



Consumers Energy Board Approves \$750,000 in Patronage Capital Retirement for 2018

At Consumers Energy's board meeting on November 29, 2018, the Board of Directors approved the retirement of \$750,000 of patronage capital credits. **This patronage capital retirement is shown as a credit for each member's portion of this retirement on electric bills received in January 2019.**

The retirement of patronage capital credits is a tangible demonstration of member ownership in Consumers Energy. As a cooperative that belongs to the members it serves, Consumers Energy operates as a not-for-profit utility. Any "profits" made by the cooperative are referred to as margins. At the end of each year, the margins are allocated to each member's patronage capital credit account in proportion to the amount of electricity purchased after all statutory and reserve requirements are met. From the time the margins are generated until they are re-turned, this money is put to work within the cooperative, minimizing debt financing and strengthening our financial position.

Your elected Board of Directors must first consider the financial condition of the co-op and the needs for capital funds for coming years before distributing patronage capital credits. The patronage capital credit amount is determined by the board and is set at a level that maintains the financial integrity of the co-op. The board evaluates Consumers Energy's equity goals, the patronage capital credit rotation plan, the cost of borrowing money, plant growth, and storm reserves.

Please contact Consumers Energy at 800-696-6552 with questions about your portion of the retirement for 2018 or the patronage capital retirement process.

--Jim Kidd, General Manager



WIN

ONE OF TWO MONTHLY \$5 BILL CREDITS

THIS MONTH'S CONTEST:

*Complete the quiz questions in the bath safety activity on Page 8-C, and submit those answers. Correct answers will be published in the February issue of *The Connection*.*

◆ ◆ ◆

Winners for the month of November:
Mona & Merrell Kilborn, Marshalltown
Shelby & Taran Strempeke, Kelley

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
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*.

January 2019

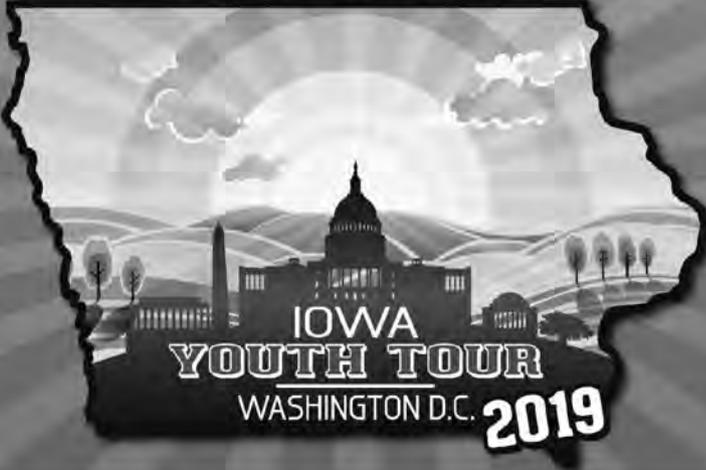
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Power and Information*

Dates To Remember:

| | |
|---------|---|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day Holiday Office Closed |
| Jan. 2 | Read Meters |
| Jan. 3 | Bills Due |
| Jan. 3 | Automatic Payments Deducted |
| Jan. 10 | Email/Mail Bills |
| Jan. 25 | Automatic Payments Deducted |
| Feb. 1 | Read Meters |
| Feb. 3 | Bills Due |
| Feb. 5 | Automatic Payments Deducted |

Opportunities for HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:

**WIN A WEEK-LONG TRIP
TO WASHINGTON D.C.**



**IOWA
YOUTH TOUR
WASHINGTON D.C. 2019**

NEXT YOUTH TOUR - June 14-20, 2019

DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR
YOUTH TOUR:
MARCH 9, 2019

DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR
SCHOLARSHIPS:
MARCH 15, 2019

2019 SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

CONSUMERS ENERGY OFFERS
\$1,000 SCHOLARSHIPS FOR
ACADEMIC AND LINEWORKER
STUDENTS.



Questions?

Contact Tami Kerwood at 800-696-6552 or tkerwood@consumersenergy.coop.

Applications are available at www.consumersenergy.coop.
Click the Community tab, then Youth Tour or Scholarship.

Do you know the hidden electrical dangers in the bathroom?



Answer these bath safety questions, then send in your answers for a chance to win one of two \$5 bill credits!

Contest details are on page 8-A.

Answers will be published in next month's newsletter.

1. Electricity and water are a deadly combination.
True or False
2. It's OK to go near water with hair dryers, flat irons, and other bathroom appliances.
True or False
3. Water _____ electricity.
A. repels
B. conducts
C. insulates
D. plays a game of Twister with
4. You should test your GFCI outlets monthly.
True or False
5. Water heaters should be set at _____°F so hot water does not cause severe burns.
A. 130
B. 350
C. 100
D. 120
6. Uncovered lightbulbs exposed to water or steam can lead to electrocution or fire.
True or False
7. Your risk of shock does not increase with a small amount of water from damp skin after a shower.
True or False

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Q

Members were asked: “What energy efficient products are you most interested in learning about?” The cooperative’s Energy Advisor Jeff Lanning has provided information to answer these member questions.

If you have more questions on these topics or others, contact the Member Services Department at 800-696-6552.

What new, very efficient space heaters are available?

Electric space heaters are less efficient and less cost-effective than central heating systems to heat your home. Before you turn to space heaters to solve heating issues, you should try to address the root problems causing you to need a space heater – cold air seeping into your home or a poorly functioning furnace.

To determine how much a space heater will cost you to use, you can implement this formula:

Multiply the wattage of your space heater by the hours of use to get A.

Multiply A by your electricity rate per kilowatt hour (kWh) to get B.

Divide B by 1,000.

For instance, if you use your space heater which has a wattage of 1500W for 6 hours:

$$1,500 \times 6 = 9,000$$

$$9,000 \times 0.1225 \text{ (Consumers Energy’s residential rate)} = 1,102.50$$

$$1,102.50 \div 1,000 = \$1.10$$

Your space heater costs \$1.10 for every 6 hours it is running. If that’s 6 hours every day for a month, that is \$33.00.

Let’s try a 1500W space heater for 24 hours:

$$1,500 \times 24 = 36,000$$

$$36,000 \times 0.1225 = 4,410.00$$

$$4,410.00 \div 1,000 = \$4.41$$

\$4.41 x 30 days = \$132.30 – That is \$132.30 in addition to your regular electric use.

Cost to Run a Space Heater Based on Consumers Energy’s Residential Rate of \$0.1225/kWh

| Heat Setting (Watts) | Cost per Hour | Cost per Day | Cost per Month |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| 600W | \$0.07 | \$1.76 | \$52.92 |
| 1000W | \$0.12 | \$2.94 | \$88.20 |
| 1500W | \$0.18 | \$4.41 | \$132.30 |

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What are recommendations for continued use of solar generation during an outage on the grid?

Does solar work in a power outage?

There are two reasons that ordinary grid-tied solar will not work during a grid failure. The first is a technical reason and the second is a safety and regulatory issue.

First and foremost is the technical reason. The electronics that control a solar electric system constantly adjust voltage and current in order to keep the panels operating at their most efficient and powerful operating point through a range of varying sunlight conditions. To do this, the system needs to be able to produce quantities of power that are not dependent on how much your house is actually using at the time. In a grid-connected system, that excess power is put back onto the grid for others to use, and your utility credits you on your bill for that power.

Solar power output varies directly with sunlight levels. So, even if you disregard the need for efficiency, connecting this variable resource directly to your home's electrical system would cause your lights to blink, damage your refrigerator, and wreak havoc on your computers and television.

The second reason that solar shuts down during a blackout is safety.

During a power outage, the power utility sends out repair crews to find and fix the points of failure. Lineworkers can be jeopardized if there is a local power generator (like a solar array) leaking power onto the grid lines. Therefore, utility rules mandate that in the event of a power outage, solar arrays must automatically shut down. Solar systems have detectors that sense whether power is coming across the grid, and whenever grid power is down, they automatically shut down too, to protect utility workers.

What about battery backup?

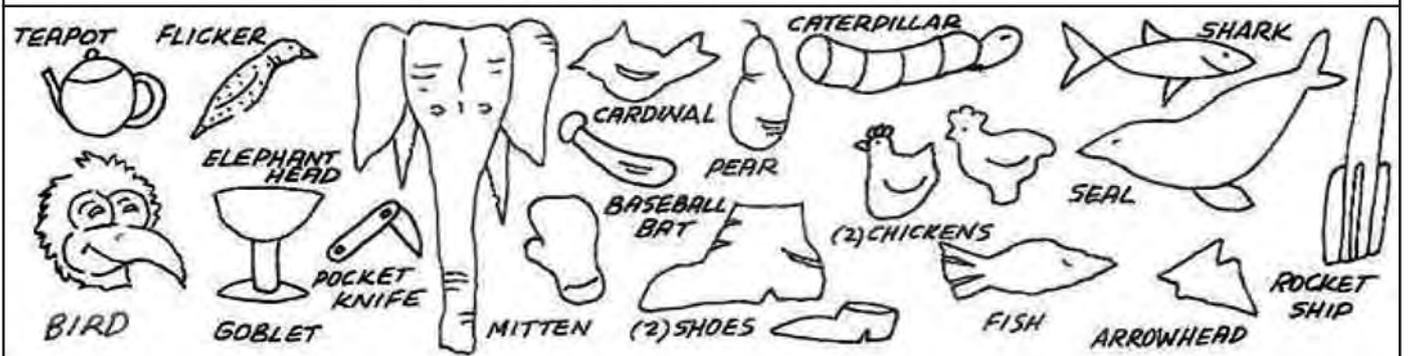
There are arguments for and against battery storage for PV solar systems. The biggest “for” argument is that, with battery backup, your home or business can be powered during a blackout. The biggest “against” of battery storage is the cost, which can double the cost of your clean energy system. Batteries also compromise the “clean energy” aspect of solar—they are toxic and very costly to discard when no longer useful. Batteries have a relatively short life, compared to other solar system components; they are also very heavy and bulky, and require a lot of maintenance to perform at their best.

If you have questions on energy efficiency or things to do with electricity, please contact Consumers Energy at 800-696-6552 or info@consumersenergy.coop.



Hidden Picture by Liz Ball

See page 8-H for the answers.



Iowa Cooperatives
for Energy Efficiency
welcome you to

**momentum
is building** 2019
working together
toward energy efficiency

February 7-8, 2019
at the Sheraton West Des Moines

Consumers Energy
invites local
contractors to
participate in the
2019 Momentum is
Building
Conference.

momentum is building
is your opportunity to

-  Gain insight into new techniques from top-of-the-industry, nationally known speakers.
-  See the latest building products and technologies offered by our vendors.
-  Network with other building, electrical and HVAC professionals.
-  Qualify for door prizes. More than \$1,000 in tools will be given away throughout the conference.

www.momentumisbuilding.com

Consumers Energy will sponsor a limited number of attendees to participate in the 2019 Momentum is Building Conference.

For more information, contact Energy Advisor Jeff Lanning at 800-696-6552.

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📠 641-752-5738

🌐 www.consumersenergy.coop

✉ info@consumersenergy.coop

OFFICE HOURS
7:30 AM - 4:00 PM
MONDAY - FRIDAY

Energy Efficiency Cost per kWh: \$0.001232

WAYS TO PAY YOUR CONSUMERS ENERGY BILL

Automatic recurring
monthly payments



By dropbox



By mail

By phone 24/7
844-201-7196



In person



Online or the app
www.consumersenergy.coop



For more information, contact the Member Services Department at
800-696-6552 or info@consumersenergy.coop.

2019 Annual Meeting

Save the
date

Saturday, August 24, 2019

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

Business Meeting 10:00 a.m.

