



Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
The power of human connections®

Current News

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

Cooperative celebrates 91 years of service

Eastern Iowa REC members again gathered at the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds in Davenport on Sept. 10 for the Cooperative's annual meeting.

The Cooperative's board of directors met following the Annual Meeting in a re-organizational session and re-elected the following officers: Ken Purdy, Columbus Jct., president; Kurt Olson, Grand Mound, vice president; Michael Bixler, Clarence, secretary; Henry Bentley, Durant, treasurer; and Brad Weiss, Burlington, assistant secretary.

Attendance was on par with last year with 794 memberships registered compared to 772 in 2025.

Jeff's Market prepared 1,445 ribeye sandwich lunches for the event.

The five directors elected at this summer's District Meetings were introduced and officially began their new terms on the board.

Adam Cartwright and pianist Adam Austin entertained the Annual Meeting audience covering songs from Frank Sinatra, Bobby Darin, Michael Buble, Billy Joel and Elton John.

A drawing for the 30 door prizes ended the event. The prize winners are listed online at www.easterniowa.com.



All incumbent directors re-elected to Board of Directors

All incumbent directors were re-elected at the District Meetings held this summer.

Joel Carstensen, Charlotte, was re-elected to the board during the District 1 meeting held July 28 at the DeWitt Community Center.

Michael Bixler, Clarence, was re-elected to the board during the District 2 meeting held July 29 at the Cedar County Fairgrounds in Tipton.

Mike Shuger, Wilton, was re-elected to the board during the District 3 meeting held July 22 at the Durant Community Center.

Robert Schneider Jr., Riverside, was re-elected to the board during the District 4 meeting held Aug. 4 at the Lone Tree school cafeteria.

Bradley Weiss, Burlington, was re-elected to the board at the District 5 meeting held Aug. 11 at the Mediapolis school auditorium.

All directors were re-elected without opposition. The directors were elected to three-year terms on the Cooperative's Board

of Directors.

Overall attendance for the five district meetings decreased from last year with 473 memberships registered compared to 531 in 2025.

Chairpersons for the meetings were: District 1, State Rep. Norlin Mommsen, DeWitt; District 2, State Rep. Bobby Kaufmann, Wilton; District 3, Dan Petersen, Muscatine; District 4, Kevin Morgan, Conesville; and District 5, Jeff Burgus, Sperry.

The 2026 Cooperative scholarship winners were introduced at each meeting.

Cooperative CEO Kirk Trede addressed the members at each meeting. His report touched on the Cooperative's financials, power generation capacity issues, CIPCO's power plant construction project and plans to build a new service center in Riverside.

A list of District Meeting prize winners can be found on the Cooperative's website, www.easterniowa.com.



Cooperative members who attended the District 4 meeting in Lone Tree Aug. 4 listen as the door prize winners are announced.

What consumers should know about plug-in solar systems

It seems easy enough. You set up a solar panel or two and its small generator-type device outside, plug the thing into a wall socket in your house, and before you know it, electricity is flowing and lowering your power bill.

These portable, DIY solar energy systems can generate several hundred watts and are marketed like appliances that only require a regular outlet. But as plug-in solar becomes more popular, consumers should be aware that these products require important safety considerations.

So, what should you know about behind-the-meter, plug-in solar kits?

Safety comes first

First, these systems have the potential to put lives and property at risk. Electric utility leaders note that almost all of these devices lack U.S. safety requirements, such as certification under UL codes or standards. UL has only recently developed a safety certification for plug-in solar systems.

Unlike rooftop solar and electric vehicle charger installations, these plug-and-play packages attempt to bypass existing interconnection protocols, oversight and inspections.

If a home's wiring is not up to snuff to support plug-in solar, the consumer wouldn't know because they didn't call a licensed electrician to install the equipment or an inspector who could spot that hazard.

That can be dangerous on multiple fronts, leading to overheated wires in a residence, property damage, fire and even worse, serious or deadly electrical shock.

"Plug-in solar introduces real safety risks at the consumer-member level," said Jeffrey Groenewold, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) senior energy solutions manager. "Existing residential wiring standards were not designed for generation through standard outlets, so plug-in solar increases the potential for fire and shock hazards."



A charged solar system can backfeed, or send electricity back to the grid, and re-energize power lines without your electric cooperative's knowledge. This could be fatal for lineworkers.

"The evolving plug-in solar industry must work to ensure these systems are properly managed and controlled to prevent unintended backfeed," said Groenewold. "This is critical to protecting cooperative lineworkers and keeping them safe when they are out working to restore power."

Unplugging the system does not eliminate its risk. Contact with the power cord energized by the solar panels can cause devastating injury.

Will Morris, a consultant to NRECA Business and Technology Strategies Group, underscored that these systems are not harmless appliances and should not be treated as such, especially around children.

"When we were growing up, our parents taught us if you would just unplug a blender or an iron or something like that, you're putting that device in a safe state. With this, it is the complete opposite," he said. "If somebody has this on their patio plugged into an exterior outlet and they unplug it and drop it in a puddle ... you can get 800 watts going to you. That can be a real bad day."

Weighing the costs and benefits

Then there's the affordability factor. Is plug-in solar really a good deal? The equipment for this behind-the-meter energy resource can cost a few hundred dollars to more than \$1,000, but its output, even in areas with plenty of

sunshine, will shave only an estimated 40 to 80 cents per day off your power bill, according to industry experts.

"I would be very surprised if in our markets plug-in solar makes financial sense because the average cooperative consumer rates are pretty low," said Morris. "It would take a long time to recover that investment."

European apartment dwellers who face very high electricity rates have been eagerly buying "balcony solar" for a while and expect to pay off their investment in a couple of years, he said. In Germany, where rates are particularly high, the plug-and-play packages are designed within the country's safety mandates and must be registered with the grid operator.

"So, the German utility knows when that device is being utilized and that they have potential for energy to flow back into the grid," he said.

But in the U.S., states are at various stages of potentially regulating plug-in solar to ensure safety.

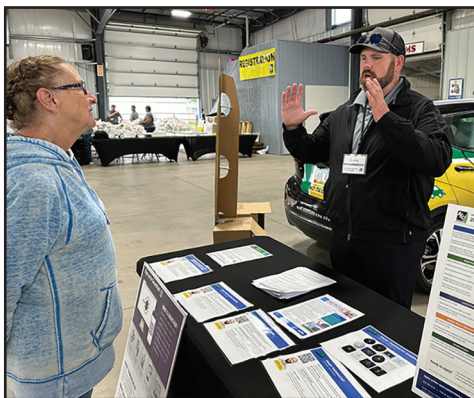
"We're at the Wild West phase of it right now," Morris said. "You can buy a system and plug it in. It's like buying a hairdryer, except the hairdryer is UL certified."

Members are encouraged to contact their electric cooperative for knowledgeable advice on plug-in solar and to inquire about requirements for installing such a device.

"The bottom line is if you're looking to lower your electric bill with some behind-the-meter device, please let your electric cooperative know," said Groenewold. "Co-ops have a variety of programs to partner with you to save money and to do it safely."

Cathy Cash writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. For any questions regarding plug-in solar, please contact Max Holtz, Energy Advisor, at 563-732-7353 or max.holtz@easterniowa.com.

Scenes from the 91st Cooperative Annual Meeting



Comments from the CEO

With cooperatives, local voices shape local solutions

This month, electric cooperatives across the country take time to celebrate National Co-op Month and reflect on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative. When you hear the word cooperative, what comes to mind? As your local electric co-op, we hope you think of Eastern Iowa REC.

Regardless of the services offered, all cooperatives have one thing in common: they're led by the people they serve—and that simple idea makes a meaningful difference.

Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, each created to meet a specific need. Credit unions help members save and borrow money. Producer cooperatives, like Ocean Spray and Land

O'Lakes, help farmers bring their products to market. Retail cooperatives, like REI and ACE Hardware, are owned by their shoppers or a membership of store owners, while housing cooperatives give residents a voice in managing their communities. And utility cooperatives—like Eastern Iowa REC—provide reliable electricity to the communities they serve.

Unlike many businesses that answer to outside investors or shareholders, cooperatives are built for their members. Their goal isn't simply to earn a profit—it's to provide value, meet unique local needs and strengthen the communities they call home.

That's exactly what makes Eastern Iowa REC different.

Our story began in 1935 when neighbors came together to bring electricity to an area when other utilities wouldn't. While a lot has changed since then, our purpose has remained steady. We're still here to provide power and make decisions with our community's best interests in mind.

Being locally owned means we have the flexibility to focus on what matters most to the communities we serve.



Kirk Trede
CEO

That's why no two electric cooperatives are exactly alike. Every community has different needs, and every cooperative reflects those priorities.

For some co-ops, that means expanding programs that help members save energy and money. Others may focus on supporting economic development, investing in new technology or creating new opportunities for local students.

You'll also find the co-op difference in the little things. It's the linemen restoring power after a storm. The employees answering your questions when you call. The team members volunteering at community events. The board members—your neighbors—who help guide decisions for the future.

We're your neighbor and local energy partner, and we're committed to serving this community for generations to come.

This National Co-op Month, we invite you to join us in celebrating the cooperative difference, because this co-op belongs to you.

Whether it's Eastern Iowa REC, your local credit union or ACE Hardware, cooperatives prove that when people work together, everyone benefits.

Your membership is what makes our mission possible—and it's what keeps us focused on serving the people and communities that matter most.

From the Boardroom, July, 2026

- Provided a Lone Tree Operations site update.
- Reviewed the Cooperative's participation in the Touchstone Cooperative Advantage survey.
- Reviewed plans for 2026 District and Annual Meetings.

From the Boardroom, August, 2026

- Provided a Lone Tree Operations site update.
- Reviewed the Cooperative's Strategic Corporate Plan.
- Reviewed results of 2026 District Meeting and plans for 2026 Annual Meeting.

The next board meeting will be held on October 23, 2026.



2025-2026 IOWA HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WHEN TO APPLY:

- **Elderly (60 & over) and/or disabled:**
October 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026
- **All other households:**
November 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026

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.
- **Proof of Social Security Numbers** for all household members (documentation required)
- **Most recent heat bill**
- **Most recent electric bill**

WAGE EARNERS:

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

FIXED INCOME:

This income may include Social Security Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, 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.

Note - Additional countable income and/or income verification not listed above may be required for eligibility determination

2025-2026 IOWA HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

ATTENTION: RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING BILL?

The 2025-2026 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.

If you are not sure where to apply you can **Dial 2-1-1**, visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/liheap> to locate and contact your local community action agency, or write to:

LIHEAP
Iowa Department of Health & Human Services
Capitol Complex
Des Moines, IA 50319

INCOME MAXIMUMS

Household Size	Annual Gross Income
1	\$31,300
2	\$42,300
3	\$53,300
4	\$64,300
5	\$75,300
6	\$86,300
7	\$97,300
8	\$108,300

For households with more than eight members, add \$11,000 for each additional member.

Statement of Operations

	12 months ending 12/31/25	6 months ending 6/30/26 unaudited
OPERATING REVENUES		
Electric Revenue		
Residential & Farm	\$43,558,049	\$21,378,011
Small Commercial	9,781,104	4,706,081
Large Commercial	17,690,669	9,559,412
Public Streets & Buildings	377,713	174,956
Resale	1,454,864	588,636
Other Operating Revenue	469,264	143,853
Total Operating Revenue	\$73,331,663	\$36,550,949
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Cost of Power	\$43,090,892	\$21,432,568
Distribution Expense-Operations	2,975,039	1,506,491
Distribution Expense-Maintenance	4,676,002	2,844,785
Consumer Account Expense	514,144	223,805
Customer Service & Information Expenses	89,531	39,792
Sales Expense	107,016	55,235
Administrative & General Expense	5,577,428	3,098,916
Depreciation Expense	7,459,471	3,897,617
Interest on Long-Term Debt	4,097,172	2,124,507
Other Deductions	14,906	12,908
Total Operating Expenses	\$68,601,601	\$35,236,624
MARGINS		
Operating Margin (loss)	\$4,730,062	\$1,314,325
Non-Operating Margins	3,969,232	612,246
Total Margins	\$8,699,294	\$1,926,571

Balance Sheet

	12 months ending 12/31/25	6 months ending 6/30/26 unaudited
ASSETS		
Utility Plant		
Total Electric Plant	\$233,700,766	\$239,198,576
Construction Work in Progress	9,339,864	9,716,067
Total Utility Plant	\$243,040,630	\$248,914,643
Less Accumulated Depreciation & Amort.	(83,915,183)	(86,618,815)
Net Utility Plant	\$159,125,447	\$162,295,828
Investments:		
Investments in Associated Organizations	\$35,165,590	\$33,494,221
Nonutility Property, Net	260,859	---
Other Investments	4,682,091	4,908,179
Total Investments	\$40,108,540	\$38,402,399
Current Assets:		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$6,712,051	\$6,419,280
Accounts Receivable,		
Net Credit Loss Allowances	8,171,486	8,045,991
Inventories	3,673,362	3,699,755
Other Current and Accrued Assets	740,965	228,493
Total Current Assets	\$19,297,864	\$18,393,519
Other Assets		
Deferred Debits	\$4,717,798	\$2,947,138
Total Assets	\$223,249,649	\$222,038,884
Equities and Liabilities		
Equities:		
Membership Fees	\$189,710	\$190,830
Patronage Capital	45,495,673	41,959,030
Other Equities	59,770,052	65,119,116
Total Members Equity	\$105,455,435	\$107,268,976
Long-Term Debt	\$103,057,537	\$101,040,583
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable	\$5,585,991	\$4,618,402
Other Accrued Liabilities	7,312,798	7,425,147
Total Current Liabilities	\$12,898,789	\$12,043,549
Deferred Credits	\$1,837,889	\$1,685,775
Total Equities and Liabilities	\$223,249,649	\$222,038,884

Current News Monthly Quiz

Quiz Winners:

Mark Hedin,
Muscatine

Dave Schmucker,
Lone Tree

John Melvold,
Maquoketa

Shiree Wolfswinkel,
Riverside

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

What is the deadline for LIHEAP applications?

Question 2

How many meals were served at the 2026 Annual Meeting?

Question 3

How many memberships were registered at the 2026 District Meetings?



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.

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