

ACEC NEWS

OCTOBER 2026 | VOLUME 29 | ISSUE 09

ACEC IN DC

LIHEAP
GUIDELINES

ANNUAL MEETING
PRIZE WINNERS



ELECTION
RESULTS

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A MESSAGE FROM *Your General Manager*

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

THIS FALL, REFRESH YOUR CYBERSECURITY HABITS

As the leaves begin to change and we settle into the routines of fall, it's a good time to take stock of a few things around the house—preparing for cooler weather, checking our heating systems and getting ready for the months ahead. It's also a good time to refresh our cybersecurity habits.

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, but protecting your personal information is something that deserves attention all year long.

At Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative, cybersecurity is a critical part of providing safe, reliable electric service. While much of our focus is on protecting the physical systems that operate the electric grid, we also work to protect the systems and information that help us serve you—including online accounts, payment systems, member portals and outage communications.

Unfortunately, scammers are becoming more sophisticated, too. Artificial intelligence (AI) is making it easier for cyber criminals to create convincing emails, text messages, websites and even voice messages that can look and sound legitimate. The FBI has warned that generative AI can make fraudulent schemes more believable by eliminating many of the errors that once helped us identify a scam.

That matters when it comes to utility scams.

A scammer may impersonate ACEC and claim your account is past due, your service is about to be disconnected or you need to make an immediate payment.

The message might even include our logo, use professional-looking language or direct you to a website that appears legitimate. With AI helping scammers create more convincing communications, simply looking for spelling mistakes or other obvious warning signs may no longer be enough. And these scams are not a small problem.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, consumers reported losing \$3.5 billion to imposter scams in 2025, making these types of scams the most commonly reported type of fraud. Nearly one in three fraud reports involved an imposter scam.

So, what should you do if you receive an unexpected message claiming to be from us?

If a message creates a sense of urgency or threatens immediate disconnection, take a moment to verify it. Don't click the link or call the phone number provided in the message. Instead, contact our office directly using our trusted methods. You can reach us by phone at (888) 788-1551; through our website at www.acrec.com; or by email at acrec@acrec.coop.

You can also take steps to protect your online accounts before a scam occurs. Start with your password. Longer is generally better than simply adding more special characters. Choose a long, unique passphrase that is difficult for others to guess, and don't reuse the same password across multiple accounts.

If the accounts you access online offer multifactor authentication (MFA), consider using it. MFA adds an extra layer of protection by requiring an additional way to verify your identity, such as a code sent to your phone or an authentication app.

Most importantly, if something seems a little off, call and check in. We want you to have an opportunity to verify any unexpected request.

ACEC is committed to protecting the systems that help us deliver your electricity and serve our members. You can help by protecting your own account, slowing down when something seems urgent and contacting us directly when you're unsure.

For questions about your account or payment options, contact our office at (888) 788-1551. ■

BOARD BRIEFS

September 28

Re-Organizational Meeting

- Election of Officers:
 - ◊ President – Al Steffens
 - ◊ Vice President – Brice Wood
 - ◊ Secretary/Treasurer – Cindy Heffern

Regular Board Meeting

- Heard presentation from Youth Tour attendees, Ben Gelner & Bryce Kelly
- Annual Meeting recap presentation
- Approved 2027 IAEC Health Care Plan Agreement
- Presentation summarizing 2026 Dairyland Capital Credit Retirement Payment
- Approved IRS Form 990/990T Tax Return
- Approved RLF to Ulring & Sons Timber Co.
- Approved donations to Allamakee County Economic Development, Northeast Iowa Business Network (NIBN) and Partners in Vocational Education

ACEC's Brenda Hackman advocates for rural Iowans in DC

Hackman travels with others from IAEC Delegation

Advocates representing Iowa's electric cooperatives traveled to Washington D.C. to discuss rural Iowa priorities with our elected officials in mid-September.

Organized by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, the group met with Iowa's congressional delegation and key staff to discuss federal policies impacting rural electric cooperatives and the communities they serve. The advocates included cooperative leaders and staff representing a broad range of experience and expertise from across the state, including:

- **Brenda Hackman**, manager of economic development and community relations at ACEC
- **Branden Yates**, government relationships specialist at Dairyland Power Cooperative
- **Mike Walton**, VP of engineering and system planning at MiEnergy Cooperative
- **Kevin Condon**, director of public affairs at Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO)
- **Gary Kester**, board director at Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative and CIPCO

Their diverse perspectives helped illustrate the real-world impacts of federal policy decisions on Iowa's rural electric cooperatives and member-consumers.

During the fly in, the group met directly with Sen. Chuck Grassley, Sen. Joni Ernst, and Rep. Zach Nunn, as well as staff from Iowa's three other congressional offices, including Congresswoman Ashley Hinson's representative. Discussions focused on several key priorities for electric cooperatives, including FEMA reform to improve disaster response and recovery efforts, permitting reform to help streamline critical infrastructure projects, and increasing Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Electric Loan Program funding to \$12 billion in FY2027 to support continued investment in the rural electric grid. **H394**

Hackman highlighted the success of the USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) Program, sharing examples of how the program has supported economic growth, expanded opportunities and improved quality of life in rural Iowa communities.

"When we meet with our federal elected officials, we have an opportunity to share stories about the impact and the importance of federal and state programs in the rural communities we serve," said Hackman. "The USDA REDLG program has helped turn local projects into real opportunities for growth. I was proud to bring these Iowa stories, along with future project opportunities and community needs, to Washington, D.C."

These meetings provided an important opportunity to strengthen relationships with Iowa's federal policymakers and ensure the voice of electric cooperatives remains part of the conversation as Congress considers policies that affect rural infrastructure, economic development and the future of rural America.

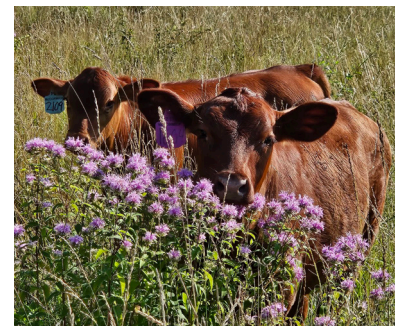
Learn more about the grassroots advocacy efforts at www.IAruralpower.org and follow Iowa Rural Power on social media. ■



ACEC's Brenda Hackman traveled with a delegation from Iowa to Washington D.D. to advocate for rural Iowans. Pictured are Brenda Hackman; Branden Yates, Dairyland Power Cooperative; and Mike Walton, MiEnergy Cooperative.

THROUGH A MEMBER'S LENS

It's fall on the farms. While our local farmers were busy getting in the fields in between all the rain, our members were able to snap some great photos of their families and property.



Thank you to Laurie Blietz for this photo of checking cattle for her son-in-law.

We our Members!

Thank you to everyone who attended our 88th Annual Meeting on Monday, Sept. 14.

We welcomed 276 vehicles through our garage, serving close to 500 meals. We also had 612 ballots cast, either at the meeting or before.



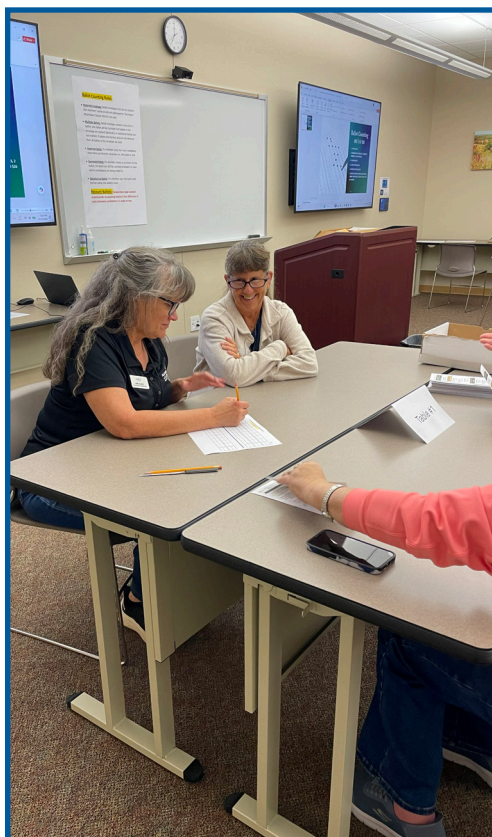
Members Duane and Linda Mork attended their first Annual Meeting after being members for over six decades. They are pictured with ACEC General Manager Hollee McCormick.



ACEC's Stacy Stock and Aandi Deering were enjoying serving the meals.



After 18 years serving as a Board Director, Mike Gibbs officially served at his last Annual Meeting. He is pictured with Hollee McCormick.



ACEC's Kim Kloke sits with members of the Nominating Committee, including Joan Schwartz, while counting ballots.



AC Skyways representatives Kelly Blockhus (left) and Matt Marting (right) chat with a member.

Two new directors on Board



**CINDY
HEFFERN**
HARPERS FERRY



**DAN
BYRNES**
WAUKON



**PEGGY
CONNOR**
FARMERSBURG

It was a close race in both districts for the Board of Directors, following the 88th Annual Meeting on Sept. 14. Members were asked to vote for two directors in District A and one in District C. A total of 612 ballots were cast.

In District A, incumbent Cindy Heffern, Harpers Ferry, was re-elected to her position. Filling a vacant seat, Dan Byrnes, Waukon, narrowly defeated Kerry Troendle, also of Waukon, by just three votes. Byrnes takes over for Mike Gibbs, who opted not to run for re-election after 18 years on the board.

In District C, Peggy Connor, Farmersburg, defeated incumbent Greg Formanek, also of Farmersburg, by two votes.

Thank you to our nominating committee members who counted the votes and certified the results. **4756A**

At the September 28 regular board meeting, the board selected: Al Steffens, president; Brice Wood, vice president; and Cindy Heffern, secretary/treasurer. ■



Tell Us Your Thoughts!

In your October bill statement, we included a survey about the future of our Annual Meeting. Even if you didn't attend this year, we'd like to hear your thoughts on future meetings. Everyone who returns the survey by November 15 will be entered into a drawing for one of two \$30 bill credits.

Want to complete the survey online? Scan this QR code



Congratulations to our winners!

\$50 BILL CREDIT

Robert & Patricia Penrod, Postville
Anthony & Jean Mueller, Monona
Mark & Nancy Arthur, Harpers Ferry
Lester & Janet Baade, West Union
Brent & Vivian Bruns, Monona
Michael & Hollee McCormick, Harpers Ferry

\$25 BILL CREDIT WINNERS

Steve Aulwes, Elkport
Cynthia Lee, Waterville
Patricia Blake, Dorchester
Kuhens Well, Harpers Ferry
Lucille Eberhardt, Elkader
Lawrence & Patricia Howell, Wadena
Kenneth & Le Ann Popenhagen, Wadena
Carl & Romona Mullarkey, Lansing
James Pladsen, Waukon
Beverly Bacon, Postville

\$20 BILL CREDIT WINNERS

Jim & Ardis Smith, Elgin
Dennis & Barbara Nebendahl, Waterville
Patricia Heins, Luana
Neal & Sheryl Struthers, West Union
Neil & Cindy Landt, Luana

Mark & Pam Halverson, Wadena
Woodside Lane Homeowners Association, Waukon
Mary Pladsen, Waukon
Joe Duwe & Dennis Koenig, Castalia
Bruce & Connie Snitker, Harpers Ferry
Cindy Berns, Postville
Gibbs Dairy LLC, Waterville
Joyce Kiley, Harpers Ferry
Zack & Rachael Bushman, Waukon
Southern Comfort Homeowners, Postville
Terry & Janice Foels, Luana
Leo & Jo Ann Folsom, Waukon
Gary & Patsy Spies, Elgin
Albert & Trudy Hanson, Elgin
Donald Egeland, Ossian
Robert & Jane Halverson, West Union
James & Joyce Bakewell, Lansing
Cyril & Jane Vorwald, Garber
James & Lori Koester, West Union
David Green, Elgin
Kent & Linda Burns, Postville
Virgil Dennler, Elkader
Patrick & Karen Whalen, Lansing
Alan & Connie Ruff, Farmersburg
Jo Ann Moss, West Union

Gail Olson, Volga
Kenneth & Sharon Larson, Dorchester
Kannon Grotegut, Waukon
Susan Kuennen, Elgin
Jeffrey Kruse, Harpers Ferry
Patrick Delaney & Patricia Berg, Lansing
Kathleen & Mark Kisner, Hawkeye
Vernell & Sharon Gookin, Postville
Paul & Lynn Jones, Harpers Ferry
Velma Jones, Hawkeye
Dakota Pattee, Postville
Gale & Kathy Koenig, Castalia
Travis Schnuelle, Waukon
Donald & Barb McCormick, Harpers Ferry
Craig & Jill Sebastian, Castalia
Mary Heiden, Elkader
Vicky Hinsbrock, Clermont
Andrew & Emily Moore, Harpers Ferry
Jeffrey & Judy Huinker, Postville
Megan Fahey, Waukon
Jeff & Janell Bradley, Wadena
Jason & Brooke Troendle, Waukon

ONE 5-YEAR SOLAR PANEL SUBSCRIPTION

Jonathan Rose, Elgin
Chelsea Atherton, Castalia

Iowa LIHEAP 2026-2027 Guidelines

Residential Members: Help with Your Heating Bill

The 2026-2027 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

WHEN TO APPLY:

- * **Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled:** October 1, 2026 to April 30, 2027
- * **All other households:** November 1, 2026 to April 30, 2027

WHAT TO PROVIDE:

- * **Proof of Income** (for all household members age 18 and over) Depending upon your household income type, income documentation from the past 30 days, the last 12 months, or last calendar year, whichever is easier or more beneficial for you.
- * **Social Security numbers for all household members** (documentation required)
- * **Most recent heat bill**
- * **Most recent electric bill**

WAGE EARNERS:

Please bring copies of your check stubs for the 30-day period preceding the date of application, or a copy of your federal income tax return.

FIXED INCOME:

This income may include: Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Family Investment Program, Veteran's Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and pensions. Please provide copies of your check stubs from the previous 30 days.

SELF-EMPLOYED/FARMERS:

Please provide a copy of your most recent federal income tax return.

If you are having financial difficulties and cannot pay your electric bill, communicating with ACEC is essential. Don't ignore disconnection notices. Contact us at 1-888-788-1551 to discuss winter disconnection protection and the steps required to avoid being disconnected. Even if you don't qualify for energy assistance, the cooperative can help set up a payment plan to help members through tough times to avoid disconnection at any time of the year.

Contact the local Northeast Iowa Community Action Agency in your area:

Allamakee County:

Waukon	955 3rd Ave NW	(563) 568-4224
Postville	134 W Greene St.	(563) 380-2780

Clayton County:

Elkader	600 Gunder Rd NE	(563) 245-2452
Guttenberg	514 S. River Park Dr.	(563) 380-3728

Fayette County:

West Union	114 N. Vine St.	(563) 422-3354
Oelwein	1 W. Charles St., Suite 5	(319) 283-2510

Winneshiek County:

Decorah	305 Montgomery St.	(563) 387-4958
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Income Maximums

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$31,920
2	\$43,280
3	\$54,640
4	\$66,000
5	\$77,360
6	\$88,720
7	\$100,080
8	\$111,440

Note: For households with more than eight members, add \$11,360 for each additional member.

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. **5244**

November – HOLIDAY TREATS, DECEMBER – APPETIZERS, JANUARY – HEALTHY OPTIONS



CREAMY CHICKEN AND WILD RICE SOUP

- 2 c. cooked, shredded chicken
- ¾ c. uncooked wild rice blend
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 celery stalks, sliced
- 6 c. chicken broth
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- ½ c. half-and-half or milk
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

Melt butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion, carrots and celery; cook for 5 minutes. Stir in rice, broth and thyme. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30-35 minutes, until the rice is tender. Stir in chicken and half-and-half. Heat through without boiling. Season with salt and pepper before serving.

ONE-PAN LEMON GARLIC CHICKEN

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lemon, sliced
- ½ c. chicken broth
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 c. broccoli florets

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place chicken and broccoli in a baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil and season with garlic, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Pour chicken broth around the chicken and top with lemon slices. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until chicken reaches 165° internally. Serve with rice, pasta or crusty bread.

CHICKEN AND VEGETABLE PASTA BAKE

- 3 c. cooked, chopped chicken
- 12 oz. penne or rotini pasta
- 2 c. marinara sauce
- 1 c. frozen or fresh spinach
- 1 c. diced bell pepper
- 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
- ½ c. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F. Cook pasta according to package directions; drain. In a large bowl, combine pasta, chicken, marinara sauce, spinach, bell pepper and Italian seasoning. Transfer mixture to a greased 9x13 in. baking dish. Sprinkle with mozzarella and Parmesan. Bake uncovered for 25-30 minutes, until hot and bubbly. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. **Note – cook chicken to an internal temperature of 165°F, measured in the thickest part.**

ON THE COVER

Thanks to ACEC employee and member Kim Kloke, who submitted this beautiful photo of fall colors. Also on the cover are nominating committee members Roger Arthur and Mark Brase.

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

AC SKYWAYS
INTERNET SOLUTIONS
BY ALLAMAKEE • CLAYTON
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



A social media account takeover is when someone gains unauthorized access to your account and uses it as if they were you. They might change your password to lock you out, send scam messages to friends and followers, share malicious links or fake promotions, attempt to steal money or personal information from your contacts, or use your account to spread malware or misinformation. Sometimes criminals don't need to hack your account at all. Instead, they create a fake social media profile using your publicly available information, such as your name, profile photo and bio. How can you protect your social media accounts? A few tips include: Use long, unique passwords; turn on multifactor authentication (MFA); keep your devices and software updated; watch out for phishing messages; review privacy settings; be cautious with friend requests.

~ Courtesy of
staysafeonline.org

FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

ACEC has hidden three Service Location numbers within this newsletter. The numbers are from different regions of our service area – **one is worth \$10.00 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.



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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AL STEFFENS, President, Clermont

BRICE WOOD, Vice President, Lansing

CINDY HEFFERN, Sec./Treas., Harpers Ferry

JEFF BRADLEY, Wadena

DAN BYRNES, Waukon

PEGGY CONNOR, Farmersburg

NELSON CONVERSE, Postville

RON HARTMAN, Sumner

JERRY KELEHER, Elkader

MANAGEMENT STAFF

HOLLEE McCORMICK, EVP/General Manager

JENNIFER ACHENBACH, Manager,
Marketing & Communications

DAVID DECKER, Director,
Finance & Administrative Services

BRENDA HACKMAN, Manager, Economic
Development & Community Relations

JENI KOLSRUD, Manager, Information
Technology

JASON TROENDLE, Director,
Operations & Engineering

RYAN WAGNER, Manager, Member Services

    **STAY CONNECTED**



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FREE HOME ENERGY AUDITS IN CLAYTON CO.

The Clayton County Energy District is offering free home energy services for income qualifying households located in Clayton County.

A home energy audit is a detailed assessment of a home's energy use based on data gathered from expert testing. Personalized energy coaching helps determine energy priorities, objectives, timelines and potential budgets. Both programs help identify ways to reduce energy costs, improve home comfort, evaluate clean energy options and optimize overall energy use.

"An energy audit provides so much valuable information, and I'm very excited to be able to help provide this service to our neighbors in Clayton County. It's a tool which helps homeowners to gain a better understanding of their home's efficiency and to direct their efforts into improvements that will provide the most benefit to them in the future," said Clayton County Energy District Energy Coach Jake McGreal.

Eligible households include those at or below 150% of the area median income.

To get started, use the QR code to visit the CCED website (<https://claytoncounty.energydistrict.org/>) and complete the sign-up form. Once submitted, an energy coach will follow up to schedule either a phone consultation or an in-home visit, depending on the requested service. ■

