



# Current News

Volume 72 Number 3 March, 2026

A monthly publication for the members of Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative



## Nomination deadline for director elections is near

Anyone seeking to run for a position on the Eastern Iowa REC Board of Directors is asked to submit an address verification form to enable the Cooperative to ensure the potential candidate is eligible to run within the district they indicate on the form.

Candidates then need to complete a petition signed by at least 15 memberships of their district by April 1, 2026.

Nomination packets, along with information regarding the district boundary map, qualifications to seek election, director compensation, direc-  
**More ELECTIONS see page 2.**



Rep. Bobby Kaufmann addresses Cooperative members at the District 2 meeting in the Matthews Building at the Cedar County Fairgrounds during the 2025 meeting.

## Cooperative answers call for mutual aid following ice storm

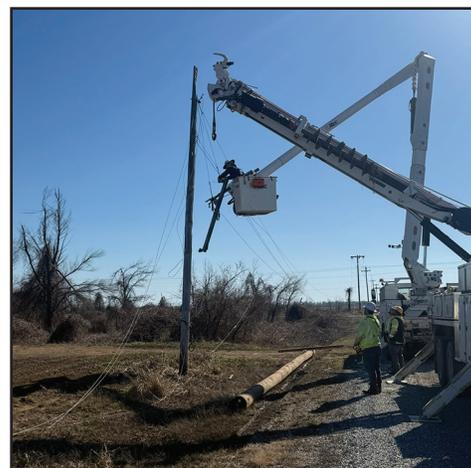
Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the 7 Cooperative Principles and Eastern Iowa REC followed that principle in answering the call for mutual aid from Twin County Electric Power Association late last month.

A devastating ice storm struck the west-central Mississippi electric cooperative Jan. 25 resulting in large-scale outages and more than 1,000 broken poles.

Four Eastern Iowa REC linemen answered the call for assistance. Aaron Brau, a journeyman lineman from the Cooperative's Lone Tree service center; Clayton Cooling and Andy Koopmann, journeyman linemen from the

Cooperative's Wilton service center; and Dillon Wilhelm, apprentice lineman from the Cooperative's DeWitt service center, left Jan. 31 with two basket trucks and the Cooperative's tracked digger-derrick vehicle.

They worked with Twin County crews and other mutual aid crews until mid-February to help restore power to Twin County members.



Crews work to rebuild a section of line destroyed by the Jan. 25 ice storm that struck the Twin County Electric Power Association service territory in west-central Mississippi.



Aaron Brau



Clayton Cooling



Andy Koopmann



Dillon Wilhelm



The Eastern Iowa REC mutual aid crew brought Cooperative's tracked digger-derrick vehicle to assist in the power restoration efforts in Mississippi and the muddy conditions made the vehicle invaluable in their efforts.

# Student applications due this month

The application deadlines for two Eastern Iowa REC youth programs are this month. The deadline for the Cooperative scholarship program is March 12, 2026 and the deadline for the Youth Tour program is March 13, 2026.

The 2026 Eastern Iowa REC scholarship program includes 26 \$2,500 scholarships.

The “Bob Wiemerslage Memorial Scholarship” is awarded to a student whose parents or guardian is a member of the Cooperative and who plans to major in accounting. Wiemerslage was the Cooperative’s Division Manager of Accounting until his passing in 2019.

Twenty scholarship winners will



receive a \$2,500 award that can be used to help defray the costs of attending any accredited college or university.

Five \$2,500 scholarships will be awarded to students planning to pursue a trade-related degree at a community college, technical school or powerline school.

The Cooperative’s scholarship program is open to all 2026 high school seniors, whose parents or guardians are members of the Cooperative. This includes children of Cooperative directors and employees.

The 2026 Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. will be June 14-20. Iowa students will join other student leaders from across the nation to learn more about cooperatives, U.S. history and government.

Eastern Iowa REC is sponsoring an opportunity for a high school sophomore or junior attending school within the Cooperative’s service territory to be part of Youth Tour 2026.

Applications can be found online: [www.easterniowa.com/scholarships-steam-grant-program](http://www.easterniowa.com/scholarships-steam-grant-program).

**VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in a cooperative is open to all people who can reasonably use its services and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender or economic circumstances.

## Cooperatives follow Seven Principles

The Seven Cooperative Principles were established by the International Cooperative Alliance, an international organization representing cooperatives worldwide, in 1937 and were revised in 1966 and 1995.

The purpose of the Seven Cooperative Principles is to guide cooperatives in their values, governance, and daily operations, ensuring they operate democratically, ethically, and in the best interests of their members and communities.

These Principles are important because they provide a shared set of values and guidelines that help cooperatives operate democratically, fairly, and responsibly. They ensure that cooperatives focus on member ownership and control, promote economic participation, encourage education and cooperation, and support sustainable community development. By following these principles, cooperatives maintain their unique identity and balance economic success with social responsibility.

The First Cooperative Principle is Voluntary and Open Membership, which promotes inclusivity by ensuring that cooperatives are open to all people who are willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without discrimination based on gender, social status, race, religion, or political beliefs.

This principle allows individuals from diverse backgrounds to participate equally, encourages equal access to opportunities, and helps cooperatives reflect and serve the needs of the entire community.

Look for information about the remaining Cooperative Principles in future issues of the *Current News*.

## Nomination deadline is April 1

**ELECTIONS from page 1.** tor duties, responsibilities, Standards of Conduct and characteristics of a director can be found on the Cooperative’s website, [www.easterniowa.com](http://www.easterniowa.com) under the “My Cooperative” tab, Director Elections or call 1-563-732-7305 to request the information.

All candidates who submit qualifying petitions will then be asked to fill out a biographical form and return it to by May 15, 2026.

This information will be used for the candidate profiles which will be published on the Cooperative’s website and in the *Current News*. All profiles will be published verbatim, as submitted.

The nomination process puts no limit on the number of candidates in a given district. To serve on the board:

✓A candidate must hold an active membership and be a bonafide resident in the district he or she is to represent.

✓A candidate cannot be in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members of the Cooperative.

✓No close relative of a candidate, as defined by board policy, can be employed by the Cooperative.

This nomination process in no way

screens or filters potential candidates for seats on the Cooperative’s board. Anyone who successfully completes the nomination papers and meets qualifications as described will be placed on the ballot.

All candidates should note the time requirements of a director are more than just the 12 monthly meetings. Directors should be prepared to devote an average of 25-30 days per year to Cooperative business-related activities.

The incumbent directors whose terms expire in 2026 are: Joel Carstensen, Charlotte district 1; Mike Bixler, Clarence, district 2; Mike Shuger, Wilton, district 3; Robert Schneider Jr., Riverside, district 4; and Bradley Weiss, Burlington, district 5.

**DIRECTOR ELECTIONS**

2026 DISTRICT MEETINGS

REC EASTERN IOWA

# Geothermal vs. Solar: What's the difference for your home?

We regularly get questions from members about geothermal systems and solar panels. Both can be useful tools, but they are not the same thing and they do not impact your electric bill in the same way.

If you are considering one of these investments, it helps to understand where the savings come from and how each option fits within our rate structure.

Geothermal systems use the steady temperature underground to heat and cool your home. Instead of creating heat the way electric resistance systems do, a geothermal unit simply moves heat. Because of that, it operates much more efficiently than many traditional heating methods.

In Iowa, heating is one of the largest energy expenses for most homes. When you improve the efficiency of your heating system, you are addressing one of your biggest energy loads.

Geothermal systems do require a higher upfront investment because of the underground loop installation. To help offset that cost, Eastern Iowa REC offers a \$500 rebate per ton for qualifying new geothermal installations.

Members with qualifying electric heat, including geothermal, are also eligible for our Heat Plus Rate. During the heating months, October through May, eligible heating usage is billed at \$0.067 per kWh regardless of time of day. That seasonal rate is specifically designed for electric heating loads and can make a noticeable difference during the heating season.



Geothermal systems also tend to create more consistent energy use during the heating season. That steady demand supports efficient operation of the electric system while helping members manage winter heating costs.

Federal residential tax credits for geothermal ended December 31, 2025. Commercial incentives remain available for qualifying projects.

Solar photovoltaic systems generate electricity from sunlight. When the panels are producing power, that electricity offsets what you would otherwise purchase from the grid.

Production depends on roof direction, shading, system size, and time of year. Output is generally highest during summer months and lower in winter, when heating demand is typically greatest.

Solar helps reduce the amount of electricity you purchase from the grid. Results vary based on installation cost, how and when your home uses electricity, and the design of the system.

Federal residential solar tax credits

also ended December 31, 2025. Commercial incentives remain available.

For many members, the decision comes down to timing. If you are replacing an HVAC system, geothermal may deserve a serious look, particularly with the Heat Plus seasonal rate in place. If your heating system is newer and you are focused on offsetting usage, solar may be the option you evaluate.

Every home is different. Heating type, insulation levels, usage history, and how long you plan to stay in the home all matter.



Before making a decision, contact our energy advisor. We can review your actual usage and walk through how each option would perform under our rates, including the Heat Plus rate for qualifying geothermal systems. Our goal is to make sure you understand how each option works within our rate structure so you can make a confident and informed decision. Call Max Holtz, energy advisor, 563-732-7353 or email [max.holtz@easterniowa.com](mailto:max.holtz@easterniowa.com).



## IMPROVE YOUR WATER HEATER'S EFFICIENCY

Your water heater works hard every day, but a few simple upgrades can help it use less energy and save you money. Lower the temperature setting from 140°F to 120°F to reduce energy use while still meeting daily hot water needs.

### MAX'S TIP:

Fixing leaky faucets and using low-flow showerheads can reduce hot water use overall, improving efficiency without sacrificing comfort.

-Max



You can also install a water heater timer to limit operation during times hot water isn't needed—especially effective for electric units, with rebates available on eligible models. Finally, insulating the tank and hot water pipes reduces heat loss, helps water stay hotter on the way to faucets, and cuts wasted energy, especially if the heater is in an uninsulated space.



## Comments from the CEO

# Our personnel went to the aid of a fellow electric cooperative in Mississippi

While the eastern Iowa area experienced some bitterly cold temperatures at the end of January and early February, our area was spared the devastating snow and ice storms that struck the eastern and southern portions of the country. These storms left considerable damage in their wake and caused power outages affecting hundreds of thousands of people.

A particularly hard-hit area was the state of Mississippi, which is unaccustomed to dealing with large amounts of snow and ice. Following a storm on Jan. 25, a call went out for mutual aid to assist Mississippi electric cooperative restore power to their members. Eastern Iowa REC responded and sent four linemen, two basket trucks and the organization's tracked digger-derrick vehicle to assist Twin County Electric Power Association in west-central Mississippi.

Twin County had 10,000 of its 12,659 members without power and more than 1,000 downed poles immediately after the storm. Crews from two other Iowa electric cooperatives, Midland Power Cooperative and Woodbury REC, were also part of the team from Iowa that answered the call for help.

### From the Boardroom, January, 2026

- Approved discount rate on patronage settlement of estates.
- Set interest rate on consumer deposits for 2026.
- Approved Cooperative's Revolving Loan Fund Committee.
- Approved updated per diem policy for Directors and Officers.

*The next board meeting will be held on March 26, 2026.*

We have experienced large-scale outages from storms in the past, including the 2007 ice storm and the derecho in 2020. Both times we were very grateful for the assistance we received from other electric cooperatives who answered our call for mutual aid.

This willingness to lend a hand to our fellow electric cooperative organizations follows the 6th Cooperative Principle "Cooperation Among Cooperatives" as well as the 7th Cooperative Principle "Concern for Community."

The Cooperative Principles are a key element that allows cooperatives to maintain their unique identity and balance economic success with social responsibility. We are not in business to increase profits for shareholders. Eastern Iowa REC, like all cooperatives, are here to serve our members and support fellow cooperatives.

Cooperatives are often more resilient in serving local communities than traditional businesses because they prioritize the needs of their members and the community over maximizing profits.

Electric cooperatives were started more than 90 years ago to bring electricity to the homes, farms and businesses in rural areas. Serving our communities remains our clear focus today. We stand ready to help other electric cooperatives in that mission.



**Kirk Trede**  
CEO

## The Eastern Iowa REC Statement of Nondiscrimination

Eastern Iowa Light and Power Cooperative is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the **Page 4 - Current News - March, 2026**

Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The person responsible for coordinating this organization's non-discrimination compliance efforts is Kirk W. Trede, Chief Executive Officer.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html). at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form.

To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

## Current News Monthly Quiz

### Quiz Winners:

Joyce Kerr, Blue Grass

Twyla Robertson, Danville

Nancy Starkweather, Letts

Jim Smith, Iowa City

Mail your answers to Current News, P.O. Box 3003, Wilton, IA 52778 or email their answers to [info@easterniowa.com](mailto: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

Where did Cooperative linemen go for a mutual aid call in February?

### Question 2

What is the first Cooperative Principle?

### Question 3

What temperature should a water heater be set at to save energy and still meet daily hot water needs?

Name

Address

REC Account

## Current News



BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Ken Purdy, president; Kurt Olson, vice president; Michael Bixler, secretary; Henry Bentley, treasurer; Bradley Weiss, assistant secretary; Gary Bruns, Joel Carstensen, Aubrey "Lee" Cartwright, Allan Duffe, Tom Hotz, Gary Kester, Robert Schnieder Jr., Mike Shuger, Denise Timmerman, Kathrine Wunderlich.

Kirk Trede  
CEO

Jim Williams  
Communications Director

DeWitt  
500 South Fifth St.

Wapello  
101 Surrey Drive.

Lone Tree  
307 W. Commercial St.

Wilton  
1705 West Third St.

Call toll free, 1-800-728-1242.

General Information.....[info@easterniowa.com](mailto:info@easterniowa.com)

Billing Questions.....[billing@easterniowa.com](mailto:billing@easterniowa.com)

Service Questions.....[member.service@easterniowa.com](mailto:member.service@easterniowa.com)

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*