating pharmacy location list can be found at www.locateproviders.com.

Call 712-707-4935 or 800-766-2099 if you have questions or need more information.



COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS IS SELECTED

The Board of Directors has selected the Committee on Nominations, and they will be meeting Wednesday, January 25, 2012, to select nominees for election to the Board of Directors of North West REC. One director will be elected in Districts 1, 2 and 3. There will not be a director election in District 4 this year. They will be voted on and elected at the Annual Meeting of the Cooperative.

Contact one of the nominating committee members in your district if you have any interest in running for the Board of Directors or you know of any member that would be interested. You must contact them before the meeting date in January. For your information, please review the director qualifications listed below.

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

District 1 – Sioux Co.

Cal De Ruyter 3335 Dogwood Ave. Rock Valley, IA 51247 712-476-5095	Gary Kooima 2811 Garfield Ave. Hull, IA 51239 712-476-2057	Scott Te Grootenhuis 4213 400th St. Hospers, IA 51238 712-230-1168
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District 2 – O'Brien Co.

Lowell Appleton 3380 Polk Ave. Sanborn, IA 51248 712-729-3984	Darwin Gaudian 6478 400th St. Primghar, IA 51245 712-261-0076
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District 3 – Plymouth Co.

Dave Probst 19169 Key Ave. Le Mars, IA 51031 712-540-1975	Clark Tindall 21935 Hwy. 3 Le Mars, IA 51031 712-568-2717
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Rick Westhoff 12704 Kestrel Ave Le Mars, IA 51031 712-540-6769	Dave Vander Hamm 40757 120th St Remsen, IA 51050 712-786-2035
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YOUR CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1 Steve Abma, Rock Valley *Del Beyer, Boyden Jeff Rehder, Hawarden	District 3 Steve Brown, Merrill *Lee Grage, Remsen Gerald Klemme, Le Mars Alan Lucken, Akron
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District 2 *Joel Orthmann, Sanborn Tom Wagner, Primghar	District 4 Raymond Drey, Ida Grove Charles Rohlf, Ida Grove
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* Director whose term is expiring in 2012

Director Qualifications:

The Cooperative's bylaws establish that a director must be a member, individually, and a bona-fide resident of the district from which they are elected to represent.

To do a competent job, a director is expected to:

- Attend all regular monthly board meetings. The Board holds daytime meetings usually scheduled for the last Thursday of each month. Meetings last approximately six hours.
- Attend the annual meeting of the Cooperative.
- Attend special meetings of the Board, or of committees to which assigned by the president.
- Attend meetings of related organizations such as Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, Federated Insurance, and others, when necessary.
- Read and be familiar with information, data and reports received from cooperative management, national, state and other local associations.
- Establish and maintain contact with members of the Cooperative in his or her locale.
- Work in harmony with the other members of the Board and employees for the good of all members of the Cooperative.



Your Board of Directors: front row, (l-r): Gerald Klemme, Joel Orthmann, Alan Lucken and Charlie Rohlf. Back row, (l-r): Steve Brown, Jeff Rehder, Steve Abma, Tom Wagner, Del Beyer, Lee Grage and Raymond Drey.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Additional Scholarships Awarded

North West REC and Basin Electric Power Cooperative will again be sponsoring four individual \$1,000 scholarships to a dependent of a member of North West REC. There will be one winner from each of the four districts of North West REC.

In addition to that amount, North West REC will also sponsor four \$750 scholarships and four \$500 scholarships to the runners-up in each district. We will be able to honor a total of 12 applicants.

The scholarship is designed to recognize and encourage the academic achievements of students in the eight-state region where Basin Electric of Bismarck, ND, supplies wholesale electric power.

North West REC members may qualify if their dependent meets the following criteria:

- Must be a U.S. citizen
- Are current North West REC members
- Must be a senior in high school and planning to enroll in a full-time accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school
- Submit the application as provided by North West REC
- Return all completed forms no later than **Friday, February 17, 2012**

The selection will be based on a combination of SAT/ACT scores and overall grade-point average, work experience, participation in school and community activities, a personal statement of career goals and a written recommendation by a third party.

If you are interested in applying for this scholarship, send in the registration form below, and we will then send you an application form. You can also apply online by visiting our website at www.nwrec.coop or you can e-mail Delores at dlancaster@nwrec.coop and she will mail you an application. If you have any questions, please call Delores at 712-707-4935 or 1-800-766-2099. All entries for the scholarship must be returned to the REC no later than **Friday, February 17!**



2012 BASIN SCHOLARSHIP REGISTRATION

YES, I am interested in applying for the scholarship. Please send me the application form.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

PARENT'S NAME _____

MAIL TO: North West REC • Attn: Delores • PO Box 435 • Orange City, IA 51041

BALANCING U.S. ENERGY POLICY

By Iowa Rep. Chuck Soderberg
(chuck.soderberg@legis.state.ia.us)

Have you wondered where your electricity comes from?

The United States, and specifically Iowa's electric utilities, work hard to incorporate diversity in their energy resources while ensuring safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible electric power to their customers.

Iowa's taxpayers and utility consumers have invested billions of dollars in renewable energy projects, specifically wind power, and energy efficiency measures to reduce electricity use. However, this country faces new, strict Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulatory mandates and must do even more to further diversify our supply of electricity with low- or zero-carbon base-load generation facilities.

A base-load electric generating facility is a larger electric power plant that uses a fuel supply of coal, natural gas or nuclear and can produce electricity 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Such facilities provide us with reliable electricity when we need it. Unfortunately, most renewable energy sources do not have that around-the-clock ability.

To ensure continued safe, reliable, affordable and efficient electric service in Iowa, the Iowa House passed HF 561 with bipartisan support on April 24. The Iowa Senate might consider this bill during the 2012 legislative session.

The legislation updates and clarifies the Iowa Code and provides the Iowa Utility Board (IUB) the information it needs if it is asked to authorize construction of a new state-of-the-art generating facility using a small modular nuclear reactor to produce electricity in Iowa.

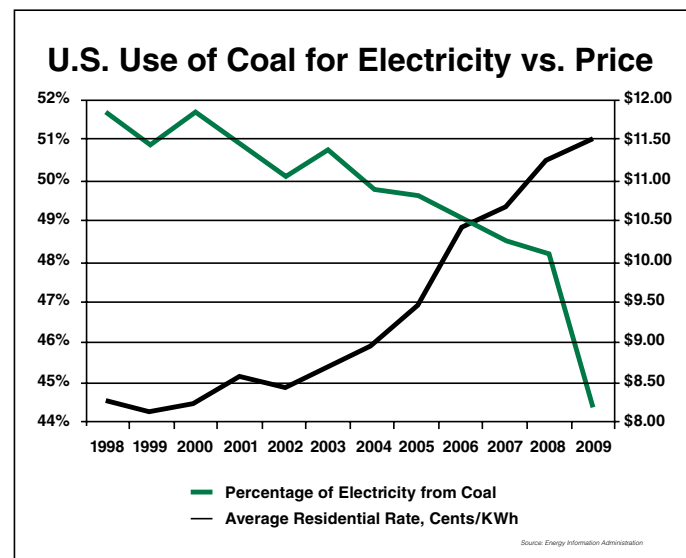
This technology is similar to what has been used to power our military submarine fleet and aircraft carriers safely and reliably for decades. Furthermore, constructing power plants in smaller increments would prevent overbuilding and reduce some upfront investment.

To grow our economy even more and create new jobs, business growth and expansion is needed. This means new electricity usage and the need to construct new base-load generating facilities.

Only three fuel sources exist for base-load power — coal, natural gas and nuclear. Because of the pending EPA environmental regulations, using coal to generate electricity in new facilities is no longer a viable option. These new restrictions fly in the face of this country's efforts to become more energy independent. It is estimated that 25 percent of the world's coal supply is located in the United States. At the present consumption rate, some have estimated that this coal supply could last 250 years.

The easiest solution for utilities and policymakers is to transition to using more natural gas for future electricity generation since "current" natural gas prices are low and a new gas generating facility could be constructed in less than five years. However, natural gas prices have fluctuated dramatically over the past 20 years, ranging from \$2 per million British thermal units to \$15 and back to current levels of \$4 to \$5. Environmental concerns have also surfaced in how shale gas is extracted from the earth, creating even more uncertainty and price volatility.

The limited pipeline capacity will further restrict availability and drive prices even higher if more natural gas is used to power electric generating facilities. If shortsighted policy decisions are made, Iowans could pay much higher gas and electricity prices to heat our homes and operate our businesses for decades to come.



These and many other challenges created by the new, stringent regulations and restrictions make it virtually impossible to use our abundant coal and natural gas resources to generate electricity in new facilities.

The North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC), an industry group charged with ensuring electric grid reliability, concluded that the new EPA rules could compromise and erode power grid reliability because the older power plants are required to retire too quickly.

We all want to be good stewards of our great Earth, but the economic and environmental concerns must be carefully balanced without sacrificing one for the other.

We must ask ourselves: Does it make sense to invest hundreds of millions of dollars to upgrade old coal-fired electric generating facilities, with a limited operating life remaining, to comply with a number of new EPA regulatory mandates beginning in 2014? If not, nuclear energy is the only remaining replacement option in most areas of the United States.

Proven record of safety

With strict oversight by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, we have a long, proven record of producing safe and reliable electricity with nuclear generation in the United States.

It takes at least 10 years to build a nuclear generating facility. Decisions must be made now if we expect utilities to provide their customers with reliable electric delivery as it takes at least 10 years to build a nuclear generating facility. Iowa is committed to adopting balanced energy policies. The federal government must lead by example and legislatively adopt a balanced energy policy without mandating unreasonable regulatory requirements. Relying on a single fuel source to meet increasing energy demand is shortsighted. This is no different than smart investors trying to limit their long-term risk.

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Important NEW YEAR resolutions . . . that don't involve diet or exercise!

- Make sure outlets have GFCIs in the kitchen, bathroom and laundry
- Replace frayed electrical cords
- Check for loose-fitting plugs
- Replace missing or broken wall plates
- Check for overloaded outlets
- Make sure light bulb wattage matches the fixture requirements
- Have an electrician check outlets that are warm/discolored



Learn how to keep your family safe at SafeElectricity.org