

# THE CONNECTION

## Paying for a System that Works Around the Clock

Your electric cooperative has been around for a long time – 80 years to be exact. We’ve witnessed the many ways electricity has transformed the communities we serve and our rural landscape. Before electricity, today’s household tasks were hard work and dangerous. For example, cooking and washing clothes involved a lot of manual labor. Thankfully, practically everything we do – from entertainment to our jobs – is impacted by the ease of electricity.

A lot has changed since electric cooperatives first turned the lights on for rural Iowa. One thing that hasn’t changed is our mission to provide electricity to you. Because we’ve been reliably, efficiently, and affordably delivering electricity to homes and businesses for decades, some of our members ask why they still need to pay for a system that should have been paid for by now.

The truth is, most – if not all – of the original system was paid for many years ago. The original infrastructure, such as poles and wires, which was paid for many years ago has likely been replaced. When you have a system that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, equipment needs to be replaced at regular intervals. Imagine if you had a car that was 80 years old, and it was driven all day, every day. By now, either the car would not be operating, or every part of the car – from the tires to the engine – would have been replaced many times. The same is true for utility infrastructure. While poles and wires generally have a life span of 30-40 years, some may not last as long due to a variety of conditions. For example, a major ice storm can cause power lines to snap and poles to break regardless of their age.



continued on page 8-B ►

### WIN

ONE OF TWO MONTHLY \$5 BILL CREDITS

### THIS MONTH’S CONTEST:

*What summer newsletter topics would interest you?*



Winners for the month of April:

**Richard Beekman, Kelley**

**Gary & Judith Engeltjes, Alleman**

### Here’s how to enter:

1. Answer the question or challenge posed each month.

2. Send answers to Consumers Energy with:

- Name
- Service address
- Account number
- Phone number
- Email address

Email to: [kglenney@consumersenergy.coop](mailto:kglenney@consumersenergy.coop)

Subject line: Contest

Mail to: Consumers Energy  
2074 242nd Street  
Marshalltown, IA 50158

3. Winners’ names will be drawn at random and published in upcoming issues of *The Connection*.

### May 2018

– Your Source for  
*Power and Information*

#### Dates To Remember:

- |        |                                     |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| May 1  | Read Meters                         |
| May 3  | Bills Due                           |
| May 3  | Automatic Payments Deducted         |
| May 9  | Mail Bills                          |
| May 13 | <b>Mother’s Day</b>                 |
| May 25 | Automatic Payments Deducted         |
| May 28 | <b>Memorial Day – Office Closed</b> |
| June 1 | Read Meters                         |
| June 3 | Bills Due                           |
| June 4 | Automatic Payments Deducted         |



# ANNUAL MEETING

**EAT** Breakfast 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

**PLAY** Kids' Activities 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.  
Kids' Movie 10:00 a.m.

**LEARN** Annual Business Meeting 10:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26  
CONSUMERS ENERGY'S  
HEADQUARTERS  
2074 242ND STREET  
MARSHALLTOWN, IA 50158

www.consumersenergy.coop | info@consumersenergy.coop | 800-696-6552



## YOU COULD BE THE NEXT WINNER!

Member Jens Grage won a **Miracle-Gro soil-free indoor AeroGarden** from the Editor's Choice Contest in *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine.

Check out page 5 of this month's issue to enter for your chance to be the next winner!

### **Paying for a System** *(continued)*

Paying for an electric cooperative system can be compared to paying for your home. Over many years or decades, the original tract of land and the physical property are paid in full. But infrastructure updates such as a new furnace, air conditioner, windows, and roof are required, not to mention updates to appliances, carpeting, flooring, and paint. Consider how inefficient it would be to heat your home with an 80-year-old furnace. Think of the additional money you'd spend each month due to its inefficiency instead of replacing it with a new model. The same logic applies to your co-op as we need to replace vehicles and equipment over the years to serve you best. Aside from the costs of hard assets at the co-op, there are also the costs of property taxes, insurance, regular maintenance, and staffing that contribute to our overall system costs.

The original co-op infrastructure fulfilled the expectations of that time in terms of reliability and affordability. Over the years, many of those needs have changed. What's in place today is an improved distribution system that allows us to meet increasing demands for kilowatt-hours in an efficient manner. Not only has the need for electricity increased, but our processes now result in reduced outage times. We also work to extend the life of infrastructure through maintenance at regular intervals. Poles are routinely tested, and we trim vegetation throughout our system on a regular basis to maintain a high level of reliability. To balance reliability with affordability, we upgrade our system when and where it makes sense to do so. We balance financing upgrades and replacements with debt and equity so that we can keep your rates stable and affordable while providing power that you can count on for your home or business.



– Jim Kidd, General Manager

Please join Consumers Energy in congratulating

# C.D. Kendall

at his

## Retirement Party



OPEN HOUSE  
FRIDAY, JUNE 1  
3:00-5:00 P.M.

Consumers Energy's  
Community Room

2074 242nd Street  
Marshalltown

### EVER WONDERED?

How can my kids be safe around electricity?  
How can I make my farm or home electrically safe?  
What about renewable energy?

CONSUMERS ENERGY OFFERS  
**FREE**  
PRESENTATIONS & DEMONSTRATIONS  
TO VARIOUS GROUPS, CLASSES, CLUBS,  
& ORGANIZATIONS.

For more information or to schedule a presentation, contact the Member Services Department at 800-696-6552 or [info@consumersenergy.coop](mailto:info@consumersenergy.coop).



More than 200 advocates from Iowa's rural electric cooperatives met with legislators during IAEC's 2018 REC Day on the Hill event including Consumers Energy's Directors Allan Ambrecht, Bill Hobson, Pat VonAhnen, and General Manager Jim Kidd. Co-ops are working hard to ensure safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy for their members. We also served pie in honor of Pi Day (3/14)!



**When streaming online content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching.**

**Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than streaming through a tablet or laptop.**

*Source: energy.gov*



# COLO-NESCO ANNUAL CAREER & COLLEGE FAIR

\*\*\*\*\*

Colo-NESCO 5th - 12th grade students attended the school's career & college fair.

Consumers Energy employees were on hand to discuss career opportunities in the electric industry, the cooperative's Youth Tour and scholarship opportunities, and the importance of safety in the field.

Lineman gear was available for students to learn more about what it is like to be a lineman.

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information on how to have Consumers Energy employees attend your educational meeting or event, contact Tami Kerwood at 800-696-6552 or [tkerwood@consumersenergy.coop](mailto:tkerwood@consumersenergy.coop).



HAPPY   
MOTHER'S  
Day! 

- COLOR
- LAUGH
- LEARN
- LOVE
- PAINT
- PLAY
- PRETEND
- READ
- RUN
- SHARE
- SING
- TRAVEL
- WALK

W T P L O V E U  
A T R A V E L H  
L Z E U E O E E  
K I T G P L A Y  
L G E H Y S R K  
R U N P A I N T  
F L D G N N Y U  
C O L O R G Y S  
S H A R E A D V

# ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING

## UNKNOWN DANGER LURKING IN THE WATER

Docks and boats carry sources of **electricity**. Faulty wiring or the use of damaged electrical cords and other devices can cause the surrounding water to become **energized**. NEVER swim near a marina or a near a boat while it's running.



There is **no visible warning** to electrified water.

Electric current in the water causes the **paralysis of muscles** which results in **drowning**.



The 2017 NEC now **requires** marinas and boatyards to have **ground-fault protection** to help prevent water electrification. Check to see if your marina, and the boats in the marina, have proper **GFCI protection**.



As little as **10 milliamps**, 1/50th the amount used by a 60 watt light bulb, can cause **paralysis and drowning**.



### WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE **ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING** TAKING PLACE

Turn power off



Throw a life ring



Call 911



**NEVER** enter the water



You could become a victim too.



**WARNING – POTENTIAL SHOCK HAZARD: ELECTRICAL CURRENTS MAY BE PRESENT IN THE WATER**

The 2017 National Electrical Code **requires** marinas and boat docks to post electric shock **warning signs** where electricity is used near water.



[www.facebook.com/ESFi.org](https://www.facebook.com/ESFi.org)

[www.twitter.com/ESFIdotorg](https://www.twitter.com/ESFIdotorg)

[www.youtube.com/ESFIdotorg](https://www.youtube.com/ESFIdotorg)



### Junior Safety Agent, your help is needed to crack the code!

Safe Electricity has important safety tips to help keep people safe from electrical hazards while playing outside. Your mission is to discover what these safety tips are by completing the sentences below. Then, put the circled letters in the decoder. When you have finished all the sentences, the clues will come together to form a secret message!

1. Keep yourself and any play items away from power .
2. It is dangerous to climb trees near  lines.
3. Never play around padmount .
4.  should be flown far away from overhead power lines or other electrical equipment.
5. A kite string can  electricity from a power line through a person to the ground.
6. It is safest to fly kites in large, open areas like a  or a field.
7. Never climb a  surrounding the substation for a ball or other toy. Call your utility for help.
8. Keep electronics like  away from pools and hot tubs.
9. Be aware of the hazards, also known as , inside and outside your home.
10. Know where to fly model  to avoid contact with power lines.
11. Damaged power lines are dangerous. Never touch a  power line.
12. Making contact with electrical appliances while  is dangerous.
13. Remember to think about  before deciding where to play outside.
14. Always dispose of  balloons properly.
15. Weatherproof covers should be used for exterior .
16. Never  trees that are close to power lines.
17. Never swim in  where boats are plugged in to shore power.
18. Don't plant tall  near power lines.
19. Walk carefully, and don't run in areas near extension .

-----  
Congratulations! You've cracked the code, Junior Safety Agent! Be sure to share what you know about electrical safety to help keep your friends and family safe. Learn more at:



1. lines; 2. power; 3. transformers; 4. kites; 5. conduct; 6. park; 7. fence; 8. radios; 9. dangers; 10. planes; 11. downed; 12. wet; 13. safety; 14. Mylar; 15. outlets; 16. climb; 17. marina; 18. trees; 19. cords



**Office Hours**  
7:30 am — 4:30 pm  
Monday through Friday

## Contact Us

2074 242nd Street • Marshalltown, Iowa 50158  
Phone: 641-752-1593 • Toll-Free: 800-696-6552  
Fax: 641-752-5738 • E-mail: [info@consumersenergy.coop](mailto:info@consumersenergy.coop)  
**[www.consumersenergy.coop](http://www.consumersenergy.coop)**

### Directors:

Bill Hobson, President  
Mark Wampler, Vice President  
Pat VonAhnen, Secretary-Treasurer  
Allan Armbrecht, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer  
Terry Benskin  
Jeff Edler  
Arden Greiner  
Bob Meimann  
John Ripley

If you have an idea for a topic for The Connection, please contact Kippen Glenney at 800-696-6552 or [kglenney@consumersenergy.coop](mailto:kglenney@consumersenergy.coop).



Consumers Energy's  
winner:  
**EMILY  
JACOBS**

My name is Emily Jacobs. I am currently a sophomore at Marshalltown High School. I have 3 brothers and 2 sisters (and 2 dogs and a cat) so my house has always been pretty hectic growing up.

My favorite sport is volleyball, which I've played since 5th grade. I just started playing tennis for the first time this year.

I like to read so my favorite subject is English. I also like science and history, so I really look forward to visiting the museums in Washington, D.C.



For more info:  
[www.consumersenergy.coop](http://www.consumersenergy.coop)  
[tkerwood@consumersenergy.coop](mailto:tkerwood@consumersenergy.coop)  
800-696-6552

## Change in Method to Accept Payments Made by Phone Coming Soon

**S**afety is our number one priority – with the linemen, the office staff, and with our members. It's no different when it comes to member information – we want to make sure your information is as safe as possible

On July 1, Consumers Energy will be using Secure Payments for all phone payment processing. Our staff will no longer accept payments made over the phone. The cooperative's Secure Payments system being implemented is an automated pay-by-telephone system to process debit/credit card and check payments. This system is being used in order to increase security for our members and to comply with the payment security industry credit card standards.

With Secure Payments, you will be able to check your account balance, make payments, and store card or electronic check information for future payments. This system is automated with all personal information entered by you, the member. Simply call 844-201-7196 and have your current phone number and/or account number available. This service is FREE and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

For more information, contact the Member Services Department at 800-696-6552 or [info@consumersenergy.coop](mailto:info@consumersenergy.coop).

