

Prioritize Safety Year-Round

At Consumers Energy, we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our co-op crews to you, the members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity, and it powers our daily lives. But we know first-hand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

To me, safety is more than a catchphrase. As CEO/General Manager, it's my responsibility to keep co-op employees safe. Additionally, we want to help keep you and all members of our community safe. That's why you'll see Consumers Energy hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, to demonstrate the dangers of electricity. We discuss emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines. We caution students on the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools, and appliances, I'd like to pass along a few practical electrical safety tips.

Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard. Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use, or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.

Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle—by having too many devices running on one circuit.



continued on page 8-B ►

WIN

ONE OF TWO MONTHLY \$5 BILL CREDITS

THIS MONTH'S CONTEST:

Submit your answers to the emoji Pictionary puzzles on page 8-B.

*The solutions will be published in the June issue of *The Connection*.*

◆ ◆ ◆

Winners for the month of March:
Merrell & Mona Kilborn, Marshalltown
Roseann Nymeyer, Marshalltown

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

Submit via email or mail:
Email to: kglenney@consumersenergy.coop
Subject line: Contest

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

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

May 2022

Dates To Remember:

May	
3	Bills Due
3	Automatic Payments Deducted
8	Mother's Day
10	Email / Mail Bills
25	Automatic Payments Deducted
30	Memorial Day - Office Closed
June	
1	Read Meters
3	Bills Due
3	Automatic Payments Deducted

Prioritize Safety Year-Round *(continued)*

Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home. Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you “daisy chain” them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don’t exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

I encourage you to talk with your kids about playing it safe and smart around electricity. Help them be aware of overhead power lines near where they play outdoors.

Our top priority is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days per year. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity.

Contact Consumers Energy for additional electrical safety tips or if you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or upcoming community event.

Bridget Itzen

Bridget Itzen,
CEO/General Manager

SAFETY FIRST!

Consumers Energy offers free electrical education and safety presentations for local students and civic organizations.



If you are interested in having
Consumers Energy present for your class or group,
contact Tami Kerwood, Billing & Education Coordinator, at
800-696-6552 or info@consumersenergy.coop.



Book Emoji Pictionary

Guess the books! Enter the monthly newsletter contest by sending in your answers! Contest details are on page 8-A.



SPOT THE ELECTRICAL HAZARD



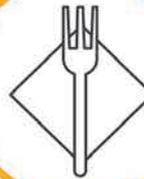
When combined, electricity and common items that seem harmless can create dangerous situations. Look at the items grouped below, then circle the two items that (when combined) create an electrical hazard.

Check your work in the answer key.

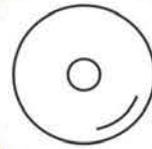
1



toaster



fork

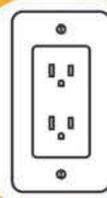


bagel

2



hairdryer

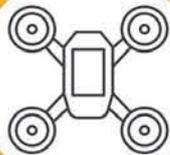


electrical outlet



running water

3



drone

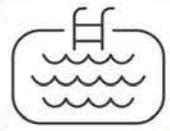


power lines



picnic

4



swimming pool



floatie



extension cord

Answer Key: 1) fork & toaster 2) hairdryer & water or outlet & water 3) drone & power lines 4) extension cord & pool

Annual Audit of Co-op Financials Complete

In February, Eide Bailly LLP completed the Annual Audit of the balance sheet of Consumers Energy Cooperative and Subsidiary as of December 31, 2021, and 2020, and the related statements of operations, member patronage capital credits, and other equities and cash flows for the years then ended. The audits were conducted according to the generally accepted auditing standards.



An audit facilitates improved processes and controls, addresses regulatory or other compliance issues, and ensures processes are efficient as well as providing reasonable assurance the financial statements are presented fairly and are free of material misstatement. Eide Bailly LLP's Nick Crank, CPA, Partner, presented a clean opinion to the Board of Directors at their March board meeting, stating that the financial statements are in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The financial statements for Consumers Energy will be presented to the membership at the Annual Business Meeting on Saturday, August 27, 2022.

Shining the Light on Community Volunteers in June

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Iowa's electric co-ops are excited to bring back our Shine the Light contest in June to celebrate local volunteers. Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the Shine the Light Contest will accept nominations and select three winners who will each receive a \$2,000 donation to their local charity or nonprofit.

"We were truly inspired by the flood of contest entries we received last summer," remarked Erin Campbell, director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. "We're increasing our three winner donations from \$1,500 to \$2,000 each this year to encourage even more participation across the state."

Members and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers during the month of June. If you receive electricity from Consumers Energy, you're a co-op member, and we encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

The three winners will be announced in September and featured in Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine. Go to www.IowaShineTheLight.com to review the contest rules. Contest entries will be accepted at this website starting on June 1. Help us shine the light on community volunteers this summer and consider making a nomination!



**Nominate a local volunteer
and they could win
\$2,000 for their charity!**

Contest entries accepted during June at
IowaShineTheLight.com

A QUICK GUIDE TO GENERATORS

With proper use and maintenance, generators provide great convenience during a power outage. Before you purchase a generator, determine your backup power needs to select the right size. Make a list of essential appliances and devices you'll want to power during an outage, then total the required wattage.



RECOMMENDED IF YOU...

... **rarely** lose power.

Recreational Inverter

Up to 2,000 watts

Lightweight, about 60 pounds

Quiet, easy to store

Power: fridge and a few smaller items (i.e. lamp, phone charger and home security system)

Mid-sized Inverter

Up to 3,500 watts

Weighs up to 150 pounds

Power: fridge, laptop, five to 10 lights, phone charger, home security system and 10K BTU air conditioner

... **occasionally** lose power.
Transfer switch required.

Portable Generators and Large Inverters

Up to 7,500 watts

Weighs about 300 pounds

Power: fridge, gas furnace, 10K BTU air conditioner, dishwasher, multiple lights, TV, laptop and more

Ability to connect to home's breaker panel

... **frequently** lose power.
Transfer switch required.

Home Standby

Up to 20,000 watts

Must be permanently installed; starts automatically during outage

Power: nearly all home appliances and electronics (simultaneously)

Can run indefinitely on natural gas or propane

Recommended if you frequently lose power.

SAFETY FIRST!

- Let us know if you purchase a generator that you plan to connect to an electric panel.
- Improperly installed generators can create back feed, which is dangerous to our crews and the community.
Before using the generator, disconnect the normal source of power coming into your home/business.
- Never operate a generator indoors or in an enclosed space.

Disclaimer: Please note safety requirements may differ based on the type of generator you purchase. Thoroughly read the operator's manual and know how to shut off the generator quickly.

Source: Consumer Reports



Employee SPOTLIGHT

Gail Hull

Member Services Manager



Zoey

Gail Hull works at Consumers Energy as the Member Services Manager. In her 20 years at the co-op, she has held positions in member services and billing including Billing Services Coordinator and Member Account Supervisor. Gail enjoys the variety her job allows and helping members.

Gail's family includes her husband, Ryan; daughters Ellie and Sydney; and her "third daughter" toy poodle, Zoey.

When Gail isn't at work, you can find her at one of her daughters' activities - both Ellie and Sydney are active in sports at East Marshall.

Gail enjoys traveling, although her travels have been limited recently. She enjoys trips to the beach or the mountains, but most weekends you will find Gail in the gym, at the ballpark, or cruising around in her family convertible!

Thanks for your years of dedicated service to the co-op, Gail!



Gail & Ryan in Rome



Ellie, Zoey, & Sydney



Ryan & Ellie enjoying a convertible ride!



Ellie & Sydney



Ellie at track



Ellie at softball



Sydney at volleyball



Sydney at softball



Consumers Energy is proud to sponsor a student annually for the Iowa Youth Tour.

Iowa's not-for-profit electric cooperatives have been sending high school students to Washington, D.C., in June since 1958!

On the tour, students learn about electric cooperatives, American history, and U.S. government and walk away with a greater understanding of their role as an American citizen. They participate in National Youth Day, visit with their elected legislators, and explore the sights around the nation's capital.

THIS YEAR'S WINNER IS...

CONGRATS, COLTON!



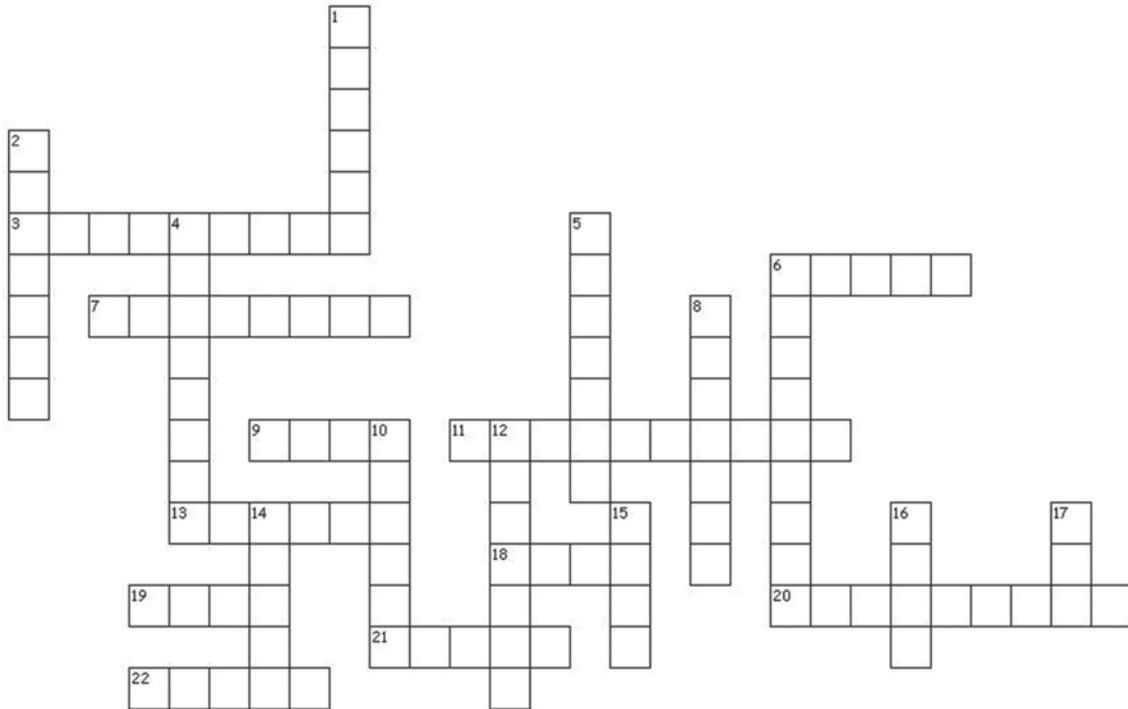
Colton Buell

Colton is the son of Fred and Ann Marie Buell of Bondurant. He is a senior at Ankeny Christian Academy where he's a member of Student Council, National Honors Society, Drama Team, and Teen Advisory Group. In his spare time Colton enjoys acting, roller skating, long boarding, and performing in Chapel Band. Colton is looking forward to learning about what co-ops do on a national level especially after participating in the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy last fall.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON YOUTH TOUR, CONTACT TAMI KERWOOD AT 800-696-6552 OR TKERWOOD@CONSUMERSENERGY.COOP.

Be Safe with Electricity!

Read the Safety Tips to Find the Missing Words



Across

3. Use extension cords on a _____ basis - not as permanent household wiring.
6. Run lamp _____ along walls and behind furniture so they're safely out of the way.
7. Screw light bulbs in securely. Loose bulbs may _____ and cause a fire.
9. Before you dig, _____ your local underground utility locator service to avoid damage and injuries.
11. Prevent electrical shocks and fires by using safety-tested _____.
13. If you see a _____ or sagging power line, stay far away, warn others to stay away and call the utility company.
18. Make sure outlets in the kitchen, bathroom, laundry, workshop, basement and garage have _____s.
19. Unplug _____-producing appliances like irons and toasters when not in use.
20. Don't remove the _____ pin to make a three-prong fit a two prong outlet.
21. Make certain extension cords are _____ to handle the lamp, tool or appliance you are using.
22. Have your home's wiring checked regularly, at least every 10 _____.

Down

1. Use _____ covers or special outlets if you have young children in the home.
2. All _____ sockets should have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Use a portable GFCI if those outlets don't have them.
4. Flickering, blinking and dimming lights can be a sign of home electrical _____.
5. Test ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) _____.
6. Keep cords out of walkways. Don't cover cords with _____ or rugs. The cords could overheat.
8. Go indoors when _____ roars.
10. Never place tall items like a _____ or antenna near a power line.
12. Never reach into water for a _____-in appliance. Unplug it first.
14. Keep appliances away from _____.
15. Overloaded outlets and extension cords can overheat, increasing the risk for _____. Limit the number of appliances plugged into each outlet.
16. Pull by the _____, not the cord when unplugging appliances.
17. Keep all objects at least _____ feet away from overhead lines.

Across: 3. temporary 6. cords 7. overheat 9. call 11. appliances
 13. downed 15. GFCI 19. heat 20. grounding 21. rated 22. years
 Down: 1. safety 2. outdoor 4. overload 5. monthly 6. carpeting
 8. thunder 10. ladder 12. plugged 14. water 15. fire 16. plug 17. ten



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Energy Efficiency Cost per kWh:
\$0.000874

To report an outage, call 800-696-6552.

For the most accurate outage updates, check SmartHub or www.consumersenergy.coop for messages, the statewide outage map, or call Consumers Energy.

WAYS TO PAY YOUR CONSUMERS ENERGY BILL



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www.consumersenergy.coop

Automatic recurring
monthly payments



In person

By phone 24/7
844-201-7196



By mail

By dropbox



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641-752-1593 | 800-696-6552



641-752-5738



www.consumersenergy.coop



info@consumersenergy.coop

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



WATER HEATERS

- Consumers Energy stocks and sells Marathon & Ruud energy efficient electric water heaters.



APPLIANCE & CFL BULB RECYCLING

- Get paid to recycle old, working fridges, freezers, and window air conditioners! Call CLEAResult at 855-838-7817.
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For information on ways to pay or programs and services offered, contact the Member Services Department.