

ACEC NEWS

DECEMBER 2024 | VOLUME 27 | ISSUE 12

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Helping the Sumner Daycare
and Learning Center

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A MESSAGE FROM Your General Manager

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

2025 RATE INCREASE

I truly love most aspects of my job as the General Manager at Allamakee-Clayton Electric. However, sometimes, there are difficult messages that I must share. Today, I want to address a topic that is critical to both our operations and your household budgets: an upcoming rate increase.

First and foremost, I want to assure you that any decision to adjust rates is made with the utmost consideration and care. Rate increases are challenging and complex; we do not take this step lightly. Our primary goal has always been, and will continue to be, to provide you with reliable, affordable, safe and sustainable energy. Unfortunately, a rate increase is necessary to continue to accomplish our goal.

This rate increase comes after a Cost-of-Service study, conducted by rate specialists at STAR Energy Services. This study lasted for several months and takes a deep dive into our current and futuristic revenues, cost pressures and budgetary needs. These results were presented to the Board of Directors for implementation, effective January 1, 2025. The Board approved the new rates at their November 25 regular monthly meeting.

The official "NOTICE OF RATE INCREASE," as required by Iowa Utility Commission regulations, is printed on page three of this newsletter. Your first billing under the new rates will reflect electricity used from January 1, 2025 forward.

Let me explain what this increase means to you as a member and why it is necessary to raise rates.

Under the new rates, the service availability charge for our A Rate Class members (which constitutes 2/3 of our members) will increase from \$49 to \$55. That fee attempts to recover a portion of the actual cost to provide electrical service from the substation to your home or business. That includes the cost of the transformer, poles, service wires and meter, taxes, maintenance, customer accounting expenses and vegetation management, plus any unforeseen outage costs associated when the power goes out.

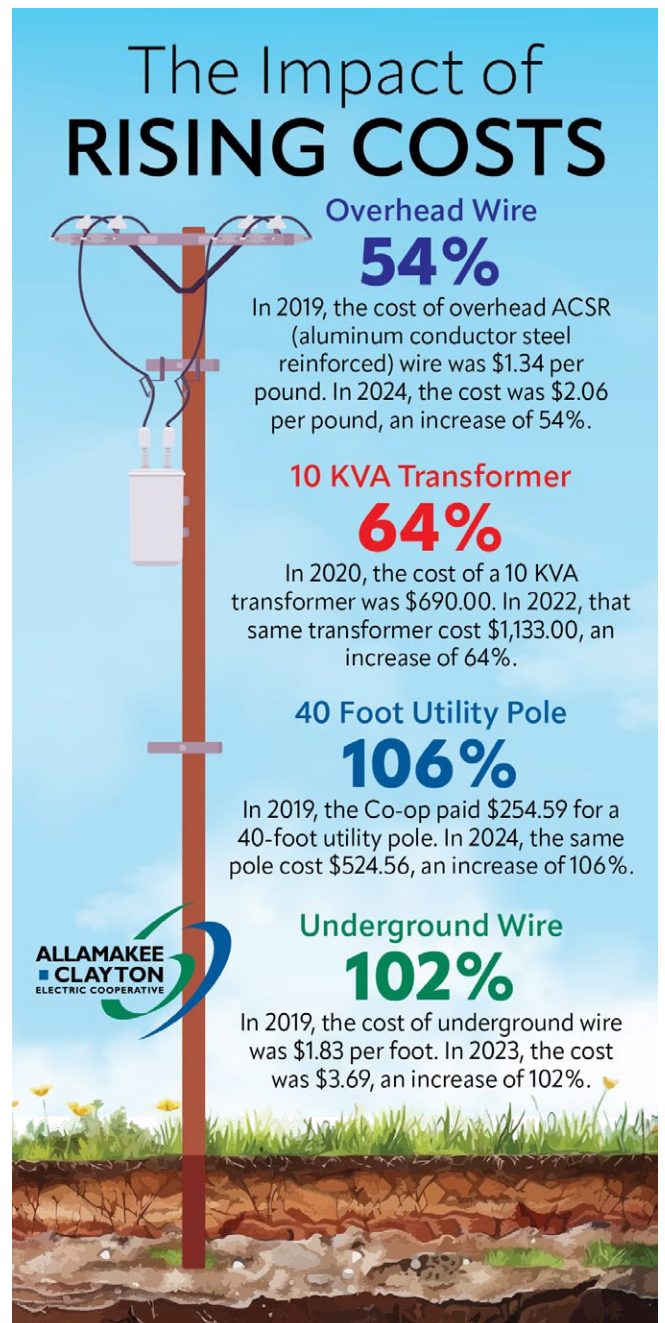
While an increase of \$6 a month may seem like a lot, it boils down to this: the basic cost to provide electricity to your home or business is around \$1.833 per day for a 30-day month. #760

The kilowatt (kWh) charge will also increase slightly. For most of our members, that will go from 13 cents to 14.66 cents. These adjustments more closely align with what our true cost is of providing electricity to our members.

Like the households, farms and businesses we serve, our co-op is not immune to the increase of costs felt by everyone. According to a Bankrate analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, consumer prices have increased 21.4 percent since February 2020. From September 2023 to September 2024, the price of eggs has increased 39.6%. Motor vehicle insurance is up 16.3%. Admission to sporting events is up 10.3%.

Our basic and necessary costs have increased as well. From 2023 to 2024, our insurance cost increased 13%. Our property taxes increased 7.2%. While still an amazing facility, our building is 17 years old and the cost of maintenance to ensure we reach its expected life increases every year.

The value of electricity is immeasurable. It costs roughly \$1,600 to own a cell phone a year. The cost of the electricity needed to charge that cell phone in a year -- \$0.86. Our



way of life is heavily dependent on energy, and it really does remain a good deal.

As your power cooperative, we will continue to do everything we can to manage our operating costs and increase our efficiencies. We will strive to ensure this rate adjustment is effective for more than two years.

We are committed to transparency and dedicated to maintaining open lines of communication. I want to thank you for your continued trust and support.

I wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season and a prosperous new year. ■

BOARD BRIEFS November 25 Meeting

- Approved long term loan advances
- Received information regarding RESAP and Federated Insurance visits
- Received Annual Meeting survey results
- Approved a Cost Share Application to Clayton County Development Group
- Approved a donation request to NE Iowa Wellness and Rec Center
- Approved 2025 Rate Increase

NOTICE OF RATE INCREASE

On November 25, 2024, the Board of Directors of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative, Inc. approved an increase in rates affecting prices for electricity that you receive. The increase will apply to your usage beginning on January 1, 2025.

The increase in annual revenues will be approximately \$2,722,578, or 11.9 percent.

Although the effect of the increase on your bill will vary depending upon the type and extent of usage, the average monthly increase per customer for the primary customer classes is:

Notice of Rate Increase Comparison Information:

Rate Code	Rate Type	Avg. Monthly kWh Usage	Current Monthly Rate	+ Increase	= New Monthly Rate	Percentage Increase
A	Single Phase - General Service	825	\$156.25	\$19.20	\$175.45	12.29%
	Single Phase - General Service with					
B	- One Interruptible Water Heater	1,113	\$190.09	\$22.41	\$212.50	11.79%
C	- Two Interruptible Water Heaters	3,082	\$444.66	\$52.31	\$496.97	11.76%
M	Multi - Phase - General Service	5,263	\$748.40	\$88.95	\$837.35	11.89%
	Multi - Phase - General Service with					
N	- One Interruptible Water Heater	6,739	\$932.85	\$109.09	\$1,041.94	11.69%
O	- Two Interruptible Water Heaters	13,967	\$1,848.81	\$216.50	\$2,065.31	11.71%
X	Peak Alert	58,109	\$4,809.17	\$594.71	\$5,403.88	12.37%
Y	Large Power	90,822	\$9,827.18	\$988.17	\$10,815.35	10.06%
F	Non-Interruptible Home Heating	525	\$64.08	\$7.85	\$71.93	12.25%
G	Interruptible Home Heating	624	\$56.80	\$6.12	\$62.92	10.77%
E	Electric Thermal Storage Heating (ETS)	456	\$44.20	\$4.60	\$48.80	10.41%
R	Single Phase - Low Temp Crop Drying	902	\$103.36	\$19.88	\$123.24	19.23%
L	Unmetered Security Light		\$9.00	\$1.00	\$10.00	11.11%

A written explanation of current rate schedules and charges is available without charge. If you have any questions, please contact our office.

CONCERN FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

ACEC partners to provide funding for new Sumner Daycare and Learning Center

Daycares provide more than just a need for working families. They provide a vital resource for a whole community. Sumner area residents and business owners discovered this when they found themselves suffering from a severe lack of childcare options in 2021.

Stephanie Duhrkoph is the president of the Sumner Daycare board. She said the process began in early 2021 when one of the largest in-home daycares closed unexpectedly, leaving around 20 children without daycare. The area was already considered a “daycare desert,” Duhrkoph said. Then in March of 2021, the three-year-old preschool program was also discontinued, leaving an even larger gap in childcare needs.

“This led to the question of how could we help the childcare situation in our community. A realtor had also told us that they were getting worried because not only were new people not moving into the community, but people were also leaving because there was no childcare. We wanted a bright future for our community and knew if we did not get something started to rectify the childcare situation, we would be in real trouble,” said Duhrkoph. This sparked the community members into action.


In June 2021, there was a community meeting involving the Sumner-Fredericksburg School District, community members, local employers, and others. From that meeting, a board was formed. After touring different childcare facilities, it became apparent there was not a quick fix. Duhrkoph said they also did

not want to rush into building a new facility without thinking through all the options. As a temporary solution, they went back to the school district and worked out an agreement to renovate three classrooms to use for the daycare. They opened in September of 2022.

The work did not stop there. Duhrkoph said the group kept researching other daycare facilities. The board met every week for 3-4 hours at a time to work on fundraising and to develop the building plans. They were aware of the time crunch to build since they only had a two-year license for the classrooms the daycare was using at the school.

The hard work has paid off. The new Sumner Daycare and Learning Center officially opened for business in October 2024. It is licensed to serve 104 children, ranging in age from 6 weeks to 12 years. While they are not licensed for preschool education, the Sumner-Fredericksburg School District picks up and drop off students who want to attend preschool at the school. #3297

With a \$2.1 million price tag, Duhrkoph said this project would not have been possible without the generosity of the community members, businesses, grants, and the help of people like Allamakee-Clayton’s Brenda Hackman, manager of economic development and community relations. Hackman collaborated with representatives from Dairyland Power Cooperative, Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Butler County REC to provide \$700,000 in USDA Revolving Loan gap



SUMNER
DAYCARE AND LEARNING CENTER, INC.

The Sumner Daycare and Learning Center is currently accepting students. For more information or to donate either money or supplies, please message the Sumner Daycare & Learning Center on Facebook.



Congresswoman Ashley Hinson was on hand for the ribbon cutting for the daycare in October. (Photo courtesy Ashley Hinson).



It was cooperation among cooperatives as four co-ops worked together to provide USDA Revolving Loan Gap Funding. Pictured are, from left - Stacy Cirks (Corn Belt), Stephanie Durhkopf (Sumner Daycare) Jenny Radcliffe (DPC), Brenda Hackman, and Katie LaBree (Butler County REC)



ACEC's Brenda Hackman worked closely with Sumner Daycare Board President Stephanie Duhrkoph to get the funds needed.

funding.

Hackman stated, "Every project is different, and some present some unique challenges. When I begin to work with an organization or business, getting to know their project and the goal that they would like to achieve is so important. Daycare is an issue not only in Iowa but across our country. I was so proud of this group for diving in and figuring out how they could make this happen for not only their community but for the region.

"I knew that ACEC did not have enough in our revolving loan fund to fill the gap that was needed so I reached out to Jenny Radcliffe, economic development manager at Dairyland Power. I feel so fortunate that ACEC is a part of Dairyland Power Cooperative and believes in community development, which then leads to economic development."

Dairyland Power (\$200,000) and ACEC (\$200,000) were able to do an application for \$400,000 but were still short \$300,000. Hackman examined the statewide cooperative map. Due to Sumner's location, she reached out to Katie LaBree, business development manager at Butler County REC (\$100,000). LaBree in turn reached out to Stacy Cirks, development finance director at Corn Belt Power Cooperative (\$200,000). Together, they were able to help fill the \$300,000 remaining gap.

"This project was such a wonderful collaboration of so many involved and the especially for cooperation among cooperatives to achieve one of the cooperative core principles, Concern for Communities," said Hackman.

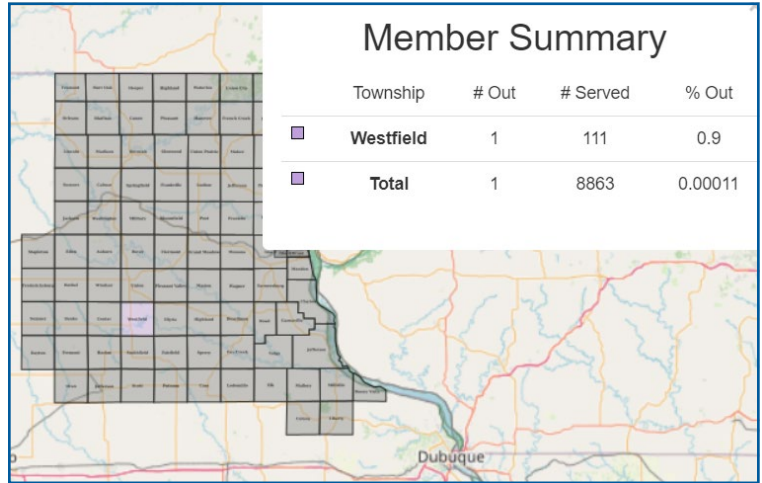
"Brenda is an incredible resource. It was so fulfilling to work with her because she wanted nothing but the best for us," said Duhrkoph. "I cannot say enough about her and making this project a viable option because of her expertise. This was all new to us so having someone also be an advocate was huge."

"This project took a lot of patience. It felt like a long time, three years in the making, with fundraising and building. Reflecting back now, it actually went quite quickly," Duhrkoph said. "We really appreciate people being interested in hearing our story and helping us to continue to fundraise.

"We no longer have people moving out of the community but they're moving back," she said. "This is the first year in a while that we have had an increase in enrollment in our school district. We are already seeing the benefits come to fruition. It is not just the Sumner-Fredericksburg community that is seeing the benefit, the daycare extends into fourteen communities and five counties. It has been wonderful to see our dream turn into a reality."

DID YOU KNOW...

Allamakee-Clayton Electric maintains an outage map? The map refreshes automatically every 5 minutes and shows how many outages we have in each township.



This map can be found on our website at www.acec.com/outages. You can also access the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperative (IAEC) outage map, which details outage data from all IAEC member co-ops. You can also sign up to receive text outage alerts.

For more information regarding specific outages or to report an outage, contact ACEC at 888-788-1551. It's also important that your electric co-op is notified if your phone number or other contact information changes.

If you see downed power lines, stay away from the lines and poles. Always assume the lines are energized and report any damage to ACEC.

Happy Holidays!
 MAY YOUR SEASON BE MERRY AND BRIGHT
 Our office will be closed on
Wednesday, Dec. 25, and Wednesday, Jan. 1.

DEFINED ELECTRIC SERVICE AREAS PROTECT RURAL IOWANS

By Leslie Kaufman, executive vice president and general manager of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives



At the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), we are constantly monitoring issues that could impact the people and rural communities served by Iowa's electric cooperatives. Our state's 2025 Legislative Session will begin on January 13 and IAEC will prioritize efforts to ensure Iowa's law regarding defined service areas is not undermined. I'd like to explain why this law has been so crucial to our mission to serve co-op member-consumers.

What are defined service areas?

In Iowa, your location determines which electric utility will serve you. This regulatory protection is called defined electric service territory and the State of Iowa wrote Senate File 1258 into law almost 50 years ago to efficiently ensure that every square foot of our state has an electric utility obligated to provide service upon request. #6448

Why do Iowa's electric cooperatives support defined service areas?

Electric co-ops are committed to safeguarding defined service areas because they protect rural Iowans by supporting affordable electric rates, fostering a resilient electric grid and encouraging economic development.

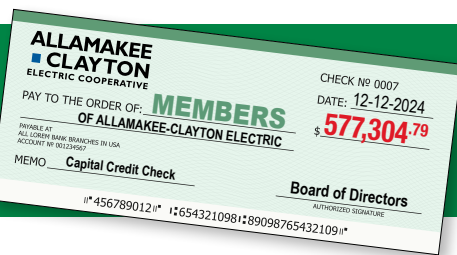
Defined service areas provide a high degree of certainty to Iowa's electric cooperatives which allows us to confidently make long-term investments in power generation to maintain affordable rates, finance major grid upgrades to ensure resiliency and utilize new technologies to enhance service. Electric co-ops can also be proactive in maintenance and

vegetation management to improve reliability for the homes, farms and businesses we serve every day. Additionally, defined service areas allow electric co-ops to robustly support economic development efforts in the communities we serve, which retain and create local jobs and provide needed services and tax revenue.

Any efforts to remove or weaken Iowa's defined service areas could result in higher electric bills and decreased reliability for Iowans. This issue is non-negotiable for Iowa's not-for-profit electric cooperatives, which are mission driven to power lives and empower communities by providing electricity that is safe, reliable and affordable.

Since the 1990s, several states have deregulated their electric utilities, but the hopes that competition would result in lower rates and improved reliability have not materialized. In fact, according to a 2023 *New York Times* investigation, "Deregulation has resulted in increased rates/fees in every state where it has been introduced." The report goes on to conclude that "On average, residents living in a deregulated market pay \$40 more per month for electricity..." This outcome is unacceptable for the Iowans we serve.

We invite you to learn more about this issue at www.ProtectRuralIowa.com where you will also find links to research and studies on deregulation. Your locally owned electric cooperatives are working hard to safeguard defined service area protections that have benefitted Iowans since 1976.



Board Returns \$577,304.79 to Members Through Patronage Dividends

YOUR SHARE OF THE MARGINS 2024 Capital Credit Checks mailed 12/12/2024

Capital credits represent your ownership in Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative and are one of the most unique and rewarding benefits you enjoy as a member of an electric cooperative.

This year, the Board of Directors approved the distribution of **\$577,304.79** in patronage dividends to members and former members who purchased electricity from ACEC in 2002 and 2023. This distribution includes patronage dividends from Dairyland Power Cooperative (\$196,876.84 for 1998, 1999 and 2000) and our former DBS Division (\$91,834.46 for 2004).

Over \$20.3 million in cash dividends has now been returned to the local economy by ACEC member-owners. For more information, visit www.acec.com/capital-credits.

In a co-op, every member gets a piece of the pie



MEMBER RECIPES

Send your favorite recipes and/or recipe topics to Jennifer Achenbach, ACEC, PO Box 715, Postville, IA 52162 or email jachenbach@acrec.coop.

You'll receive a \$5 bill credit if your recipe is printed. Please note – recipes must be received by the 25th day of the month before the intended publication.

January – **Guest column recipes**;

February – **SLOW COOKER**



CARAMEL APPLE CHEESECAKE BARS WITH STREUSEL TOPPING

For the apples

3 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and finely chopped

2 Tbsp. sugar

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

¼ tsp. ground nutmeg

Streusel topping

1 c. (212 g.) packed light brown sugar

1 c. (142 g.) all-purpose flour

½ tsp. cinnamon

½ c. (50 g.) quick cooking oats

½ c. (113 g.) salted butter, softened

Shortbread base

2 c. (284 g.) all-purpose flour

½ c. (106 g.) packed brown sugar

¼ tsp. salt

½ tsp. cinnamon

1 c. (227 g.) salted butter, softened

Cream cheese layer

2 packages (8 oz. each) cream cheese, softened

½ c. (106 g.) granulated sugar

2 large eggs

1 tsp. vanilla extract

Caramel sauce

4 Tbsp. salted butter

1 c. (212 g.) packed light brown sugar

½ c. heavy cream

Pinch of salt

1 Tbsp. Vanilla, can cut down to 1 tsp. for less vanilla flavor

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°. Line a 9x13" pan with foil (helps with cleanup but isn't necessary). Lightly grease the foil with nonstick cooking spray. For the apples, in a small bowl, stir together the chopped apples, 2 tablespoons sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Set aside. For the streusel, in a medium bowl, combine all the streusel topping ingredients and mix with

a pastry blender or two forks (or your fingers) until crumbly. Set aside. For the shortbread base, in a medium bowl, combine the flour, brown sugar, salt and cinnamon. Cut in butter with a pastry blender or two forks until mixture is crumbly but evenly and well combined. Press the crust evenly into a prepared pan. Bake for 10 minutes or until very lightly browned around the edges. For the cream cheese layer, while the crust is baking, in a large bowl with an electric handheld mixer (or in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment), beat the cream cheese with ½ c. sugar until smooth. Add the eggs, one at a time and then the vanilla. Mix until evenly combined, scraping down the edges of the bowl as needed. Pour over the warm crust. Give the apple mixture a good stir

and spoon over the cheesecake layer. Sprinkle the streusel topping over the apples. Bake for 30-35 minutes until the filling is set. For the caramel sauce, add the butter, brown sugar, cream and salt to a saucepan and set over medium-low heat. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer and cook while stirring gently for 5-7 minutes, until thickened slightly. Add the vanilla and cook another minute to thicken further. The sauce will continue to thicken as it cools. If the caramel sauce has been refrigerated, warm slightly to pour over the bars. Cool the bars to room temperature. Drizzle with the caramel topping (or plate individual slices and drizzle with topping one by one).

■ *Abby Edminster, Postville*

CHEESY BEEF ENCHILADAS

1 lb. ground beef, cooked

1 6 oz. salsa

2 c. shredded cheddar cheese

10 flour tortillas

Directions

Combine ½ c. salsa and ½ c. cheese with beef. Place 1 c. salsa in a 9x13" pan. Put ¼ meat mixture on each tortilla. Roll up and put in pan. Top with remaining salsa and cheese. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Can use sausage in place of ground beef.

■ *Charlotte Waldbeser, Elgin*

CYBER SECURITY Tip of the MONTH

Cancelling “dark patterns”

Some websites and apps are designed to be manipulative – they make it hard to cancel a recurring subscription, obscure the fact that you will be charged, or hide the unsubscribe button. These tricky design practices are called “deceptive patterns” or “dark patterns.” Being aware and informed is the first step in resisting deceptive patterns. Be skeptical of offers that seem too good to be true, make sure to read the fine print, verify the credibility of the website or app and take it slow. If you do find yourself stuck in a “dark pattern,” make sure to report it to consumer protection agencies. ■ #J17

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FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

ACEC has hidden **6** Service Location numbers within this newsletter. The numbers are from different regions of our service area – **four are worth \$10 and two are worth \$5.00**. The service location number must be yours to claim the credit, and you need to notify us when you find it. #5725



CONTACT ACEC

HEADQUARTERS

229 Highway 51 • PO Box 715
Postville, IA 52162

PHONE NUMBERS

LOCAL 563-864-7611

TOLL-FREE 888-788-1551

PAYMENT LINE 24/7 833-284-5051

UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATING
811

SKYWAYS INTERNET SOLUTIONS

800-864-1611

WEBSITE

acrec.com

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

OUTAGES

888-788-1551 or 563-864-7611

IOWA STATE ONE CALL

811

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ACEC Youth Opportunities



Youth Tour 2025

The 2025 ACEC Washington D.C. Youth Tour application is now available! High school sophomore and junior members are invited to apply for an all-expense-paid trip to D.C. as a part of the annual Cooperative Youth Tour. Two students from ACEC will travel with other delegates from Iowa to the nation's capital June 15-21. To be eligible, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) must be a member of the Cooperative.

Applications are available through area high school guidance counselors, at the ACEC office or online at www.acrec.com. **Application deadline is Friday, January 31, 2025.** For more information, contact Jennifer Achenbach at 888-788-1551. ■ #4565-13



Hauschild Scholarship 2025

Current graduating high school seniors are eligible to apply for a scholarship through the Cooperative. To be eligible, students must be planning to continue studies in an electric-related field. Parent(s) or guardian(s) do not need to be members of ACEC; however, they must reside within the boundaries of our service area.

The Hauschild Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1995 in memory of former ACEC Director Robert "Bill" Hauschild by his wife and family.

Details are available at www.acrec.com. Applications are available online, through high school guidance offices and at our ACEC office. **Application materials are due by Friday, February 28, 2025.** For more information, contact Jennifer Achenbach at 888-788-1551. ■

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 