

SEASONS GREETINGS FROM ACEC!



CONGRATS
ROGER!

OPERATION
ROUND-UP GRANT

RE CARE



A MESSAGE FROM *Your General Manager*

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

CONNECTING OUR PAST TO OUR FUTURE

As 2025 draws to a close, it's natural to look back on the year that was and look forward to what may come in 2026. However, it's hard to look at what our immediate future might bring without taking a deeper dive into our overall history.

When the rural residents of Allamakee and Clayton counties gathered to form our REC in 1938, they were focused on bringing electricity to their homes and farms, something the municipal power companies weren't willing to do.

Today, we are nearly 40 employees strong, bringing power over 2,500 miles of line in the beautiful hills and valleys in parts of eight counties.

Despite the constant work to upgrade our infrastructure, the fact remains that as a nation, our electrical grid needs a major upgrade.

The backbone of our national electrical system, the power grid, was largely built in the mid-20th century. Designed to meet the needs of a different era, much of this infrastructure is now reaching the end of its useful life. This includes transmission lines, substations, and transformers, many of which are over 50 years old. As these components age, they become less reliable and more prone to failures, which can lead to outages and increased maintenance costs. While we strive every year to stay on top of the replacement schedule, the fact remains that infrastructure is reaching the end of its lifecycle faster than we can replace it.

Moreover, the traditional grid was designed for a one-way flow of electricity—from centralized power plants to consumers. Today, with the rise of renewable energy sources like wind and solar, along with the increasing prevalence of electric vehicles and smart technologies, our grid must adapt to a more dynamic and decentralized model.

Bracing for a sustainable future

Modernizing our power grid is not just about replacing old equipment; it's about transforming how we generate, distribute, and consume electricity. It's not just an effort we can make as members of ACEC but it's something that needs to happen nation-wide. These efforts include:

1. **Grid Modernization Investments:**

We are constantly looking for ways to upgrade our system to improve reliability and accommodate new technologies. This includes deploying smart meters, enhancing communication networks and implementing advanced grid management systems.

2. **Renewable Energy Integration:**

Integrating renewable energy sources into our grid is another priority. This concept involves not only expanding renewable energy capacity but also enhancing grid flexibility to accommodate the variable nature of wind and solar power. These projects not only reduce the carbon footprint but also provide economic benefits to communities.

3. **Enhancing Grid Resilience:**

Enhancing the resilience of our nation's grid is vital. This includes reinforcing infrastructure to withstand extreme conditions and investing in cybersecurity measures to protect against potential threats.

The Role of Data Centers

As we modernize our grid, data centers are becoming increasingly important. These facilities are the backbone of our digital economy, supporting everything from cloud computing to streaming services.

At its core, data centers are facilities used to house computer systems. They are essential for hosting websites, managing cloud services and support data storage needs. Data centers are nothing new. However, as the demand for data processing and storage grows, so does the need for reliable and efficient power for everyone.

Data centers are energy-intensive, but they also present opportunities for innovation. By locating data centers where it fits into the existing transmission lines and implementing energy-efficient technologies, we can reduce their environmental impact and enhance grid stability. Additionally, data centers can serve as flexible energy resources, participating in demand response programs to help balance supply and demand on the grid.

At this time, ACEC does not have a data center on its lines. However, that doesn't mean there won't be one in the future. Representatives from data centers frequently reach out to utilities, including ACEC. We are certainly open to learning about their business, as we have an obligation to serve those wishing service on our lines.

Although they often receive negative attention in the media, there are benefits to data centers that we cannot ignore. They can bring significant economic growth. There's also an increased demand for electricity, which means increased revenue for the Co-op. As a not-for-profit utility, that means more stable rates and more margins returned in the form of capital credits.

Looking Ahead

As we navigate the complexities of modernizing our aging infrastructure, we remain focused on our mission to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy to our members. The challenges are significant, but so are the opportunities. By embracing innovation and investing in the future, we can ensure that our electrical system meets the needs of our members today and for generations to come. ■

BOARD BRIEFS November 24 Meeting

- Approved Non-Union Employee Wage Plan
- Approved Tariff revision regarding idle services
- Approved Term and Power Purchase Rates for Teeple Creek Solar Project
- Reviewed Annual Meeting survey data
- Approved a Cost-Share Application for Harpers Ferry Booster Club
- Reviewed 2026 ACEC and Dairyland Scholarship guidelines
- AC Skyways year in review
- Human Resources year in review
- Approved a donation to NE Iowa Wellness & Recreation Center



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 **\$474,842.32** in patronage dividends to members and former members who purchased electricity from ACEC in 2002 and 2003. This distribution includes patronage dividends from Dairyland Power Cooperative (\$200,678.51 for 2000, 2001 and 2002).

ROGER ARTHUR INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME

It was the bow on top of the 33-year electric cooperative career for former ACEC Director Roger Arthur.

In late November, Roger was officially inducted into the Iowa Institute of Cooperatives Hall of Fame. The induction happened during the 75th Annual Meeting, held in Ankeny. Roger was inducted along with Dyle Erickson, who served 37 years total on the Farmers Cooperative Association of Humboldt, which later merged to become NEW Cooperative.

In 1992, Roger was asked to fill an open season on the ACEC Board of Directors. In 1993, following his first full term, he was voted by his peers to serve as the Board President, a role he retained for 25 years.

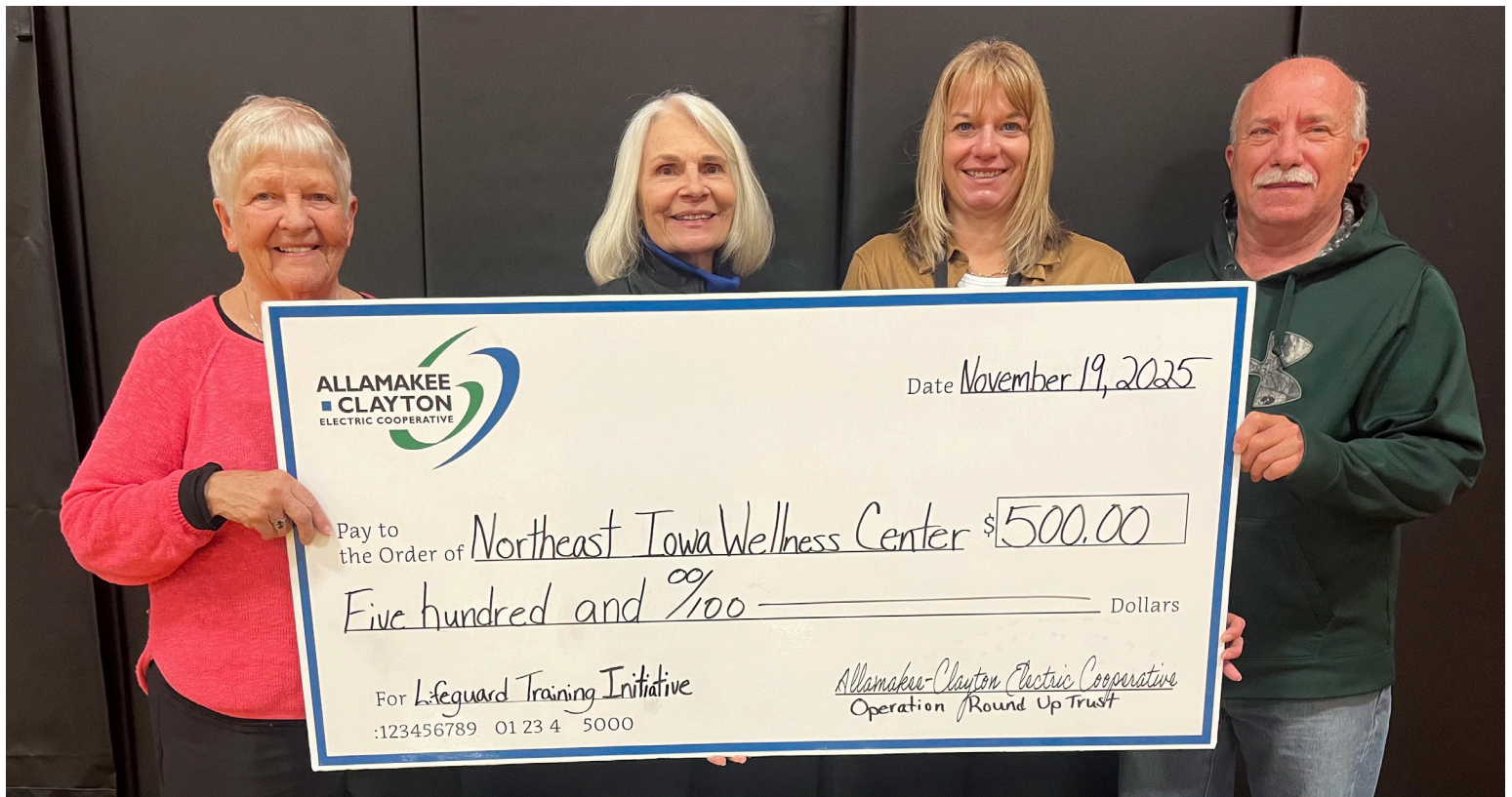


His role extended beyond the hills of Northeast Iowa. He served on the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives Board for 12 years, including as the president for eight years. He also was elected to the Natural Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Cooperation, serving on the executive committee and later as the president for a term.

Roger was nominated by current ACEC General Manager Hollee McCormick, with support from the current Board. The Iowa Institute of Cooperatives received over 20 Hall of Fame nominations this year.

During his acceptance speech, Roger thanked the Board for their continued support. He also thanked the support from Cheryl, his wife of 58 years, as well as daughters Angie and Mandy.

Thank you, Roger, for all you've done for our Cooperative and Congratulations on your Hall of Fame induction! ■



OPERATION ROUND UP AWARDS FIRST GRANT

The Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative Operation Round Up program reached a big milestone this fall after years of work to promote the program and award the first grant.

The ACEC volunteer trust board for Operation Round Up selected the Northeast Iowa Wellness Center in Postville as its first grant recipient. The grant will provide two scholarships to cover the cost of the lifeguard certification course for the wellness center. **1573-10**

What is Operation Round Up?

Operation Round Up (ORU) is funded by donations to ACEC and is separate from our co-op budget. The backbone of the program is the concept that small change can make a big difference.

If your bill is \$212.80, then it would round up to \$213.00, giving 20 cents to ORU. If you donate every month, that means the maximum amount you'd give is \$11.88 (99 cents per month). The average member contributes roughly \$6 a year.

People can also choose to make a one-time donation. You do not need to be a member of ACEC in order to donate to ORU. For example, someone who is an AC Skyways customer can choose to round up their bill or anyone can make a one-time donation to the program by

sending in cash or a check.

In the context of ACEC and its Operation Round Up program, there's a significant opportunity to expand member participation. With approximately 7,000 members and only a little over 200 currently signed up for the program, there's considerable room for growth.

"It has been very rewarding to see this program grow and to think about the potential growth as more members join that will enhance its impact on the community and align with cooperative principles," said Brenda Hackman, ACEC manager of economic development and community relations.

The first grant

ACEC began planning its ORU program in 2021, with donations beginning in 2022. Over the past three years, we have worked to spread the word about it and grow the funds available for grants.

This summer, the ACEC ORU board, along with Brenda, met and decided it was time to award the first grant. Board members include Julie Ahrens, Chair; Betty Steege, Vice Chair; Jane Hasek, Treasurer; and Vicky Peterson, Secretary.

Organizations in our service footprint were invited to submit an application for the grant. Examples of

eligible organizations include libraries, fire departments, community projects, school support programs, etc.

The Board reviewed the applications in October and selected the Northeast Iowa Wellness Center in Postville as the first recipient.

In the application, Melanie Bauch, Director of Operations at the Wellness Center, explained that there is often a financial barrier that prevents people from becoming a certified lifeguard. The courses cost approximately \$225.

"As a nonprofit organization, we rely on lifeguards to ensure safety of the pool and to keep the pool open," Melanie explained in the application. "This program will help the center meet staffing needs and provide a work experience that teaches responsibility, leadership and lifesaving skills that they can carry with them throughout their lives."

"I'm very thankful for our board of volunteers for their time and dedication to work through the process and reading the applications for this first grant round," said

Brenda. "It was a tough decision with so many worthy applications."

Next applications

Currently, ACEC ORU is awarding one grant per year but would like to be able to award two grants per year. If more members participate, this goal will eventually be met.

If you would like to donate, scan the QR code below or visit www.acec.com/operationroundup.

Thank you to everyone who has already signed up and is helping the ACEC Operation Round Up with one of our cooperative core principles...Concern for Community. ■



WHAT IS RECare?

We are frequently asked what the difference is between Operation Round Up and RECare. While both donation-based programs provide local support, they provide assistance to different people.

Operation Round-Up is a fund that provides grants to local organizations.

RECare is designed to assist local families who struggle to afford their electric bills in the winter. Every dollar contributed to this fund is used to help low-income members who are referred to the Cooperative by Northeast Iowa Community Action, Shepard of the Hills or a similar social services office. **5012**

Last year, ACEC members donated \$9,989, helping 40 families make it through the winter. Donations can be made as a one-time contribution or as a monthly pledge that is automatically added to your electric bill.

If you'd like to contribute to the RECare program, a donation card was included in your December monthly statement. If you previously authorized a monthly pledge, there is nothing further you need to do.

Thank you for all you do to support your fellow members. ■



Snowbirds Leaving for the Winter?

Please call the Co-op to notify us of your temporary address and to make billing arrangements while you're away.

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

The ACEC Board of Directors recently approved a USDA Revolving Loan application for \$245,358 to assist Josh Pope, owner of the Elkader Pit Stop, with an expansion and remodel of the gas station in downtown Elkader. Pictured are ACEC Manager of Economic Development and Community Relations Brenda Hackman and Josh Pope. ■



2026 YOUTH TOUR APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE



Do you know a high school sophomore or junior who has an interest in government, expanding their leadership skills or learning more about our nation's capital?

Applications are now available for the 2026 Youth Tour trip to Washington D.C. During the week-long trip, participants will see the sights of Washington, make friends from across the nation, meet our state-wide leaders and gain valuable leadership experience.

Applications are available at our office in Postville or online at www.acec.com. All applications are due January 31, 2026. For more information, contact Jennifer Achenbach at 888-788-1551. ■



Our office will be closed on **Thursday, December 25**, in honor of Christmas and **Thursday, January 1**, for New Years Day.

**WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS
A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY
SEASON.**

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 – **COOKIES**, February – **MAIN DISHES**, MARCH – **PIES**



SLOW COOKER BARBECUE BACON CHICKEN DIP

1 c. Sweet Baby Ray's barbecue sauce
2 ½ c. diced rotisserie chicken
16 oz. sour cream
3 c. shredded sharp cheddar cheese, divided
8 slices bacon, cooked and sliced
¼ tsp. onion powder
¼ tsp. black pepper
For serving
Sliced green onion
Garlic bread or crackers

Directions

Add everything except 1 c. of the cheese to the slow cooker. Stir gently. Sprinkle over remaining cheese. Cover and cook on high for 2 hours, without opening lid during the cooking time. Sprinkle the top with additional bacon and green onion, if desired. Serve with garlic bread or crackers.

■ themagicalslowcooker.com

CHEESE BALL

8 oz. cream cheese
¼ c. butter
½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
Dash of paprika, salt and pepper
¼ tsp. garlic powder
8 oz. spreadable cheddar cheese

Directions

Blend all ingredients. Shape into a ball and roll in chopped nuts or parsley. Chill and serve.

■ **Dalyn Corbin, Fayette**

PINEAPPLE FRAPAE

1 lb. marshmallows
1 c. sugar
1 pt. cream
1 medium can pineapple
(crushed and drained)
16 graham crackers

Directions

Melt marshmallows, milk and sugar. Cool. Whip the cream and mix with the cooled marshmallow mixture and pineapple. Roll graham crackers. Place half of crackers in bottom of 9x13 pan. Pour cream mixture over and place remaining crumbs on top. Refrigerate.

■ **Dalyn Corbin, Fayette**

CRACK DIP

1 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 c. sour cream
1 1oz. package ranch seasoning
2 c. shredded cheddar cheese
3 green onions, diced
1/8 tsp. seasoned salt
½ c. bacon bits or 6 pieces cooked chopped bacon

Directions

Using an electric mixer, mix together cream cheese, sour cream, ranch seasoning and seasoned salt. Stir in green onions, bacon and cheese. Chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

■ **Nancy Einck, Waukon**

CYBERSECURITY Tip of the MONTH

Sponsored by



Social media platforms can make holiday shopping feel fast and fun, but they're also prime territory for scams. Fake accounts and ads can lead to fake products or phishing sites. Before clicking "Buy Now," double-check:

- Is the account verified? Check the profile's history of the seller.
- Check websites: Does the store have a legitimate website with clear contact information? Go beyond the social media marketplace.
- Read reviews closely: Are reviews consistent and authentic looking?
- Be extra careful on social media: There are many scam ads offered through social media, so look through reviews and do more research before purchasing.

If something feels off, don't click the link or continue corresponding with the seller.

~ Courtesy of staysafeonline.org ■ **3916A**

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

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811

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FALL LEGISLATIVE MEETING

ACEC recently held its fall legislative meeting. This annual meeting is an opportunity for state and federal legislators from both sides of the aisle to visit the co-op and meet co-op staff and directors. During the visit, Co-op staff, as well as representatives from Dairyland Power Cooperative and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, share upcoming priorities for the next legislative session. Pictured are, from left, front row – Al Steffens, ACEC Board President; Brenda Hackman, ACEC manager of economic development and community relations; Kim Reem, representative for Senator Joni Ernst; Brice Wood, ACEC Director; Clayton Brown, representative for Senator Chuck Grassley. Back row – Hailey Moon, senior manager of policy and advocacy for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives; Iowa Senate Majority Leader Michael Klimesh; State Representative Michael Bergan; Rochelle Fuller, representative for Senator Chuck Grassley; State Representative Chad Ingels; Pedro Calderon, representative for Congresswoman Ashley Hinson; Ian Cochran, economic development manager for Dairyland Power Cooperative. ■