

A contested election in District 3 highlights 2025 series of district meetings this summer

The following are profiles of Eastern Iowa REC members seeking election to a position on the Cooperative's board of directors. Each potential candidate was asked to complete a petition with the signatures of 15 members from their district and a questionnaire which was used to create these profiles. The nomination paperwork was available at all Cooperative service centers and on the Cooperative website beginning Jan 2.

In District 3, incumbent director Henry Bentley of Durant is running against Danny Foster of Blue Grass.

Incumbent Directors Kurt Olson of Grand Mound (District 1), Allan Duffe of Wilton (District 2), Tom Hotz of Lone Tree (District 4) and Kathrine Wunderlich of Danville (District 5) are running unopposed.

Candidate videos can be found by clicking on the "Events" link on the homepage at www.easterniowa.com.

Kurt Olson of Grand Mound is the incumbent director seeking re-election in District 1. Olson has been a Cooperative member since 1996 and has served on the board since 2019.

Olson has two sons, Brock and Brady.

Education/Career/Job History: "Graduate of Calamus Community High School, Iowa State University graduate. Own/operate grain and livestock farm. Have Career Credentialed Director."

Other Positions Held: "Member St. Johns Lutheran Church, Farm Bureau, Clinton County Republicans, lifetime member National Rifle Association, Clinton County Cattlemen, Iowa Corn Growers."

Other Activities/Interests: "Children's activities, Iowa State athletics, traveling, motorcycling and learning innovative agricultural processes."

Why are you seeking re-election to the Cooperative's board of directors? "It's a challenging position that I enjoy bringing reliable energy to you when you turn on the switch, the lights come on. The experience I've gained being educated on the generation/transmission of electricity to the end user would like to continue using my skills for the betterment of our community."

What strengths would you bring to the board of directors if elected? "Have been educating myself through numerous training modules. Have attained CCD and working towards BLC. Also, as a business owner always looking for ways to maximize returns while reducing costs."



Kurt Olson

How would you describe the role of a Cooperative director? "As a conduit from members concerns to direct policy for safe, reliable energy. Also help steer co-op to stay viable for the future."

What do you see as the most important issues facing the Cooperative? "The exploding demand for electricity with limited generation opportunities at this time. Also, planning for the future of improving power grid for future generations."

What do you feel is the greatest benefit of a cooperative business? "The opportunity to have grassroots input into the co-op. Everyone can run for office and receive patronage for your usage."

Allan Duffe of Wilton is the District 2 incumbent director seeking re-election to the board. Duffe has been a director since 1990 and has been a Cooperative member since 1977. Duffe and his wife, Julie, have been married for 48 years and have three daughters and seven grandchildren.

Education/Career/Job History: "I received my Associate of Science degree in 1976. I joined my brother farming, raising livestock and row crops. I retired from full-time farming this year, but actively help my nephew farm and raise cattle."

Other Positions Held: "Eastern Iowa Light and Power--past president and vice president, CIPCO--past president, vice pres-

ident and sec./treas., IADG Board of Directors, ACES Board of Directors."

Other Activities/Interests: "We enjoy traveling and spending time with our grandkids."

Why are you seeking re-election to the Cooperative's board of directors? "I am proud to be part of an organization that brings reliable, efficient energy to rural Iowa. I look forward to the challenges of providing the high quality of service to our members."

What strengths would you bring to the board of directors if elected? "I believe I have a good understanding of the electric industry. I am able to bring experience and leadership to the organization."

How would you describe the role of a Cooperative director? "A director needs to strategically look ahead to future needs of the coop. This could involve setting policy, finance, lobbying, etc."

What do you see as the most important issues facing the Cooperative? "My goal is to have the best quality of service at a reasonable price."

What do you feel is the greatest benefit of a cooperative business? "Our Cooperative is member controlled. We encourage our membership to participate in district and annual meetings. I believe this is a great benefit to each member."

Henry Bentley of Durant is the District 3 incumbent director seeking re-election to
More ELECTIONS see page 2.



Allan Duffe



Henry Bentley

ELECTIONS from page 1.

the board. Bentley has been a director since 2022 and has been a Cooperative member since 2010.

"I have been married to my wife, Beverly, for 38 years. Together we have three children: Grace (Austin) Finnegan of West Branch, Anna Bentley of Cedar Falls and William (Kirsten) Bentley of Grinnell. We have two grandchildren: Marley and Karsyn and another one due in September."

Education/Career/Job History: "I graduated from Clinton High School and received my pre-Mortuary College education at Clinton Community College. I graduated from Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Chicago, IL in 1982. I have been a licensed funeral director for 43 years, for 28 years as the owner of Bentley Funeral Homes in Wilton and Durant. On January 1, 2021, I retired, but continue to work part time at the funeral home. I also serve as a Medical Examiner Investigator with the Cedar County Medical Examiner's Office."

Other Positions Held: "I am a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Wilton, where I serve as a Eucharistic Minister, music leader and trustee. I am also a member of the National Funeral Director's Association, the Iowa Funeral Director's Association, and serve as a trustee of the Leland Smith Foundation."

Other Activities/Interests: "In my spare time, I enjoy reading, playing golf and spending time with my family, especially my granddaughters, Marley and Karsyn."

Why are you seeking re-election to the Cooperative's board of directors? "I have served on the Eastern Iowa REC Board of Directors for 3 years. During this term, I have learned a great deal and have been a productive member of the board of directors. Whether meeting with legislators in Des Moines or Washington, D.C. I have represented and advocated for the membership in a professional and knowledgeable manner. I hope to continue to serve the cooperative for a second term."

What strengths would you bring to the board of directors if elected? "During my

first term on the Eastern Iowa Board of Directors, I attained the designation of Credentialed Cooperative Director, and I am working towards a Board Leadership Certification. The knowledge I have gained during my first term will allow me to continue to effectively represent the membership and oversee the operation of the cooperative."

How would you describe the role of a Cooperative director? "The cooperative director has an oversight responsibility to ensure the coop remains financially stable while representing the membership in every decision made. As a board member, the director has to educate himself on current trends, legislation and issues related to the Utilities industry and to advocate for those issues affecting the coop and its members."

What do you see as the most important issues facing the Cooperative? "I believe the most critical issue facing the cooperative is the stability of the electrical grid in the midst of increased demand due to data and mining centers, electric vehicles and supply reduction resulting from regulations. As renewable energy resources increase, there are challenges to find new technologies that provide safe, reliable and economical energy to the members. Increased inflation and supply chain issues are also challenges affecting the cooperative."

What do you feel is the greatest benefit of a cooperative business? "The cooperative principles of local democratic member control through elected representation and economic participation paid through patronage to the member owners are substantial benefits of a cooperative business and to its members."

Danny Foster of Blue Grass is a candidate for election for director in District 3. He has been a Cooperative member since 1984. Foster is divorced after 45 years with a son (married) with 3 grandkids.

Education/Career/Job History: "Masters-Business Administration-St. Ambrose University, 1989, Bachelor of Science-Architecture-University of Illinois, 1975.



Danny Foster



Thomas Hotz

2023-present, ALM Positioners, Rock Island, IL, Quoting engineer (part time); 1999-2022, Genesis Systems Group, Davenport, IA, Global Business Development Manager, General Manager-Japanese Automotive Group, Factory Operations Manager, Market Segment/Program Manager-Light Industrial & Japanese Automotive; 1996-1999, Brammer Manufacturing Co, Davenport, IA, Positions held simultaneously: Plant Manager for 3 facilities, Engineering & Quality Manager, Environmental Manager; 1994-1995, Flexsteel Industries, Dubuque, IA, Corporate Quality Manager for 8 manufacturing facilities in US; 1981-1994, Sears Seating (formerly Sears Manufacturing), Davenport, IA; Vice President - Engineering, Chief Engineer - Advanced Products."

Other Positions Held: "1985 to present, Board of Directors-Hickory Hills 2nd Annex Home Owners Association, President of BOD for past 9 years, Water Director for BOD for 20+ years; 2005 to present, Dan's Handyman Services; 1965 to 2017, Foster Family Farms; 1968 to 2022, Musician in rock 'n roll bands."

Other Activities/Interests: "Gardening, fishing, travel, music, woodworking, construction, reading."

Why are you seeking election to the Cooperative's board of directors? "It seems like a logical thing to utilize my past business and personal experiences for the good of others. Didn't want to go into politics."

What strengths would you bring to the board of directors? "Management skills, business analysis, project management experience, regulatory compliance experience, legal experience (patents, regulatory, code compliance, & liability experience), and construction experience (business, farm, & home)."

How would you describe the role of a Cooperative director? "Provide oversight on operations and analysis of recommended budgets, operating plans and regulatory compliance policies. Being an advocate for members."

More ELECTIONS see page 3.

ELECTIONS from page 2.

What do you see as the most important issues facing the Cooperative? “Infrastructure, cost controls, and regulatory compliance.”

What do you feel is the greatest benefit of a cooperative business? “Greater control over direction and policy.”

Thomas Hotz of Lone Tree is the District 4 incumbent director running for re-election to the board. Hotz has been a member of the Cooperative since 1976 and has served on the board since 2004.

Hotz and his wife, Jane, have two children, a daughter, Arin (Eric) and grandsons Porter and Beckett and son, Michael (Jess) and grandson Marshall and granddaughter Josey.

Education/Career/Job History: “Graduate Lone Tree Community and Iowa State University. Farm and feed cattle. Past Pioneer Seed Dealer.”

Other Positions Held: “Director of: Iowa Beef Industry Council, U.S. Meat Export Federation, officer of National Beef Council, Johnson County Cattlemen, Lone Tree School Board, State REC Board, Lone Tree Lions Club.”

Other Activities/Interests: “Hunting, fishing, playing cards, both Iowa and ISU athletics, traveling, going to grandkids activities.”

Why are you seeking re-election to the Cooperative’s board of directors? “Using past knowledge to help guide our Cooperative through these challenging issues.”

What strengths would you bring to the board of directors if elected? “Past knowledge as long time director, ability to communicate and listen to concerns our cooperative faces.”

How would you describe the role of a Cooperative director? “To develop and set policy to guide Eastern Iowa. Listen to cooperative members.”

What do you see as the most important issues facing the Cooperative? “Most of us rely on electricity without thinking about it. The average consumer doesn’t have to worry about reliability. Our concern moving forward is the vast increases of electricity needed in today’s world. Many more uses of



Kathrine Wunderlich

electricity are on the horizon. All of this while our generation resources are being threatened. Fossil fuels are being banned before enough other supplies are available.”

What do you feel is the greatest benefit of a cooperative business? “Our non-profit business model allows members to share in available profits keeping costs down to members.”

Kathrine Wunderlich is the incumbent director seeking re-election for a three-year term as a director representing District 5. She has been a member of the Cooperative since 1985 and has served on the board since 2013.

Wunderlich lives near Danville with her husband, Gary. The couple have three children Janel Manson (deceased), Justin & LaDana Wunderlich, Robby & Cecilia Schnathorst, and five grandchildren (Kobe, Kiley, Lane, Raya & Reid).

Education/Career/Job History: “Burlington Community High School, University of Northern Iowa. Fullerton Lumber 1980 to 1981, bookkeeper and bldg. sales estimator; Barngrover Glass & Bldg. Supply, 1991-2006, bldg. materials sales & estimator; Georges

Lawnmower 2006-2023, owner of outdoor power co. sales & service; currently retired.”

Other Positions Held: “Past board member of Southeast Iowa Builders Association (SEIBA) 1998-2001, past bd. member of Burlington/West Burlington Chamber of Commerce 2009-2012, taught Junior Achievement in elementary classes for 25 years plus, Bd. member currently Des Moines County Conservation.”

Other Activities/Interests: “Traveling, fishing, boating, side by side trail riding, hiking and the favorite is time with grandchildren.”

Why are you seeking re-election to the Cooperative’s board of directors? “The electricity demand is growing. I feel the education and positions I have held on the board, will help to make informed decisions for the members.”

What strengths would you bring to the board of directors if elected? “I have 12 years of experience on the board. I have taken classes with National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (Director Gold Certification). I am able to listen and work with the other board members and CEO. I stay involved in my community. Always available to listen to members concerns. Strategic planning for the future is always one of my missions.”

How would you describe the role of a Cooperative director? “To represent the members by listening and addressing any concerns. To make sound financial decisions for the health of the co-op. To work with the CEO on strategic planning and policy development. To make sure key decisions are made to keep electricity sustainable and affordable to the members.”

What do you see as the most important issues facing the Cooperative? “Adapting to rapid technological changes and being able to supply reliable and affordable electricity per the demand.”

What do you feel is the greatest benefit of a cooperative business? “The greatest benefit of a co-op is members have equal ownership. Margins or patronage are distributed to members not stockholders. Co-ops promote social and economical development in their communities.”

Joint memberships are available to all members

Elections for directors are held at the district meetings each summer. Your name must appear on the Eastern Iowa REC membership and you must be present at the meet-

ing in order to participate in the election process.

If only one spouse’s name appears on a membership, the other spouse cannot vote in the election. A joint membership will record both names of spouses, allowing both to participate if they wish. Joint memberships are also available for non-married couples who reside at the same address.

A joint membership will allow each to vote. Each membership is allowed one vote, so each voting party may cast ½ a vote. If

one or the other is unable to attend the district meeting, the joint membership will ensure that the person who does attend is able to cast the full vote in the election.

Any non-person account, such as a church or business, must have the designated voter listed on the account present at the district meeting to vote.

Contact a member service representative, toll free, 1-855-938-3616 or email billing@easterniowa.com to obtain a joint membership form.



Don't Miss Us!

Cedar County fair- July 10 and 11
Muscatine County fair- July 16, 17, 18
Johnson County fair- July 22
Des Moines County fair- July 25



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PAPERLESS BILLING

Visit www.easterniowa.com for details.

Get instant access to your bill and declutter your life. Experience the convenience of paying your bill online.



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90 years
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The power of human connections

The 2025 District Meetings start later this month

The 2025 series of district meetings will start on July 23 at the Durant Community Center, 606 5th Ave., Durant, for members in District 3.

The remaining meetings will be held July 28 at the DeWitt Community Center, 512 10th St., DeWitt, for members in District 1; July 30 at the Lone Tree school cafeteria, 303 S. Devoe St., Lone Tree, for members in District 4; Aug. 4 at the Matthews Building at the Cedar County Fairgrounds, 220th St., Tipton, for members of District 2; and finally Aug. 5 at the Mediapolis High School, 725 N. Northfield St., Mediapolis, for members in District 5.

Please note, the locations for the District 2 and District 5 meetings are new this year.

Each meeting begins at 7 p.m. Members will not be able to register for the meetings until after 6:30 p.m.

Elections for positions on the Cooperative Board of Directors will be

held at the district meetings.

Candidate profiles for the 2025 director elections begin on page 1.

Members are able to review district meeting items on the Cooperative's website, www.easterniowa.com. Click on the Events link on the homepage to find: official 2025 district meeting notices, minutes of the 2024 district meetings, and 2025 candidate information.

Qualifications to serve as a director, voting district maps and director nomination and election process information can be found under the "My Cooperative" tab on the website.

Official district meeting registration notices will be mailed to each membership prior to the meeting. Please bring the bottom portion of that notice to the meeting as they certify a member's eligibility to vote and they are used for the prize drawing at each meeting.

These prizes include: an electric tabletop grill, Greenworks compact

electric pressure washer, portable power station, EWork electric leaf blower with two 3.0 batteries, and Homemate heated blanket 50"x60".

All members who register at their district meeting will receive a \$25 bill credit.



An electric tabletop grill and four other prizes will be awarded in drawings held at each district meeting.

Don't miss Eastern Iowa REC fair appearances

County fairs are a big part of an Iowa summer and Eastern Iowa REC will be joining in the fun this summer.

The Cooperative will have displays at four county fairs this month starting with the Cedar County Fair in Tipton July 10 and 11. Look for the Eastern Iowa REC exhibit at the Muscatine County Fair in West Liberty July 16, 17 and 18.

The Cooperative will be at the Johnson County Fair in Iowa City July 22 and at the Des Moines County Fair in West Burlington July 25.

The highlight of the Cooperative exhibit will be the live line safety display which provides a vivid example of some of the causes for power outages and how to stay safe around power lines. Cooperative line personnel will be available to discuss the power restoration process and show some of the tools and safety equipment they use on the job.

The Cooperative's live line display will be part of the presentation at the Muscatine and Johnson County fairs.

Information about the Eastern Iowa REC's rebate program, SmartHub and other Cooperative programs will also be available.



The Cooperative's live line safety display will be part of Eastern Iowa REC's county fair exhibits at most dates this summer.

Iowa's electric cooperatives will be at the State Fair!

Iowa electric cooperatives are pleased to once again sponsor the 4-H Exhibits Building at the 2025 Iowa State Fair.

If you're planning a visit to the Iowa State Fair from August 7-17, make sure to stop by and see us in the air conditioned 4-H

Exhibits Building on the southwest corner of the fairgrounds.

Electric co-op staff from across the state will hand out plastic hard hats and suckers for the kids while supplies last. Kids can also try on some lineworker safety gear and

take fun photos in our co-op safety selfie station!

We look forward to connecting with our co-op members at the Iowa State Fair this summer. Please stop by our booth and say hello!

Comments from the CEO

Make plans to participate in the board election process

Your 2025 District Meetings start later this month and I thank you in advance for taking part in these important events. Elections from the membership for positions on the Cooperative's Board of Directors are the key business function of these meetings.

A contested election will be held at the District 3 meeting. Incumbent Director Henry Bentley of Durant will be running against Danny Foster of Blue Grass for a three-year term on the board of directors.

I encourage you to attend your District Meeting. Take an active role in these events as we hope each meeting provides a platform for an interactive exchange between the members and Cooperative staff and directors.

Cooperatives, like Eastern Iowa REC, around the world operate according to the same set of core principles and values, adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance. Cooperatives trace the roots of these principles to the first modern cooperative founded in Rochdale, England in 1844.

Among the seven cooperative principles is the seventh, Concern for Community. Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities and the member they serve.

Eastern Iowa REC does this in a number of ways including our economic development efforts, college scholarships, the new STEAM program, the Youth Tour

From the Boardroom, June, 2025

- Approved the application for a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant.
- Discussed the strategic planning session.

The next board meeting will be held on July 31, 2025.

program, donation support of various community programs and events, and participation in various community events.

Since 1987, the Cooperative has provided college scholarships for the children of Eastern Iowa REC members. Today, we award 26 \$2,500 scholarships to students planning to attend four-year college or universities as well as community colleges and trade schools. To date, we have honored more than 500 students from 50 different communities through the scholarship program.

Eastern Iowa REC values and supports education and training of the students within our service territory. The Cooperative understands that classrooms may have limited funding to pursue the projects needed to educate the young minds in our local communities.

We established the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) Grant program to provide funding for projects and initiatives at our local schools. You can read more about the STEAM program on page 8.

Each summer, the Cooperative sponsors a high school student to join a group of students from Iowa as part of the NRECA Youth Tour program. The group travels to Washington, D.C. and joins other student leaders from across the nation to learn more about cooperatives, U.S. history and government.

Another long-running Cooperative program involves economic development.



Kirk Trede
CEO

Eastern Iowa REC recognizes our service territory is a diverse and growing business community. We work to bring new businesses and industries to our region, as well as to support the growth of our existing business members.

The Cooperative assists with locating sites for commercial or industrial development, identifies energy efficiency rebates available to businesses, and sponsors applications to USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program. Eastern Iowa REC also administers a revolving loan fund to aid organizations with low-interest funding for industrial or commercial development, business expansions or startups.

Regular donations are made by the Cooperative to support a variety of community groups and events. Many of these donations, along with funds for the scholarships and STEAM program, come from unclaimed patronage funds and does not affect the Cooperative's rates.

Eastern Iowa REC employees also take part in several community events throughout the year. These include volunteering with Junior Achievement and other school programs, career days at local schools and the Cooperative will have booths again this summer at four county fairs. Through these efforts, we share electrical safety messages, information about various Cooperative programs and information about careers at the Cooperative.

The 7 cooperative principles, especially our concern for community, are a key reason that America's electric cooperatives operate differently from other electric utilities, putting the needs of their members first.



PREVENT ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING

Ensure there is GFCI protection on underwater lighting circuits, as well as lighting around pools, hot tubs and spas.

 Safe Electricity.org®

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat such as clothes dryers and dishwashers during the evening when the outdoor temperature is lower. Running heat-emitting appliances in the evening will reduce indoor heat gain during the day when outdoor temperatures are highest and ultimately keep your air conditioner from working harder than necessary.

Source: energy.gov

Battery vs. Gas: The benefits of battery-powered outdoor equipment

Battery-powered outdoor equipment—like lawn mowers, trimmers, and leaf blowers—is gaining popularity as a cleaner, quieter, and more convenient alternative to traditional gas-powered tools. Thanks to advances in battery technology, these electric options now offer impressive performance while delivering several key advantages.

Cost Savings

While the initial cost of battery-powered tools can be similar to gas versions, long-term savings add up quickly. With no fuel or oil to buy and minimal maintenance, the cost of ownership is often much lower. Many brands also offer interchangeable batteries across different tools, adding further value.

Low Maintenance

Gas tools require oil changes, spark plug replacements, and fuel stabilizers. Battery-powered equipment eliminates these hassles—no gas, no fumes, and no complex upkeep. Just charge the battery

and get to work.

Cleaner and Greener

Battery-powered tools produce zero direct emissions, making them far more environmentally friendly than gas models, which emit harmful pollutants. Switching to battery-operated equipment helps reduce air pollution and your overall carbon footprint.

Quieter Operation

Battery tools are significantly quieter than gas models. This makes them ideal for early morning yard work and for use in noise-sensitive areas like neighborhoods, parks, and schools.

A Future-Ready Choice

As emissions standards and noise ordinances become more common, battery-powered equipment is a smart and forward-looking option. Whether you're a homeowner or professional landscaper, making the switch means cleaner, quieter, and more efficient outdoor work.

Charge Up Your Ride with an E-Bike!

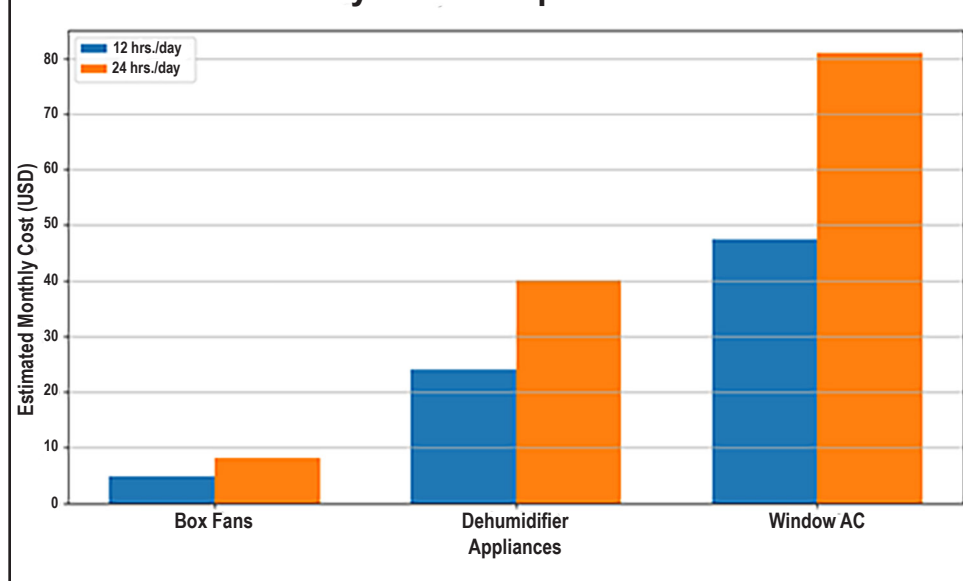
Electric bicycles (e-bikes) are changing how we get around—blending the ease of a motor with the simplicity of a traditional bike. With a built-in boost, e-bikes make hills easier, long distances more manageable, and daily rides more enjoyable.

They're a great option for commuting, quick errands, or leisurely weekend cruises. While the upfront cost is higher

than a standard bike, many find the investment worthwhile thanks to the added comfort, speed, and convenience. E-bikes also offer a cleaner, quieter alternative to car trips—helping the planet while keeping you active.

Whether you're looking to simplify your commute or just want a smoother ride, an e-bike could be the perfect upgrade.

Estimated Monthly Cost Comparison: 12 hrs. vs. 24 hrs.



Using common appliances during Iowa's hot and humid summers can impact your electric bill—especially when run during On-Peak hours (4–9 PM). Above is what you can expect based on typical daily usage. Energy-Saving Tip: Shifting appliance use out of the 4–9 PM On-Peak window can cut energy costs by more than half. Try using timers or smart plugs to schedule your appliances and make the most of lower Off-Peak rates. Small changes add up fast!

REBATE SPOTLIGHT: OUTDOOR BATTERY-OPERATED EQUIPMENT

Upgrade & Save with Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative!



Large Equipment: 25% back, up to \$150
Ex: Mowers, snow blower, e-bikes



Small Equipment: 25% back, up to \$50
Ex: Leaf blowers, chainsaws, trimmers

- Annual Limit: \$300/account
- Minimum purchase: \$50
- New equipment w/battery & 1-year warranty
- Tool-only, combo packs & refurbished items not eligible
- Submit within 6 months w/itemized receipt

Start saving energy & money today!
Apply at easterniowa.com/energy-center/rebates or
contact your Energy Advisor

MAX EFFICIENCY COOK SMART THIS SUMMER!

Beat the Heat Without Burning Through Energy!

Take advantage of the warm weather to lower your home energy use. Skip the oven and fire up the grill instead. Cooking outdoors not only saves electricity—it also keeps your home cooler, so your air conditioner doesn't have to work as hard.

No grill? No problem! Try out some tasty no-bake recipes that keep your kitchen cool and your energy bill lower. Whether it's a fresh salad, overnight oats, or a chilled dessert, there are plenty of delicious ways to beat the heat and save energy.

MAX'S CHALLENGE:

Can you go a full week without using your oven?

Try it: Grill outside, use a slow cooker, microwave or explore no-bake recipes!

Max's Tip: Every degree your AC doesn't have to fight for means more savings in your pocket!



-Max

Here are some efficiency tips for older homes

By Miranda Boutelle

Q: How do I improve the efficiency of my older home while keeping its charm?

A: I love old homes. The details and craftsmanship have always drawn me to them. The features of older homes can make them less efficient than modern construction, but it doesn't have to be that way. You can keep the charm and make your home more efficient.

Start by prioritizing the invisible upgrades that make your home more comfortable and efficient. When we were kids, I don't think any of us thought, "When I grow up, I want to spend my hard-earned money on insulation." It's not as exciting as new countertops or a remodeled bathroom, but air sealing and insulation can save you money every month. Then you can apply the savings to aesthetic improvements.

Many older homes are not properly insulated. Insulation has several benefits beyond sealing your home and keeping outdoor air from seeping in. It reduces outdoor noise, makes your home quieter and improves your overall comfort.

Always properly air seal before you insulate. Older homes with pocket doors, coved ceilings, dumbwaiters, doors to attic spaces and laundry chutes allow indoor air to escape through the cavities, gaps and cracks around these classic features. Sealing off open cavities around those features often requires plywood, rigid foam or drywall fastened into place and then caulked around the edges.

Keep an eye out for framing features



The first step to improving an older home is air sealing and adding insulation to attic spaces. Photo Credit: Bonneville Power Administration

that cause drafts. Balloon framing is a type of construction where wall studs run all the way from the foundation to the roof, allowing air to flow freely through those spaces. Second floors with knee wall attics on both sides are notorious for air leakage. Open cavities allow air to flow horizontally between the attic spaces, making the home uncomfortable and inefficient. Seal off the open cavities in the floor framing and insulate attic spaces.

Dense-packed cellulose or closed cell foam insulation can be sprayed into exterior walls. Skilled contractors can remove pieces of siding and drill holes to fill the wall cavities from the outside of the home. For brick or stone homes, holes can be drilled from the inside and then patched and painted. Insulating walls from the inside of the home requires more time and effort in preparation and cleanup, but having well-insulated walls is worth it.

Knob and tube wiring—commonly used from the early 1880s to the 1930s with no grounding wire—should be

replaced prior to insulating walls and attics for safety purposes. Contact between insulation and knob and tube wiring can create a fire hazard.

People often think new windows are the best way to improve a home's efficiency. Considering the cost of replacing windows, I recommend investing in air sealing and insulation first. Then consider storm windows to keep the charm of the original windows, such as leaded glass and stained-glass windows in good condition. Choose from interior or exterior options that are operable and inoperable.

Once you've addressed the envelope of your home, consider appliance improvements. Replace your old electric water heater with a heat pump water heater. This upgrade can save a family of four an estimated \$550 per year and more than \$5,600 over the lifetime of the water heater, according to Energy Star®.

Invest in high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment. A mini-split heat pump, also known as a ductless heat pump, is a more efficient option than electric baseboard heating and provides the benefit of air conditioning.

Miranda Boutelle is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company.

She has more than 20 years of experience helping people save energy at home, and she writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.

Eastern Iowa REC celebrating our 90th anniversary

The first Thursday after Labor Day each year has traditionally been the date of the Eastern Iowa REC annual meeting.

For many years, the event was held on land the Cooperative owned on the north end of Wilton.

Large tents were erected for the meeting and exhibitors.

The Wilton Community Center and library, along with a nursing home and assisted living facility, are now located on that land.

In 2002, the membership approved an amendment to Article V11, Section 1, which eliminated the provision that required the annual meeting to be held in the town where the headquarters was located.

The next year, the annual meeting was moved to the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds in Davenport where it will be held again this year.



The crowd lines up for the noon meal at the annual meeting grounds in Wilton.



The annual meeting food line forms at the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds in Davenport.



A view of the annual meeting during the 1960s.



A band entertains the annual meeting audience inside the Fair Center building at the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds in Davenport.

STEAM Grants support area schools

Eastern Iowa REC launched its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) Grant Program at the start of 2025. This program provided \$500 grants to teachers for projects in each of those academic areas.

The Cooperative understands school budgets are tight and this program strives to provide extra funding which will allow teachers to pursue the projects needed to educate the young minds in our local communities.

During the final semester of the 2025 school year, the Cooperative provided grants to eight eastern Iowa schools. The program will continue in the 2025-2026 school year. Any teachers interested in the program should submit an application found on the Cooperative's website, www.easterniowa.com, under the Community tab.

The Tipton Elementary School used its grant to purchase STEAM bin resources which included magnetic tiles and working small motors kits.

Wilton Elementary students learned to solve Rubik's Cube puzzles purchased with grant funds.

"My students dove headfirst into learning the special moves, or algorithms, needed to bring order to the colorful chaos," explained Tim Bean. "It was amazing to see their determination and how much fun they had while tackling such a complex puzzle."

Teachers at the Danville Community School split their \$500 STEAM grant among two programs.

Part of the grant was used to purchase dowels, rubber cement, cutting tools and movie-prop quality EVA foam which can be carved as well as bent and shaped with heat to create cosplay/movie props. The students made a sword from Lord of the Rings, a ninja sword, a lightsaber hilt, and a "star wand" from a video game.

Other Danville students benefitted from the purchase of Vernier Dynamics Cart and Track System. This system is essentially a high-tech giant Hot-Wheels track that collects real-time data for physics experiments.

At Central DeWitt Community School,



Wilton Elementary School students learned to solve Rubik's Cubes through a STEAM Grant.



Central DeWitt students learned about circuits and how to make them using LEDs and batteries. They then created insects and used little vibration motors and coin batteries to make their insects move.

the grant was used to buy supplies for 7th and 8th grade students who served as peer helpers to level 2 & 3 special education students in the 4-8th grades. The students talked about circuits and how to make them using LEDs and batteries. Students tested different classroom items to see if they were conductive. The students then created their insects and used little vibration motors and coin batteries to make their insects move.

At the Cardinal Elementary School in Maquoketa, the STEAM Grant was used to purchase makerspace supplies.

Students designed and built projects that included hibernation stations for animals and created a toy shelf that can hold up to 10 toys, allowing them to apply engineering principles in a fun and engaging way.

The Highland Community School FIRST Lego League used the grant to purchase the LEGO Education SPIKE Prime Kit and was able to purchase a second robotics kit.

Additional grants were provided to teachers at Calamus-Wheatland Community School and Northeast Community School.



Tipton students enjoyed STEAM bin resources which included magnetic tiles and working small motors kits.

Current News Monthly Quiz

Quiz Winners:

**Mindy Wriedt,
Donahue
Anthony Hauser,
Muscatine**

**Rick Brown,
Burlington
Janet Lohse,
Muscatine**

Mail your answers to Current News, P.O. Box 3003, Wilton, IA 52778 or email answers to info@easterniowa.com. Be sure to include your name, address and Eastern Iowa REC account number on all quiz answer entries.

Four winners will be drawn from all submissions with the correct answers. The winners will receive a \$25 bill credit.

Question 1

Which Board District has a contested election this year?

Question 2

Where will the District 5 meeting be held?

Question 3

Name one of the schools that received a STEAM Grant?

Name

Address

REC Account

Current News



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