

● APRIL 2023

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

**Learn more about  
our lineworkers**

**Electric co-ops work to  
stay ahead of Mother Nature**

**Breakfast and brunch recipes**

**Vote for your co-op board ▶ See Page 12-13**

# BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOUSING

Almost 200 building industry professionals and Iowa electric co-op staff attended the 2023 Momentum is Building conference, held Feb. 16-17 in Altoona.

Sponsored by the Iowa Cooperatives for Energy Efficiency, the annual conference promotes residential energy efficiency building concepts and construction best practices. It also provides valuable continuing education units (CEU) training for electricians, plumbers and HVAC professionals. This year, 13 vendors and exhibitors attended the conference to share new trends and products related to residential energy efficiency. The conference also serves to educate



the next generation of professionals, as several construction students from Indian Hills Community College attended. Account number nine eight one zero zero zero one zero.

“Momentum is Building is a great opportunity for me and my team to continue our education with electrical, HVAC and plumbing classes. We enjoy being able to network with industry partners to better serve our members,” says Tim Plumb, director of member services for Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).

This year, Plumb along with Harrison County REC electricians Clay Kuhlman and Alan Mumm (pictured below) attended the conference.

Attendees heard from Tolu Omotoso, director of energy solutions at the

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), on emerging smart home technologies that improve energy efficiency. The acclaimed Wartburg College wrestling coach Jim Miller closed the conference with an inspiring message about going the extra mile for yourself and your team.

### Next year’s event

The annual Momentum is Building Conference connects Iowa’s construction industry with the local services and resources available from Iowa’s electric cooperatives. Next year’s conference is scheduled for Feb. 8-9, 2024. The annual conference is managed and organized by Iowa’s generation and transmission cooperatives, including Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative, which supplies power to Harrison County REC.



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# THE POWER BEHIND YOUR POWER: LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY IS APRIL 10

You've likely noticed Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our community. It's no secret that a lineworker's job is tough – but it's a job that's essential and must be done, often in challenging conditions. This month, as we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 10, we want to share some interesting facts about electric lineworkers.

The work can be heavy, in more ways than one. Did you know the equipment and tools that a lineworker carries while climbing a utility pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That's the same as carrying six gallons of water. Speaking of utility poles, lineworkers are required to climb poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 120 feet tall. If you have a fear of heights, this likely isn't the career path for you!

Lineworkers must be committed to their career because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a lineworker is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Lineworkers often work non-traditional hours, outdoors in difficult conditions. While the job does not require a college degree, it does require technical skills, years of training and hands-on learning. Did you know that to become a journeyman



Pictured from left to right: Tim Plumb, director of member services; Jeremy Jochims, foreman; Jim Andersen, foreman; Mike Vana, operations assistant; Ryan Fouts, journeyman; Jacolby Ehler, journeyman; Bryce Jensen, journeyman; Drake Johnsen, journeyman; Robert Wakehouse, subforeman; Alan Mumm, electrician; Clay Kuhlman, apprentice electrician; Tom Ellison, mechanic; and Shadon Blum, director of operations. Not pictured: Derek Hamik, journeyman.

lineworker can take more than 7,000 hours of training (or about four years)? That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience and an ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an option, and there is no room for error in this line of work.

## Commitment to our members, community

Despite the many challenges, Harrison County REC's crews are committed to powering our local community. During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort of their home and families unexpectedly, and they don't

return until the job is done, often days later. That's why the lineworker's family is also dedicated to service. They understand the importance of the job to the community.

Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric lineworkers. Here at Harrison County REC, our lines are maintained by nine lineworkers, three electricians and one mechanic. This team is responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year. To do this, they work on many miles of overhead and underground power lines across five counties.

Being a lineworker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it is absolutely essential to the life of our community. Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men and women, we simply would not have the reliable electricity that we need for everyday life. Account number one two three five zero zero nine one three.

So, the next time you see a lineworker, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. After all, lineworkers are the power behind your power.



# VOTE FOR YOUR CO-OP BOARD

On Wednesday, April 19, Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) will host its annual meeting director elections. Members can vote for their board of directors, with board seats up for election in Districts 5, 6 and 7. Votes can be cast by submitting a ballot via U.S. mail, the co-op drop box or in person at the co-op office headquarters from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

“Living on co-op lines is an investment in our community and its members,” says Joe Farley, CEO of Harrison County REC. “Owned by the members we serve, it’s important that we conduct official business, provide a democratic election of directors, and share financial and operational updates with our members.”

Members will notice a different format for conducting business this year. Like many of our electric cooperative neighbors, the pandemic has changed some aspects of how we do business. To keep our employees and our members healthy, we have opted to separate the April director elections from our co-op membership appreciation event on Aug. 15. This will allow us to better utilize our facility and the outside space.

**DID YOU READ  
OUR NEWSLETTER  
CAREFULLY?**



**We have selected two lucky winners for a \$25 bill credit!**

Spot your account number in our newsletter and call us! (Example: Account 4321 is written four three two one.) Members must contact Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative by April 28 to be eligible to claim this credit. Questions? Contact Tara Ganzhorn at 712-647-2727.

“This is your cooperative, and we thank you for making the commitment to choosing our future leadership,” says Farley. “If this is your first time voting, we hope you are encouraged by what you learn, and we hope you join us for our membership appreciation event in August.”

The following is a list of director election candidates and their respective districts. We encourage you to get to know this year’s candidates as you make your vote.

Questions about voting? Contact our office at 712-647-2727 or [harrisoninfo@hcrec.coop](mailto:harrisoninfo@hcrec.coop).

## District 5: Lance Bromert

Lance Bromert grew up in Vail and attended Northeast Nebraska Community College in Norfolk, where he studied to be an electrician. He currently resides in Dow City, where he owns and operates his spray foam insulation business, Boyer Valley Enterprise.



When he’s not working, he spends time with his 14-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son, who attend Boyer Valley Community Schools. Bromert volunteers for many fairground projects at the Crawford County Fair and attends his kids’ after-school activities. He also enjoys pheasant hunting and boating with his family at Black Hawk Lake in Lake View.

When asked what he would most enjoy about being a board member, Bromert states that he is looking forward to a learning experience with the membership. He shares what he enjoys most about being a cooperative member: “Our reliability is great, and I’ve been very lucky with great service.”

## District 5: Randy Mitchell

Randy Mitchell is a long-time resident of Crawford County and has resided near Dow City for more than 50 years. He attended school in Dow City and college at Iowa State University, where he majored in industrial technology. Mitchell grows corn and soybeans as a self-employed farmer.



He is a current member of the United Methodist Church in Dow City. When he is not farming, he enjoys golfing and hunting. Mitchell and his wife Nancy enjoy spending time with their three adult children and grandkids.

When asked what he enjoys most about being part of the cooperative, he states: “I like not having to worry about whether or not my lights are going to be on, and if elected, I look forward to keeping things running smoothly just like they are.”

## District 6: Kent Kersten

Kent Kersten is the incumbent director serving District 6. He has earned his Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate. Kersten is a retired junior high science teacher and retired wrestling coach from Logan-Magnolia School District. He currently raises a 30-head cow-calf herd.



He and his wife Sandy have been married for 50 years and currently reside in Logan. They have two children, Angela (Tony) Boyce and Lanae (Matt) Chase, and five grandchildren. The Kerstens belong to St. Anne’s Catholic Church in Logan and enjoy watching their grandchildren participate in all kinds

of activities and sporting events. They also enjoy traveling with friends and family. If Kersten is re-elected, he would be most excited about representing cooperative members of Harrison County REC.

**District 6:  
Boone McIntosh**

Boone McIntosh is from Missouri Valley, where he currently owns and operates his farm and small trucking business and raises cattle.



McIntosh graduated from Missouri Valley High School in 2000 and attended Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs where he majored in ag business.

When asked what he enjoys most about being a cooperative member, he states: "I enjoy the small-town atmosphere and being a member of the cooperative means being part of a reliable system. It also provides a benefit of having a say in the leadership direction of the cooperative."

McIntosh and his wife Jennifer have two sons, Bentley and Jett.

**District 7:  
Randy Koenig**

Randy Koenig is the incumbent director for District 7 and is running for re-election this spring.



He is a retired veterinarian and has practiced animal medicine in Harrison County for more than 40 years. He also previously served as a school board member for Logan-Magnolia schools.

He and his wife Vicki reside in Logan and enjoy spending time with their two children, Brian and Stephanie. Koenig enjoys golfing, hunting and fishing in his spare time and is a big sports fan. He

also serves on the board of Western Iowa Feeder Calf Association. When asked what he would most enjoy about continuing to serve on the cooperative board of directors, he responds: "To provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members."

**District 7:  
Laura Soetmelk**

Laura Soetmelk, a Dunlap native, is an entrepreneur operating Soetmelk Family Supply and the office manager for Soetmelk and Sons



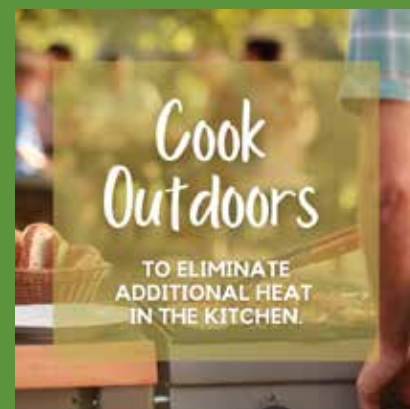
Construction. The Soetmelks also raise beef, pork and poultry as well as a large garden. Soetmelk graduated from Dunlap High School and attended Iowa Western Community College, where she received her business degree.

She volunteers as a member of the Loess Hills Garden Club, serves the elderly and the convalescent, and volunteers at Southview Bible Church. When Laura is not working or giving back to her community, she enjoys gardening, canning, baking, reading and economical practices. She and her husband Jeff reside with their children on an acreage outside of Missouri Valley. The couple has been a part of the foster and adoptive care program for 15 years. She also enjoys fishing, family campfires and card games.

When asked what she would enjoy most about being a director, Soetmelk states: "I'd be really excited about joining the REC team; fresh eyes on any situation sees details missed by others."

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**SPRING EFFICIENCY TIPS**





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The magazine  
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