

ACEC NEWS

MAY 2026 | VOLUME 29 | ISSUE 05

From scholarship winners to ACEC linemen



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A MESSAGE FROM *Your General Manager*

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

FACTS, RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE CONVERSATION AROUND DATA CENTERS

In recent months, data centers have become a growing topic of conversation in communities across our region. It's hard to ignore the buzz around them. In fact, at a recent Clayton County Planning and Zoning meeting, residents raised a number of concerns about these facilities — from noise and water use to pollution and public health matters.

Whenever a new type of large electric load enters the public discussion, it is understandable that people have questions. It is also important that those conversations be grounded in facts.

As an electric cooperative, our role is not to advocate for or against a particular type of business development, such as a data center. Our responsibility is to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to the members and communities we serve. That obligation includes evaluating new requests for service fairly and carefully, whether they come from a farm, a manufacturing facility, a hospital, a school, or a data center.

At the same time, our ability to serve any new load is not unlimited. Every request must be assessed based on the capacity of the existing electric system, including local distribution facilities and the transmission network that supports them. Simply put, we can only accommodate new demand that our system can reliably handle. If a proposed project would exceed available capacity, significant upgrades may be required before service can be provided. And those upgrades would not fall on the members and ACEC to finance. Bottom

line - reliability for existing members will always remain the top priority.

Dispelling fiction from fact

Because data centers are large users of electricity and are currently a hot topic nation-wide, they naturally draw attention. They also tend to attract speculation, particularly when people are unfamiliar with how they operate. Some concerns deserve thoughtful review, especially those related to land use, local planning, water availability, and sound. Those are legitimate issues for communities and local governments to examine as part of the siting and permitting process.

However, some claims that circulate about data centers are simply not supported by evidence.

There have been claims that data centers inherently poison air or water. These claims should be approached with caution. Data centers do not produce emissions in the same way as manufacturing or combustion-based facilities. Their environmental footprint depends heavily on design, location, cooling technology, and compliance with applicable regulations. Some use significant amounts of water for cooling, while others rely on air-cooled systems, closed loop systems or other technologies that reduce water use. Some generate noticeable sound from cooling equipment and backup generators, while others incorporate design features to minimize noise. These are not issues to ignore, but neither should they be exaggerated beyond the facts.

Other comments are related to data centers causing health concerns, such as cancer. There is no credible scientific basis for that claim. Data centers are buildings that house computer servers, networking equipment, and cooling systems. They are not power plants, chemical processing facilities, or hazardous waste sites. Like many commercial and industrial buildings, they use electricity and mechanical equipment to operate, but there is no established evidence showing that properly designed and regulated data centers create cancer risks for nearby residents.

What is ACEC's role

It is important to distinguish between the electric utility's role and the role of local government.

Our cooperative's responsibility is to determine whether electric service can be provided safely and reliably, and what infrastructure may be needed to do so. Questions about zoning, land use compatibility, permitting, environmental review, and local ordinances are not handled by ACEC. That falls to our county or municipal officials. Those processes exist so that communities can weigh benefits, impacts, and appropriate safeguards.

As these discussions continue, our commitment is to remain factual, transparent, and focused on our mission. We understand that large projects can create uncertainty. We also understand that misinformation can spread quickly, especially when emotions run high. That is why it is so important to separate legitimate concerns from unsupported claims.

Our cooperative has an obligation to serve, but that duty is exercised responsibly. We do not promise service where the grid cannot support it. We do not ignore the need for system planning. And we do not dismiss the questions communities ask. Instead, we evaluate each request on its merits, consider the capabilities of our transmission system, and work within the regulatory and planning frameworks that govern these projects.

People may have different opinions about data centers and other forms of development. But productive public discussion depends on accurate information. As your electric cooperative, we will continue to do our part by focusing on reliability, fairness, and facts.

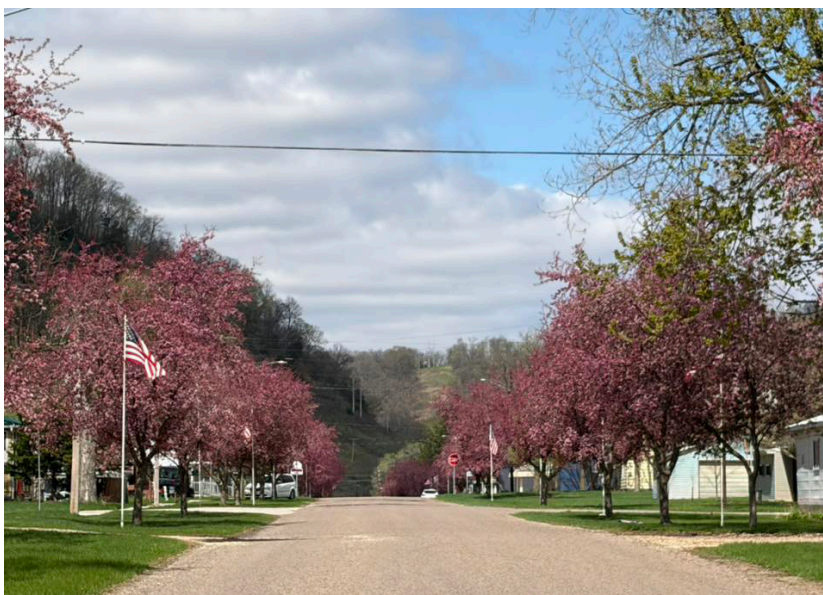
That means serving a new load when it is feasible, protecting service for existing members, and participating in these conversations with professionalism and clarity. Our responsibility is not to react to rumors, but to make sound decisions that support the long-term interests of the members and communities who depend on us every day. ■

You're invited to our 5th annual
Member Appreciation Picnic



THROUGH A MEMBER'S LENS

Harpers Ferry, spring looks good on you! This month we asked for your favorite photo you've taken recently. We selected this photo taken by Angie Daubenberger, highlighting the beautiful cherry blossom trees lining the street in Harpers Ferry. Thanks to everyone who submitted a photo! **165**



BOARD BRIEFS

April 30 Meeting

- Selected Jeff Bradley as nominee for Dairyland Power Board of Directors
- Set date for 2026 Annual Meeting: **September 14**
- Selected Delegate for Dairyland Power Annual Meeting
- Reviewed and Approved Composition of Director Districts
- Reviewed and Approved Board Policy 413 "Qualifications for Eligibility to Serve on the Board of Directors"
- Received a Safety Program update
- Received a Strategic Plan update
- Approved donation request to Allamakee County Fair and Country on the Creek

FOUR FORMER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS NOW KEEP THE LIGHTS ON AT ACEC

Since 1995, Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative has provided scholarships to over 50 local high school students who are pursuing a career in the electrical industry.

This year, we are proud to announce four recipients of the Hauschild Memorial Scholarship – Braxton Bormann, Caden Fette, Karl Peters and Carson Ruegnitz. We also are excited to announce the recipient of the inaugural Dairyland Power Cooperative Careers Scholarship – Brock Hackett.

"We firmly believe in helping local students get their start in the electrical industry, whether it's financially through our scholarships, by job shadow opportunities or just speaking at career fairs about the industry," said ACEC General Manager/Executive Vice President Hollee McCormick.

This scholarship opportunity has also provided an unexpected benefit for the future of the cooperative – giving students more cooperative knowledge and a future career goal.

Currently, we employ four linemen who were once recipients of the Hauschild Memorial Scholarship. All four said they had a goal of returning to the cooperative for a career.



Travis Erickson, Class of 2002

Travis Erickson was a 2002 graduate of Postville High School, with plans to go to the electrical line worker technology program at Minnesota West Community & Technical College in Jackson, Minnesota.

Travis said he had a few older classmates in high school who were also going to line school in Jackson. After talking to them about the program, he was inspired to pursue a career in the electrical field.

Once he finished his program, he spent a year working for Mueller Concrete before he was hired at ACEC. He said it was his goal to become a lineman here.

When asked what he enjoys about his career, he said he likes "being able to keep the lights on for our members."

Thank you Travis for your 21 years of service!



Blair Everman, Class of 2003

A 2003 graduate of Postville High School, Blair Everman knew he wanted to work outside. He also had a family tie to linework as an uncle was a linemen.

Blair also went to Minnesota West Community College. Right after graduation, he began his career at ACEC. He said his plan was always to find a line career close to home, having grown up four miles from the co-op.

When asked what advice he'd give to future linemen, he said "go out and talk to people who are linemen. Make sure you show up for work, both at school and on the job site, and work hard."

Thank you Blair for nearly 22 years of service!



Brent Schutte, Class of 2009

Brent Schutte, a 2009 graduate of Postville High School, said he found inspiration to become a lineman from his high school basketball coach, then-ACEC lineman Aandi Deering. Aandi served as a lineman for 14 years. He is currently our staking engineer.

After completing the lineman program at Minnesota West Community College, he worked for a contractor for five years before a line position opened at ACEC. Like Blair and Travis, Brent said he had a goal to come back to the place that gave him a scholarship. When asked what advice he'd give students interested in becoming a lineworker, he said he'd encourage them to do a job shadow and apply for opportunities like the 1,000 hour summer labor position at ACEC. He also said to be flexible with where your career takes you at first.

"Don't be afraid to travel when you're starting out. Take a job that has travel with it or doing contracting if you have to. A lot of students graduate and they can't find a job exactly where they want to be so they end up doing something in an unrelated field. Half my class was like that. Stay patient to get the job you really want," he said.

Thank you Brent for 10 years of service!



Sam Freitag, Class of 2020

Sam is a 2020 graduate of North Fayette Valley High School. Sam was introduced to linework from his dad, who worked for Alliant Energy in the natural gas division. Sam did a job shadow with Alliant when he was a sophomore in high school and realized linework was for him.

After earning his high school diploma, Sam went to Northwest Iowa Community College for the line program. In addition, Sam also got his associates degree. He was hired by ACEC in August 2022. **3927**

Sam said it was always his goal to become a lineworker close to his home. One benefit of working close to home is that after working to keep or restore the power for members, he gets to go home every night.

When asked what advice he'd give future lineworkers, he said to keep your options open after graduation.

"It's not always going to work out the way you want it to right away. Just be patient. I got really lucky."

Thank you Sam for nearly four years of service!



CONGRATULATIONS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

ACEC is proud to announce our 2026 scholarship winners!

Brock Hackett is the recipient of the Dairyland Power Cooperative Careers Scholarship! Brock is the son of Chad and Rachel Hackett of McGregor. He is a freshman at UW-Platteville, majoring in civil engineering.

This year, ACEC awarded a Hauschild Memorial Scholarship to four students! The Hauschild Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1995 in memory of Robert "Bill" Hauschild by his wife and family. It is awarded to seniors in our service footprint who plan to enter a course of study in the electrical field. This year's recipients include:



Braxton Bormann

Central High School. Braxton is the son of Jarod and Jaclyn Bormann. He plans to attend Northwest Iowa Community College to study in the powerline program.



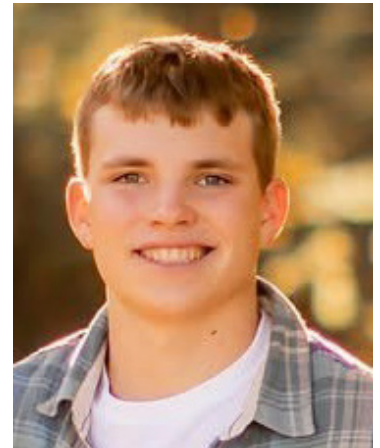
Caden Fette

Central High School. Caden is the son of Adam and Candace Fette. He plans to attend Northwest Iowa Community College to study in the powerline program.



Karl Peters

Postville High School. Karl is the son of Derrick and Maria Peters. He plans to attend Iowa State University to study electrical engineering.



Carson Ruegnitz

Central High School. Carson is the son of Chad and Kelly Ruegnitz. He plans to attend Southwest Technical College to study in the electrical power distribution program.

We invite our members to help support the next generation of local power leaders by donating to our scholarship fund. Contributions of any amount help provide educational opportunities for students in our communities and make a lasting difference as they pursue college, technical school, or career training.

Building Transmission

Unprecedented electric load growth in the U.S. is causing congestion and bottlenecks within the nation's high-voltage power infrastructure, impacting electricity costs and reliability. Industry observers agree that new transmission is critically needed, and electric cooperatives are using their community connection and member focus to navigate a gamut of challenges and complete projects as quickly and affordably as possible.

Agency approvals

Lines usually cross multiple federal, state, local and tribal jurisdictions.

Rights-of-way

Hundreds and even thousands of easements needed.

Environmental studies

Projects must document and mitigate impacts.

Permitting

Federal, state and local timelines are often long and uncertain.

Litigation

Project decisions are frequently challenged and appealed in court.

“Who pays?”

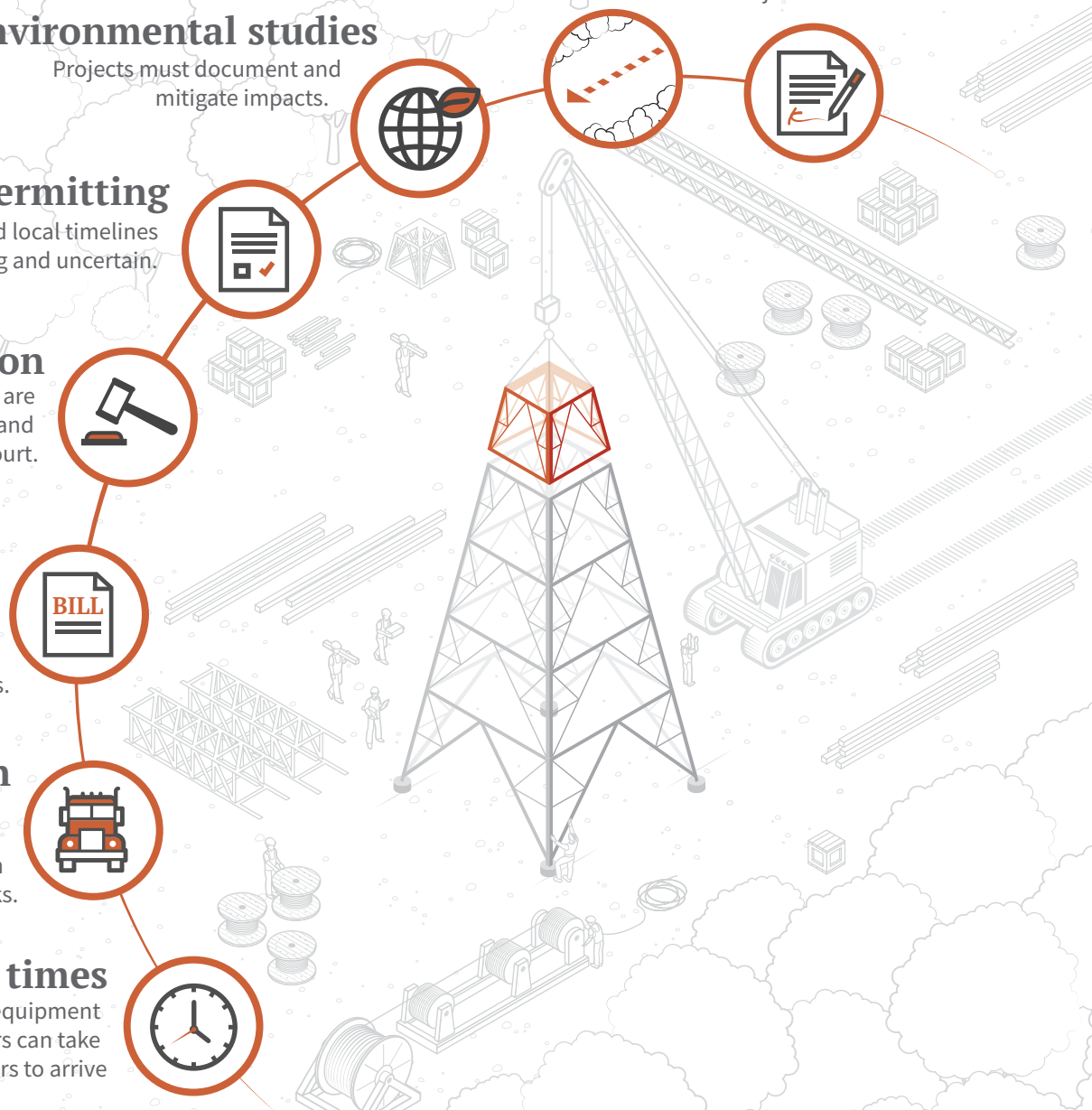
Whole regions get the benefits, while specific states or utilities often bear the costs.

Supply chain

Materials shortages, logistics and workforce constraints often cause bottlenecks.

Lead times

Critical high-voltage equipment like large transformers can take months or years to arrive



Source: NRECA; Design: Kevin Kepple

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.

JUNE – GRILLED FAVORITES, JULY – ICE CREAM/COLD DESSERTS



POT ROAST

- 2 ½ lb. beef roast
- ½ c. chopped celery
- 5 carrots, cut in large pieces
- 4 onions, cut in large pieces
- 5 large potatoes, cut in large pieces
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. tapioca
- 1 large can tomatoes, mashed

Directions

Brown meat on all sides. Add all other ingredients. Bake in covered roaster at 250°F for 4-5 hours.

■ **Kathy Ender, Colesburg**

MISSISSIPPI ROAST

- 3 lb. roast (any variety you prefer)
- 1 small jar pepperoncini with liquid
- 1 tsp. rosemary
- 1 tsp. thyme
- 2 tsp. onion powder
- 4 c. beef broth

Directions

Place all ingredients in slow cooker and cook on low for 9-12 hours.

■ **Kiley Roth, Postville**

SPANISH GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

- 1 lb. ground beef
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 16 oz. can of green beans
- 10 ½ oz. can tomato soup
- 1 ½ tsp. chili powder, seasoned to taste

Directions

Brown beef and onion with salt in skillet. Add other ingredients and mix lightly. Pour into greased 1 ½ qt. casserole dish. Bake at 300°F for 30 minutes.

■ **Becky Engelhardt, Postville**

RAISIN CREAM PIE

- 1 c. raisins
- 2 c. milk
- 1 c. sugar
- 3 Tbsp. flour
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 3 eggs
- Pie shell (baked)

Directions

Cook raisins until soft in enough water to cover the bottom of the pan. Mix 1 c. milk with the sugar and flour. Mix well. Add rest of milk to the raisins, which are still on low heat in the pan. When heated through, add mixture of milk, sugar and flour. Cook until thick. Beat the 3 egg yolks with mixture. Add ½ c. of the hot mixture to the eggs and mix well. Pour into the hot mixture and cook a few minutes, stirring constantly over low heat. Add a pinch of salt. Remove from heat and add 1 tsp. of vanilla. Pour into a baked pie shell. It can be topped with meringue. This also tastes great when poured over chocolate cake. It keeps in refrigerator a few days. It can be warmed up.

■ **Lynn Monroe, Postville**

Looking for a recipe from a previous newsletter? Wanting to try something new?

Check out the recipe section on our website:
<https://acrec.com/member-recipes>.

Every recipe submitted to the newsletter is posted on the website. Be sure to submit your recipe for publication as well – people who submit a published recipe receive a \$5 bill credit!

CYBERSECURITY Tip of the MONTH

Sponsored by



You don't need to be courteous to scammers! Here are a few steps to handling suspected "vishing" (voice phishing):

- 1. Hang up.** You're under no obligation to stay on the line. If the call feels off, it probably is. Just hang up.
- 2. Don't press buttons or speak.** Robocalls may prompt you to "press 1 to speak to an agent." Don't. Interacting confirms your number is active and may lead to more scams. Hang up.
- 3. Don't give any information.** Never share personal information, such as account numbers, passwords or your Social Security number, over the phone. Hang up.
- 4. Verify independently.** If you're worried the call might be real, hang up...and then call back using an official number from the company's website or your account statement. If the call was from someone you know, use the phone number in your contacts. Scammers can spoof phone numbers, so don't just call the same number back.

~ Courtesy of staysafeonline.org

FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

Congratulations to Jeremy and Lea Van Horn, who found their service number in a recent newsletter. They were awarded a \$12.50 bill credit. Also, congratulations to Ethel Wright, who found her service location number in a recent Newsletter. Her name was misspelled in the April Newsletter. We apologize for this mistake. ACEC has hidden three Service Location numbers within this newsletter. The numbers are from different regions of our service area – **two are worth \$10.00 and one is worth \$5.00**. The service location number must be yours to claim the credit, and you need to notify us when you find it.



CONTACT ACEC

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811

SKYWAYS INTERNET SOLUTIONS
800-864-1611

WEBSITE

acrec.com

OFFICE HOURS

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

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888-788-1551 or 563-864-7611

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JOB SHADOW

ACEC recently hosted two high school students for job shadow opportunities. Central High School senior Max Fettkether (left) went out with ACEC Hot Line Foreman Jack Regan and saw everything from construction to climbing poles to underground lines. Max plans to enroll in the linemen program at Dakota County Technical College. Waukon High School junior Jaxon Regan (right) recently observed Staking Engineer Aandi Deering (pictured) and Engineering Coordinator Brennen Gunderson. **5381-3** ■



WELCOME KAE!

ACEC welcomed Kael Crawford to the Co-op in late April. Kael is the co-op's newest apprentice lineworker. Kael previously worked at the co-op as a summer laborer in 2023. After graduating from Waukon High School in 2023, Kael completed the lineman program at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon. He worked for IES Electrical after graduation. Most recently, he was employed by Dairyland Power Cooperative. In his free time, Kael likes to hunt, hang out with his friends and go on the river. Welcome Kael! ■