

Iowa electric cooperatives support, promote energy efficiency

Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives have a long history of supporting energy efficiency; in fact, we've been offering cost-effective energy efficiency programs since the late 1980s. These programs include rebates and incentives for geothermal heat pumps/air source heat pumps, and heat pump water heaters. Eastern Iowa REC also offer programs designed to reduce electric demand, such as lighting and appliance rebates. Additionally, your Cooperative continues to upgrade facilities to maximize efficiency, including more efficient transformers and upgrades to substations. Generating, transmitting, and distributing electricity more efficiently helps Eastern Iowa REC manage costs more effectively, ultimately resulting in lower utility bills for our members.

Iowa's electric cooperatives support energy efficiency as part of our continuing commitment to the cooperative principles. First, every electric cooperative is democratically controlled by its members, who elect local representatives from amongst themselves to serve on the cooperative board. These board members, in turn, actively participate in governance and long-term decision-making, including investments in energy efficiency programs. By maintaining local control over energy efficiency, these programs can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the members and communities we serve.

Second, electric cooperatives understand the value of education and training. As co-op employees and board members continually receive training to become better equipped to manage day-to-day operations, co-ops also work hard to provide information and education to our members on energy-efficient products and services and how to effectively manage your energy use.

Third, electric cooperatives work hard to maintain and enhance the communities we serve. Energy efficiency programs can help reduce additional electricity purchases or the need to build additional electric generation which works to minimize energy costs for our members.

Finally, electric cooperatives work in cooperation with other cooperatives to more effectively deliver energy efficiency programs to members. By partnering with other cooperatives, energy efficiency programs can be developed and delivered more effectively and at a lower cost than Eastern Iowa REC could do alone.

Working together with other community-focused cooperatives, Eastern Iowa REC assesses the costs and benefits of each program to determine what to offer to our members. Standardly, we perform four benefit-cost tests to determine the cost-effectiveness of the program. First, the participant cost test determines whether the program is cost-effective from the perspective of the participant in the program. Second, the utility cost test determines whether the program is cost-effective from the perspective of Eastern Iowa REC. Third, the rate payer impact cost test, also referred to as the RIM test, determines whether the program is cost-effective from the perspective of co-op members who do not participate in the program. Finally, the societal test determines whether the program is cost-effective from the perspective of society in general.

Ultimately, Eastern Iowa REC invests in energy efficiency programs to benefit the communities we serve. If you have questions, concerns, or would like to learn more about energy efficiency, please contact us at 1-800-728-1242 and ask to speak with a member service specialist.