

ACEC NEWS

MARCH 2022 | VOLUME 25 | ISSUE 03



AC SKYWAYS
INTERNET SOLUTIONS
BY: ALLAMAKEE ■ CLAYTON
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A HELPING HAND Empowering High-Speed Internet Connection

COLLABORATING
WITH LOCAL
LEGISLATORS

THREE
INTERESTING
FACTS ABOUT
ELECTRICITY

CONSTRUCTION
PLANS?
CALL US EARLY



A MESSAGE FROM *Your General Manager*

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

THE POWER BEHIND YOUR POWER

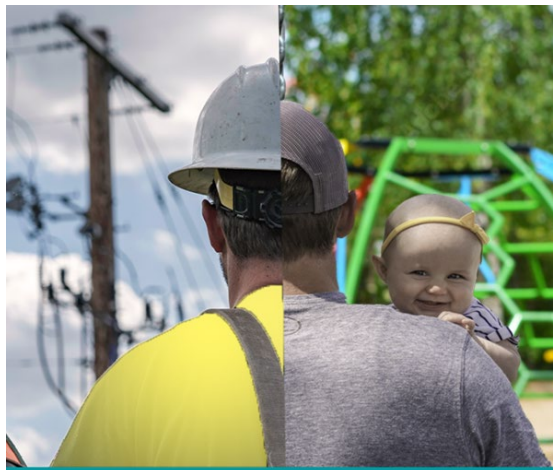
Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 11th.

You've likely noticed ACEC's crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our community. It's no secret that a lineworker's job is tough—but it's a job that's essential and must be done, often in challenging conditions. On April 11, we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation, so I thought I'd share some interesting facts about electric lineworkers with you.

The work can be heavy in more ways than one. For example, did you know the equipment and tools that a lineworker carries while climbing a utility pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That's the same as carrying six gallons of water. Speaking of utility poles, lineworkers must climb poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 120 feet tall. Needless to say, if you have a fear of heights, this likely isn't the career path for you.

Lineworkers must be committed to their career—because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a lineworker is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Lineworkers often work non-traditional hours outdoors under challenging conditions. While the job does not require a lengthy degree, it does require technical skills, years of training, and hands-on learning. Did you know that to become a journeyman lineworker



LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

We thank lineworkers for their courage and commitment to powering our community.

take more than 7,000 hours of training (or about four years)? That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience, and ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an option, and there is no room for error in this line of work.

Despite the many challenges, Allamakee-Clayton's lineworkers are committed to powering our local community.

During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort of their home and families unexpectedly, and they don't return until the job is done, often days later. That's why the lineworker's family is also dedicated to service. They understand the importance of the job to the community.

Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric lineworkers. ACEC employs 12 lineworkers responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year. To do this, they maintain over 2,500 miles of power lines across eight counties. In addition to the obvious tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing utility poles to repair a wire. Today's lineworkers are information experts who can pinpoint power outages from miles away. Line crews now use laptops, tablets, drones, and other technologies to map outages, survey damage, and troubleshoot problems.

Lineworkers are essential to the life of our community. Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men and women, we would not have the reliable electricity that we need for everyday life.

So, the next time you see a lineworker, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. After all, lineworkers are the power behind your power. Please join us as we recognize them on April 11 and follow "#ThankALineworker" on social media to see how others recognize lineworkers. ■

BOARD BRIEFS | February 28, 2022, Meeting

- Approved 2021 Auditor's Report
- Approved 2022 Operating Budget
- Received presentation of 2021 Financial Overview
- Reviewed OCIO 3 total project costs
- Approved joint \$500 Cost-Share application with DPC to Main Street Lansing
- Approved a \$350 donation to Waterville 4th Annual Outdoor Music Festival

COLLABORATING WITH LOCAL LEGISLATORS

By Brenda Hackman

Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative is a local business that powers economic development and prosperity for our region. As a cooperative, we have deep roots here, and we listen closely to our members to better understand the community's needs. In addition, our leadership, board members, and employees live and work right here in the region we serve.

We strive to advocate for our community, ensuring that local legislators know, understand, and act on the critical issues in our area.

Providing industry guidance

As a practical matter, we recognize that most legislators vote on a wide range of issues. With the changing energy industry, ACEC can provide guidance on subject matter from those who have been in the energy industry for many years.

Today's energy landscape is an increasingly complex topic covering the

traditional engineering and vegetation management aspects of the industry. It encompasses technology, cybersecurity, the electrification of the transportation sector, and more.

Because we're involved in economic development and know local community leaders, we can also provide insight into how issues and policies under discussion might impact our region.

Co-op as a convener

We periodically invite legislators and their staff to the co-op for tours to learn how we operate. We also continue to build relationships with legislators when they are in northeast Iowa and when they are in session in Des Moines. In addition, we travel to Des Moines to attend the Welcome Back Reception, do capitol visits, and participate in the REC Day on the Hill.

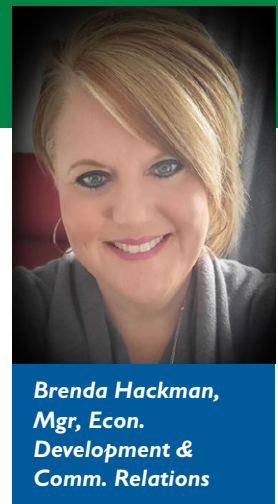
Representing your best interests

We strive to be a trusted resource on

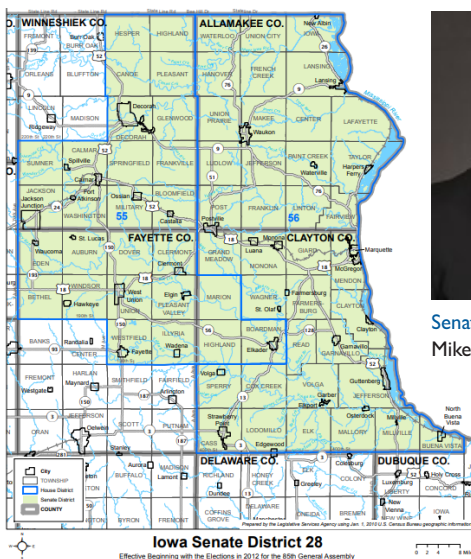
energy issues.

Because of our deep roots in the community, we have a firm understanding of local issues and needs. We will continue looking after the long-term interests of our members. This means we can cultivate and foster positive, productive relationships with legislators who know and trust us because we advocate for the community we serve. **1209-1A**

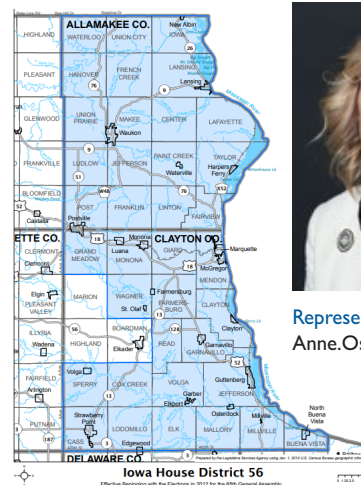
We're proud to power your life and bring good things to the community. We hope you'll reach out to ACEC on matters of importance so we can continue to advocate on your behalf and improve the quality of life for our members. ■



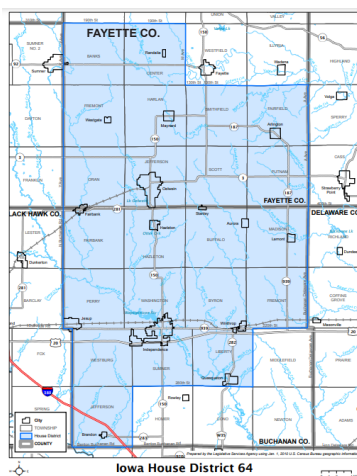
Brenda Hackman,
Mgr, Econ.
Development &
Comm. Relations



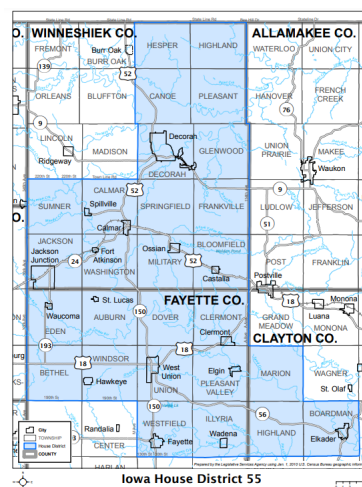
Senator Mike Klimesh,
Mike.Klimesh@legis.iowa.gov



Representative Anne Osmundson
Anne.Osmundson@legis.iowa.gov



Representative Chad Ingels
Chad.Ingels@legis.iowa.gov



Representative Michael Bergan
Michael.Bergan@legis.iowa.gov

A HELPING HAND

Empowering high-speed internet connection

2005

Began offering satellite internet

2014

Began offering Wireless Internet in Allamakee Co.

2015

Awarded FCC Rural Broadband Experiment Grant **\$1.45M**

2020

Mar. 2020 Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant **\$541,916**

03

Oct. 2020 Awarded Empower Rural Iowa Grant **\$50,921**

10

One of our country's most significant achievements is rural electrification. The expansion of broadband is another. Fast, reliable, and high-capacity internet service is an economic necessity in today's society. In addition to improving the quality of life for its membership, AC Skyways recognizes it's an economic development resource for attracting families and businesses to the area. A suitable connection five years ago isn't anymore because so many devices rely on broadband. Those devices could include smartphones, computers, home security systems, Wi-Fi thermostats, smart lighting, appliances, etc.

Our AC Skyways division has expanded to over 1,000 subscribers and is still growing. We serve these subscribers with mostly wireless broadband internet and some satellite internet in the heart of our service territory. But, when it comes to high-speed internet, fiber is truly the gold standard. We know this, but up until recently, the cost has been a prohibitive factor. Without grants, expansion to certain areas often is not financially feasible due to the high cost of infrastructure per location served. With an average density of four members per mile of line in our rural areas, providing this future-proof technology becomes too costly of an investment without a grant opportunity.

"The State of Iowa is committed to high-speed, reliable

broadband for Iowans, and we're happy to see the progress connecting rural Iowa," said Hollee McCormick, general manager. "We are constantly hearing from members and non-members alike that they need better internet. Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative is making every effort to fill the gaps."

"Having ACSkyways fiber internet as a reliable internet source has made a great impact in our home. It has given us the flexibility for uninterrupted at-home education and streaming entertainment. Great customer service and a great team that set us up. We're glad we switched!"

—Lori Johnson, Waukon

The Office of the Chief Information Officer of the State of Iowa (OCIO) awarded ACEC five grant opportunities totaling just over \$8 million. The grant opportunities allow us to deploy fiber in west Waukon and areas of northern Allamakee County.

ACEC believes that having full internet access in rural Iowa will remove barriers for people who struggle to participate in today's economy and education system due to

poor connectivity. We also want to be good partners with our neighboring providers. "We're not going to deploy fiber where we know they already have plans, said McCormick. 4747

AC Skyways began connecting fiber customers in December 2021, and at the time of print is nearing 50 fiber internet customers. "Just as the ACSkyways staff responded quickly to navigate the unexpected challenge of the need to learn and work remotely at the onset of the pandemic, they were receptive to the quick timeline of the fiber internet build," said McCormick. "Without their planning, hard work, and commitment, we would not be where we are today."

Whether you are new to broadband or fiber service or just looking for a new provider, AC Skyways local employees will take care of you from start to finish to make sure your internet network is up and running smoothly. This is an exciting time for the Cooperative. Connected communities become thriving communities, so internet connectivity today is as electricity was in the 30s and 40s. We are happy to be able to help provide solutions that better lives and empower communities. ■

"We are extremely happy with our fiber internet service. Thanks so much to ACEC for making this possible."

—Jay Mathis, Waukon



Luke Hackman, Matt Marting, and Kelly Blockhus are the masterminds behind it all. There is a lot of work behind the scenes to make our internet connections work, and these are the three responsible for it. And, you'll see one of these friendly faces during your internet installation.



Here is a face to go with that friendly voice you hear on the phone! Carol Griebenow is ACSkyways Member Services Representative, responsible for incoming calls and scheduling internet and VoIP installations.



Mar. 2021
Awarded
Empower
Rural Iowa
Grant
\$4.5M

Dec. 2021
Awarded
Empower
Rural Iowa
Grant
\$272,468

Dec. 2021
Activated
first fiber
internet
customers

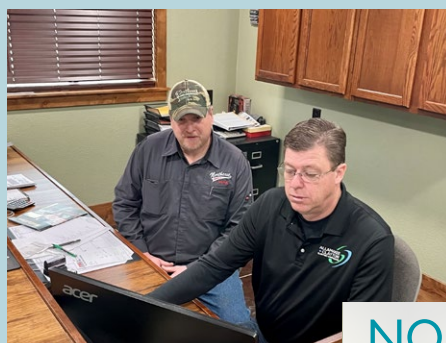
"This is the best internet service that I have ever had in twenty years. Matt and Kelly were professional, and the installation went very smoothly. We need fast and reliable internet for our business, and now we have it!"

—Cody Stilwell, West Side Waukon Lumber

Front, l-r: Hollee McCormick, Tami Stilwell, and Cody Stilwell. Back, l-r: Kelly Blockhus, Luke Hackman, Matt Marting, and Bob Stilwell



WEST SIDE WAUKON LUMBER



Matt Marting, AC Skyways IT Specialist, is pictured here with Jamie Dougherty, Owner of Northeast Auto Body during their fiber internet connection.

**Northeast Auto
Body is a new fiber
internet customer.**

Happy Fiber Internet
Customers!

Front: l-r Jamie Dougherty
and Mason Dougherty. Back,
l-r Matt Marting, Hollee
McCormick, Luke Hackman and
Kelly Blockhus.

NORTHEAST AUTO BODY



FLOORS PLUS

"We really like our fiber internet from ACSkyways. The service is so much faster than we have ever had. Installation was very quick and easy. Would definitely recommend ACSkyways! — Cary and Heather Hermanson, Owners of Floors Plus, Waukon

Floors Plus is one of the first businesses to AC Skyways fiber internet connection.

L-r: Cary and Heather Hermanson, owners, Matt Marting, Luke Hackman, Hollee McCormick, and Kelly Blockhus.

The power of human connections

CONSTRUCTION PLANS?

*Pre-planning is essential
for you and the Co-op*



**Call us early in the
planning process if you
are constructing grain
drying facilities, a home
addition, a new farm
building, or anything
else that may require
a service upgrade.**

**Aandi Deering, the
Cooperative's Staking Engineer, can answer
your questions regarding a line extension or
service upgrade.**



If you have plans to construct new or add on to grain drying facilities, a home addition, a new farm building, or anything else that requires an increase in amperage, please call us early in the planning to complete the work in time to accommodate your needs. Each year, especially during the heat of the summer, we receive outage calls from members who added central air, geothermal, or even built a new, larger home without notifying us. If the transformer is not large enough to handle the extra load, it can overload and create an unnecessary outage. Not only is the outage and equipment replacement costly for the Cooperative and its members, but it's also an unnecessary inconvenience for all members affected.

We urge all members to plan for any new services or improvements to existing services so the work can be arranged and completed on time. Also, give us a call if you have any questions regarding a line extension or a service upgrade. We can keep the power on and the costs down by working together. ■

THREE INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ELECTRICITY

By: Paul Wesslund

Electricity turns dark into light, makes hot foods cold and cold foods hot, washes the dishes, and searches the internet. It is essential to our everyday lives, so much so that we rarely think about it. But behind the scenes, exciting things are happening.

Here are three interesting facts about electricity that cause even some experts to scratch and shake their heads.



Electricity produced from power plants, solar panels, wind turbines, and hydro dams in the U.S. needs to be perfectly timed for when you decide to cook dinner, wash clothes, or watch TV.

1. Electricity must be used or stored after it's generated.

A rechargeable battery stores electricity—more on that later. But the kind of electricity you use in your home needs to be used after it's generated.

It's true. Electricity produced from power plants, solar panels, wind turbines, and hydro dams in the U.S. needs to be perfectly timed for when you decide to cook dinner, wash clothes or watch TV. The national grid of power generators, wires, and substations are an incredibly complex network that makes electricity flow smoothly.

A vast and intricate system of devices controls that power flow in a precisely balanced way. It's one reason utility operators must be strategic when adding renewable energy to the nation's fuel mix—a coal or natural gas plant can ramp generation up or down relatively quickly to meet changing energy demand. But solar energy and wind power depend more on the whims of Mother Nature, which adds an extra degree of difficulty to power management. However, technological advances could be a game-changer.

Large-scale battery storage technology is rapidly improving, allowing big batteries to offer another way for electric utilities

to better balance the flow and timing of electricity. Wider use of large utility-scale batteries could also make it much easier to add more solar and wind energy to our grid—by storing energy when it's breezy and sunny, then using it at night and during calm weather.

2. Power out? Blame a squirrel.

While severe weather causes most outages, if it's nice out and your electricity goes off, it could be caused by a squirrel.

We all know to play it safe around electricity, but squirrels don't. They scamper and chew around transformers, substations, and utility poles where they can disrupt high-voltage equipment, shutting down power for you and me.

But it's not just squirrels. Snakes, birds, and other critters can find their way into dangerous places. There's no official recordkeeping of wildlife-caused power outages, but estimates run as high as 20%.



Squirrels and other critters cause many power outages. They scamper and chew around transformers, substations, and utility poles where they can disrupt high-voltage equipment, shutting down power for you and me.

Electric utilities are constantly devising new ways to keep wildlife away from dangerous electrical equipment—the resulting power disruptions are inconvenient for us energy consumers and always fatal for the squirrel. **6362-X**

3. Highways could charge electric vehicles in the future.

If researchers have their way, electric vehicles wouldn't need to plug in—they could charge while we're driving them.

"Wireless dynamic charging" projects are underway around the world. The idea is similar to wireless chargers you can buy for your home electronics, the kind you can set near a charger rather than plugging in the smartphone or other device.

Charging cars while they're driving along the freeway is, of course, a lot more ambitious. But some developers predict that within five years, in addition to today's special high-occupancy-vehicle lanes for rush-hour traffic in large cities, there could be stretches of vehicle-charging lanes.



Wireless dynamic charging projects are underway around the world. Some developers predict that within five years, in addition to today's special high-occupancy-vehicle lanes for rush-hour traffic in large cities, there could be stretches of electric vehicle charging lanes.

Futurists expect electric trucks would be the most likely users of wireless charging lanes. Most electric cars, after all, can charge overnight in a residential garage. Wireless dynamic truck charging could keep the deliveries rolling rather than having drivers sitting and drinking coffee for the several hours it could take a conventional plug-in to get trucks back to full power.

Electricity is such a basic part of our everyday life, so it's easy to forget about it. But now and then, it's good to think about all its benefits and mysteries. That awareness can help make sure we pay attention to safety precautions, but also, sometimes it's good just to be amazed.

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

~~MARCH~~ MUFFIN MADNESS



LEMON BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

Muffins
 1 c. butter, melted
 3 c. flour
 1 tsp. salt
 2 c. sugar
 2 tsp. baking powder
 4 eggs, beaten
 ¼ c. milk
 1 ½ c. blueberries

Glaze
 1 c. powdered sugar
 ¼ c. lemon juice

In a large bowl, stir all muffin ingredients together; do not overmix. Fill greased muffin tins 2/3 full. Bake at 350° for 15-20 minutes. Cool 4-5 minutes and remove from pan. Stir together glaze ingredients and drizzle about 1 tsp. over each muffin.

Yield: 24 Muffins

Miranda Knobolch, St. Olaf

(CHOCOLATE CHIP) POUNDCAKE MUFFINS

1 ¾ c. flour
 ½ tsp. salt
 ¼ tsp. baking soda
 1 c. sugar
 ½ c. butter, softened

½ c. sour cream
 1 tsp. vanilla
 2 eggs
 ½ tsp. lemon extract (optional)
 1 c. chocolate chips (optional)

Preheat oven to 400°. Grease 9 muffin cups. In small bowl, stir flour, salt, and soda. In large bowl, beat sugar and butter until well combined. Beat in sour cream, vanilla and lemon extract if using until well blended. Beat in eggs one at a time until well blended. Beat in dry ingredients, stir until combined, add chocolate chips if using.

Spoon batter into muffin cups. Bake 18-25 minutes, until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 5 minutes before removing from muffin pans.

These are my go-to muffins for breakfast or brunch, birthday treats, you name it. I'm listing chocolate chips as optional because while 2 of my boys love them, one doesn't like chocolate and always asks for plain poundcake muffins.

Hallie Evans, New Albin

MINI MUFFINS

1 can flaky biscuits
 8 slices bacon, cooked, cooled, and crumbled
 1 small tomato, cut into small pieces and seeds removed
 ½ c. onion, chopped
 ⅓ – ½ c. mayonnaise
 ¾ – 1 c. Swiss cheese, grated
 1 tsp. basil

Combine bacon and tomato pieces, then add remaining ingredients, mixing well. Divide each biscuit into three parts. Press one part into mini muffin pan. Fill each biscuit with mixture. Bake 375° for 10 – 12 minutes. 15-20 servings.

Kathy Ender, Colesburg



BROWN SUGAR RHUBARB MUFFINS

3 c. flour
 1 ½ c. brown sugar
 1 tsp. baking soda
 1 tsp. salt
 1 c. buttermilk
 ⅔ c. vegetable oil
 2 tsp. vanilla
 2 c. diced rhubarb (fresh or frozen)
 1 c. chopped walnuts

Topping
 ¼ c. brown sugar
 ¼ c. chopped walnuts
 ½ tsp. cinnamon

In large bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, baking soda and salt. In small bowl, beat eggs, buttermilk, oil and vanilla. Stir into dry ingredients just until moist. Fold in rhubarb and walnuts. Fill paper lined muffin cups ¾ full. Bake at 375° for 18-20 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool 5 minutes before removing from pan. Mix topping ingredients and sprinkle on top of muffins.

Joyce Kuehl, Clermont (Highland Church)

BANANA ZUCCHINI MUFFINS

4 eggs
 2 c. sugar
 1 c. vegetable oil
 2 med. bananas, mashed (1 c.)
 3 c. flour

1 ½ tsp. baking powder
 1 ½ tsp cinnamon
 1 tsp. salt
 1 ½ c. shredded zucchini
 1 c. chopped pecans

Mix all ingredients well. Bake at 350° for 22 – 26 minutes.

Charlotte Christianson, Waukon

MORNING GLORY MUFFINS

2 eggs
 ¾ c. vegetable oil
 ¼ c. milk
 2 tsp. vanilla
 2 c. flour
 1 c. packed brown sugar
 2 tsp. baking soda

2 tsp. cinnamon
 1 ½ c. carrots, shredded (2-3 med.)
 1 c. apple, shredded
 ½ c. coconut
 ½ c. raisins
 ¾ c. walnuts

Heat oven to 350°. Place baking cups in 18 regular-sized muffin cups. Beat eggs, oil, milk, and vanilla until blended. Add flour, brown sugar, baking soda, and cinnamon. Blend until dry ingredients are moist. Stir in carrots, apples, coconut, raisins, and nuts. Divide batter evenly among muffin cups, filling each about ¾ full. Bake 20 – 25 minutes. Cool 5 minutes.

Jenette Schulte, Dorchester

Send your favorite recipes and/or recipe topics to Jenny McIntyre, ACEC, PO Box 715, Postville, IA 52162 or email jmcintyre@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 intended publication.

April–RHUBARB May–POTATOES June–STRAWBERRIES

FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

ACEC has hidden three Service Location numbers within this newsletter. The numbers are from three different regions of our service area – one is worth a **\$7.50** bill credit, and two are worth a **\$5** bill credit if found. The Service Location number must be yours to claim the bill credit, and you need to notify us when you find it.



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

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Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

PO Box 715 - Postville, IA 52162-0715

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

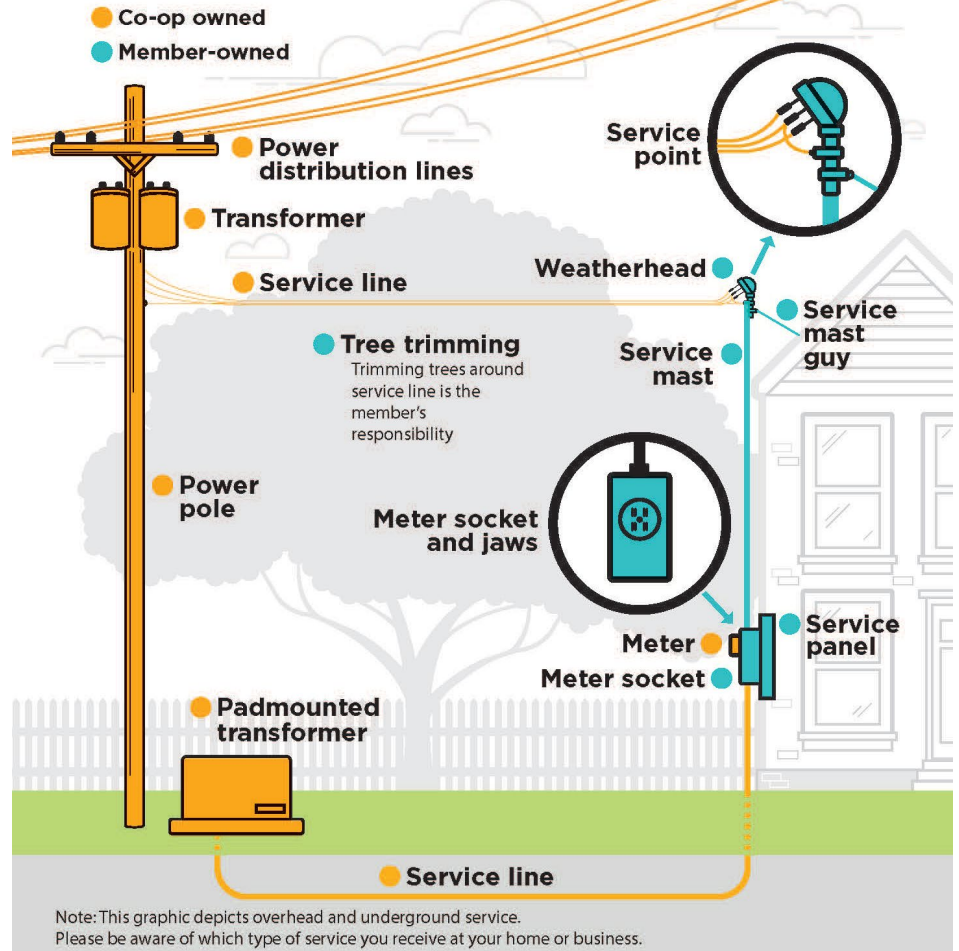


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U.S. Postage
PAID
DPC

Who Owns What?

Electric Co-op Owned Equipment vs Member-Owned Equipment

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in **gold**) and the member (in **blue**). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



STAY CONNECTED

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

