

JULY 2023

# iowa

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LIVING

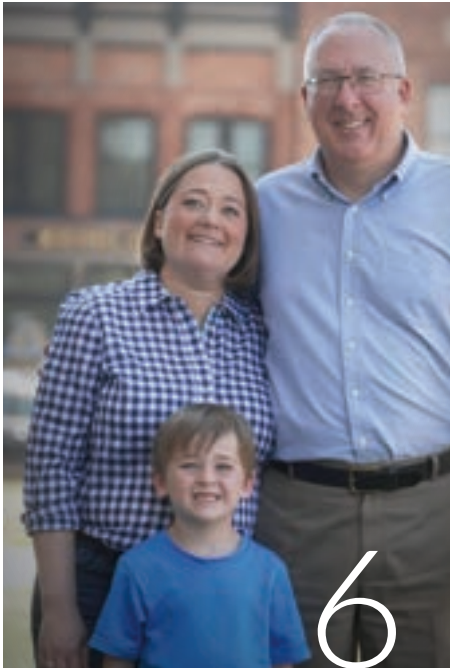
**Meet Iowa's  
Attorney General**

**Let's beat the  
peak together**

**Summer's best  
vegetable recipes**

**Harrison County REC's Power Picnic is Aug. 15 ▶ See Page 12**

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### ON THE COVER

Special thanks to Kent Schlwin, a Prairie Energy Cooperative member-consumer, for supplying this month's cover image. Submit high-resolution photos for consideration to editor@ieclmagazine.com. You could receive \$100!

# GROWING RELIABILITY THREATS

BY JIM MATHESON



American families and businesses expect the lights to stay on at a cost they can afford.

But that's no longer a guarantee. Nine states saw

rolling blackouts last December as the demand for electricity exceeded the available supply.

This is no longer a theoretical conversation. And unless policymakers change course, it's going to get worse.

## Warnings and challenges mount

In May, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a rule to regulate power plant emissions. This proposal will further strain America's electric grid and undermine decades of work to reliably keep the lights on across the nation. It's just the latest instance of EPA failing to prioritize reliable electricity as a fundamental expectation of American consumers.

It shouldn't have to be this way. When you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging. But instead of putting down the shovel, EPA wants to bring in an excavator.

But don't just take my word for it. Warnings about the threat of reliability challenges have snowballed in recent months. The 2023 North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) summer reliability assessment recently highlighted that more of the country is at risk of blackouts than last year. NERC says that the EPA proposal will accelerate the reliability challenges.

In May, several Federal Energy Regulatory Commission leaders warned the U.S. Senate about threats to reliable electricity. In March, Manu Asthana, who is the CEO of PJM Interconnection – a regional transmission organization that coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity in 13 states –

said that the regional transmission organization needed to slow the pace of generation retirements to avoid reliability problems by the end of the decade.

## Voicing reliability concerns

America has a reliability problem. With the help of co-op leaders across the nation, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association has been a leading voice in sounding the alarm on reliability. Today's energy decisions will determine if there are sufficient resources to keep the lights on tomorrow. Five issues are impacting the reliable delivery of electricity across the nation.

- 1 Increasing demand for electricity as other sectors of the economy are electrified.
- 2 Decreasing electricity supply due to the disorderly retirement and insufficient replacement of existing generation.
- 3 Permitting delays that prevent new electric infrastructure from being built and connected to the grid.

4 Supply chain challenges.

5 Problems with natural gas availability.

## Commitment to member-consumers

None of these challenges will be easy to address, but we can start by asking ourselves these questions:

- Is this what America is supposed to be?
- Should the threat of rolling blackouts be a permanent facet of U.S. energy policy?

The answer to both of those questions is a resounding no for electric co-ops and the communities we serve.

The long-term solution requires policymakers and regulators to recognize the need for time, technology development and new transmission infrastructure. These are the essential ingredients for an energy future that prioritizes reliable electricity for all consumers, including the 42 million Americans served by electric cooperatives.

*Jim Matheson is the CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*

## EDITOR'S CHOICE CONTEST

# Win a grilling package!

July is National Grilling Month! To celebrate, we're giving away a beef bundle, including \$50 in beef certificates, a cast iron skillet and additional summer grilling essentials, courtesy of the Iowa Beef Industry Council.

## Visit our website and win!

Enter this month's contest by visiting [www.ieclmagazine.com](http://www.ieclmagazine.com) no later than July 31. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified. The winner of the \$100 local nursery gift card from the May issue was Phillip Boehnke, Prairie Energy Cooperative.



ENTER ONLINE BY JULY 31!

# LET'S BEAT THE PEAK TOGETHER THIS SUMMER

BY JOE FARLEY

As a member of Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), you know how to make smart energy choices that help you save money. But did you know that when you use electricity can be just as important as how much you use? Account number six zero two seven zero zero nine one one.

Throughout the day, energy use fluctuates based on consumer demand. Typically, most households use larger amounts of electricity in the morning when most people are getting ready for their day, and in the evenings when people return from work, cook dinner, wash clothes and watch television.

These times when people in our community are using more electricity at the same time are called "peak" hours. The cost for Harrison County REC to provide power is higher during these times because of the additional demand for electricity. Our meter is read monthly just like yours. For every dollar we spend, \$0.66 goes toward paying for the price of power.

## Ideas for managing your peak demand

By shifting some of your energy use to hours when demand is lower, also known as off-peak hours, you can save money on your energy bills and help keep rates lower for the entire Harrison County REC membership. Here are a few easy ways you can shift energy use to off-peak hours:

- Adjust your thermostat. During summer months, raise the thermostat a few degrees during peak hours.
- Wash full loads of clothes in cold water during off-peak hours.
- Run the dishwasher right before you go to bed, or air-dry dishes by opening the dishwasher instead of using the heated dry cycle.
- Turn off lights and electronics when not in use. Try to make this a daily habit, whether during peak or off-peak hours.

There are many ways to save energy and money by making a few minor adjustments to your daily routine. We're here to help. Contact our member services team by calling 712-647-2727 if you have questions about your energy bill or you can visit our website at [www.hcrec.coop](http://www.hcrec.coop) for additional energy-saving tips.

*Joe Farley is the CEO of Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative.*



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## ANNOUNCEMENT

# 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 July 31 to be eligible to claim this credit.

Questions? Contact Tara Ganzhorn at 712-647-2727.

# ENERGY-SAVING PROJECTS FOR THE WEEKEND WARRIOR

If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you – all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a do-it-yourself (DIY) dabbler.



## 1 Get smart about home cooling and heating

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70!), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from your phone, and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting and removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

Always play it safe with new projects by carefully reading the installation instructions before you get started.

## 2 Go green and boost your greenery with a rain barrel

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use – it's a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.



## 3 Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs – in the summer, you can also save on air conditioning costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home. Additionally, air drying is gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of concrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like [www.thespruce.com](http://www.thespruce.com) and [www.hgtv.com](http://www.hgtv.com) offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects.

Check out Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative's website for additional energy-saving ideas and tips at [www.hcrec.coop](http://www.hcrec.coop).

# MEET IOWA'S ATTORNEY GENERAL

BY ANN FOSTER THELEN

Editor's Note: As a non-partisan publication, we profile government officials from time to time to help our readers get to know these important Iowans and to understand how their roles impact rural Iowa.



In November 2022, Iowans elected Brenna Bird as their next Attorney General – the first Republican to hold the office

since 1979. Before becoming Iowa Attorney General in January 2023, Bird served as a prosecutor for six years, first as the Fremont County Attorney and then since 2018 as the Guthrie County Attorney.

Born and raised on a farm in Guthrie County, where she was homeschooled, Bird graduated from Drake University and received her J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School.

We sat down with Bird in June to learn more about her perspectives and priorities on various topics in her new role serving Iowans.

## **Q: Tell our readers more about your background and family.**

I grew up east of Dexter, and we had corn, soybeans, cattle and farrow-to-finish pigs. My husband, son (who is 6 years old) and I live on what was once my grandpa's farm – where my dad grew up – and in the house my grandpa built in rural Dexter.

My husband Bob is an Iraq War veteran. He is also a lawyer and works in the Iowa State Senate. Over the years, my legal career has included working in private practice, in Congress in Washington, D.C., as legal counsel for Gov. Branstad and then Lieutenant Gov. Reynolds. I've served as the county attorney in Audubon, Fremont and Guthrie counties.

## **Q: Over the years, how have you been involved in your community/state or other activities? What are your hobbies?**

Beyond professionally, one of the ways I've been most involved in the

community is through our church and the local activities that our parish gets involved in. The strength of our rural communities is one of Iowa's best assets. We are good at working together and solving problems. I enjoy reading, cooking, gardening, quilting, bicycling and spending time with family.

## **Q: How has agriculture shaped who you are today?**

My family has been involved in agriculture for generations. In fact, my brother is a seventh-generation farmer. Growing up in agriculture taught me to stick to things even when they get tough and keep trying and working hard.

Like many Iowa families, we learned through the farm crisis that people matter more than possessions. From firsthand experience, I know that Iowa farmers care more about the land than anyone else and support good conservation practices.

**Q: What are some topics that you are passionate about that impact rural Iowa/lowans?**

One area is pushing back against the federal government in court when they go too far with federal overreach. An important example for Iowa is the Waters of the U.S. rule, which would allow the Environmental Protection Agency to control 97% of Iowa farm ground and other lands. We've challenged the rule and have received some favorable rulings to stop it, but we're still litigating that through court. That's very important because it could change agriculture in rural Iowa as we know it. We need to keep decision-making local and out of D.C.

I'm also passionate about supporting and maintaining strong law enforcement. An alarming trend is the infiltration of drugs into rural Iowa. In every county in the state, it's important to keep our communities safe.

**Q: As a member of Guthrie County REC, what are your thoughts/perspectives on the cooperative business model?**

The cooperative business model works well. Initially, electric cooperatives brought power to rural Iowa, including where I live. It's essential to have affordable and reliable electricity. Because of its local ownership structure, cooperatives excel with customer service, responsiveness and community engagement. The co-op business model is even more relevant today than ever before.

**Q: What personal and professional accomplishments are you most proud of?**

Personally, it's being a wife and mom. I worked full-time to pay for college. I learned a lot serving in different roles in the Governor's office and Congress. Then, starting my law firm while also working as a county attorney.

Regarding my accomplishments as a prosecutor, I think the best part of the job was working with law enforcement because they're heroes with good hearts. People don't see all the things that law enforcement does daily and the compassion and bravery they bring to the job. Working to enforce the law to keep our communities safe and helping crime victims is rewarding.

**Q: What excites you the most about being Iowa's Attorney General?**

Having the opportunity to make Iowa safer, support our law enforcement and push back against the federal government when they go too far.

**Q: What is another top priority that you are working on?**

We're here to serve lowans. If someone falls victim to a scam or thinks something might be suspicious, we want them to reach out to our office.

Last year, we were contacted by a woman who received a scam call and was told that she had a fraudulent Amazon charge for thousands of dollars on her account. The scammer convinced her they would help cancel

the payment. They claimed her account showed unusual activity in other states, that she had become a victim of ID theft, and that her information was used to commit a crime. The scammer impersonated law enforcement and informed her to protect her assets, she needed to send a box with \$20,000 in cash to California. The day after she shipped the money, she realized she had been scammed and contacted the Iowa Attorney General's office. Our team was able to stop the shipment and return the money to this woman.

*Ann Foster Thelen is the editor of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living.*

See Page 14 for tips on protecting yourself against utility scams.



*Brenna Bird with her husband Bob and their son.*



# Vegetable

## RECIPES

### for summer

## SWEET AND SOUR GREEN BEANS

- 4 slices of bacon
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- flour, optional
- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 pint green beans

Fry bacon, drain and crumble. Put brown sugar in pan, stir in flour thickener if desired. Add bacon, vinegar and beans and heat through. *Serves 2*

**Allyson Bailey • Hamilton  
Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

## MICROWAVE SUCCOTASH

- 1 16-ounce bag frozen corn
- 1 16-ounce bag frozen lima beans
- ¼ cup water
- 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon thyme, dried
- 1 teaspoon parsley, dried
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ⅓ cup sweet onion, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon butter

In a 2.5-quart microwave-safe bowl with lid, mix corn, lima beans and water. Microwave on high for 10 minutes. Let bowl sit in microwave covered. In a separate bowl, combine tomatoes, garlic powder, paprika, thyme, parsley and salt. Mix well and set aside. Sauté onions in butter until clear. Add to bowl of tomatoes and spices, mix well. Combine tomato mixture with corn and lima beans. Thoroughly stir together. Microwave on high for 2 minutes or until hot. *Serves 6*

**Jacque Minikus • Pisgah  
Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative**

## EASY SCALLOPED POTATOES

- 2½ cups milk, heated
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 6 medium potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
- 3 tablespoons butter, plus enough to coat casserole dish
- pepper, optional

Stir the milk, flour and salt together. Layer in a buttered casserole dish alternating potatoes and milk mixture. Top with 3 tablespoons butter and season with pepper, if desired. Bake at 350 degrees F for 60-75 minutes or until the potatoes are tender. *Serves 8-10*

**Elinor Moeller • Tripoli  
Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative**

## LOTTA (LOW-TAH) FINNISH VEGGIE CASSEROLE

- 5 potatoes, sliced
- 4 carrots, sliced
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 beet, sliced
- ½ pound salt pork, preferably frozen
- ⅓ cup water

In a medium-sized roaster or Dutch oven, place a layer of potatoes followed by a layer of carrots. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add a layer of onions followed by a layer of beets, salt and pepper. Repeat the vegetable layers one more time. Slice salt pork ¼-inch thick and approximately ½-inch wide, frozen pork is easier to cut. Place salt pork on top of vegetables and add water. Place under the broiler to cook salt pork until crispy brown. Cover roaster and cook at 400 degrees F for 50 minutes. *Serves 6*

**Michele Dirks • George • Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative**



## INFINITY CABBAGE SALAD

- ¼ cabbage, shredded
- 1 cucumber, thinly sliced, optional
- ½ carrot, thinly sliced, optional salt, to taste
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon sesame dressing, optional
- 1 teaspoon sesame seeds

Put the shredded cabbage in a colander. If desired, add cucumber and carrots. Sprinkle with salt, mix well. Set aside for 5-10 minutes. Meanwhile, create a dressing by mixing soy sauce, sugar, apple cider vinegar and sesame oil. Add sesame dressing, if desired. Squeeze vegetables to drain excess water. Pour dressing over vegetables and sprinkle with sesame seeds. *Serves 3*

Erina Westphal • Guthrie Center  
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

## EGGPLANT CASSEROLE

- 1 small eggplant
- 3 tablespoons cooking oil salt, to taste pepper, to taste
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 2 medium tomatoes, sliced medium thickness
- ¼ cup American cheese, grated

Peel eggplant and slice about ¾- to ½-inch thick. Cut slices in half. In a large frying pan, heat oil until starting to smoke. Place eggplant in hot oil and brown each side. Season with salt and pepper to taste. In a 2-quart baking dish, alternate layers of eggplant, onion, green pepper and tomatoes. Cover and bake at 375 degrees F for 50 minutes. Remove cover and sprinkle grated cheese on top. Return to oven and bake uncovered until cheese is melted and browned. *Serves 4*

Greg Flugum • Forest City  
Prairie Energy Cooperative

## GOOD CARROTS

- 8 cups carrots, peeled and sliced
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 1 cup plus 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 pound Velveeta
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 cups crackers, crushed

Steam and drain carrots and onions. Place in 9x13-inch pan. Melt 1 cup butter with Velveeta. Mix in brown sugar and pour over carrots. Mix crackers and 4 tablespoons melted butter, sprinkle over top. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20-25 minutes. *Serves 6*

Lizzy Hartter • Rock Rapids  
Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## ONION PIE

- 1 cup soda crackers, crushed
- ¼ cup margarine, melted
- 2 cups onion, sliced
- 2 tablespoons margarine
- ¾ cup milk
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ¾ teaspoon salt pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- parsley, to taste, chopped

Mix crackers and ¼ cup melted margarine. Press into an 8-inch pie pan on bottom and up the sides. Cook onions in 2 tablespoons margarine until tender, not brown. Place onions in pie pan. Combine milk, eggs, salt and pepper, then pour over onions. Sprinkle with cheese and a little chopped parsley. Bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes, until custard is set. Serve hot. *Serves 8*

Truman Nester • Rock Rapids • Lyon Rural Electric Cooperative

## BAKED ZUCCHINI CASSEROLE

- 1 pound ground beef
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- ½ cup green pepper, chopped
- 1 cup cracker crumbs salt, to taste pepper, to taste
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 large zucchini, cubed (or 2 small) bread crumbs for topping

Brown beef and onion. In large bowl, mix beef and onion with green pepper, cracker crumbs, salt, pepper, soup, eggs and zucchini. Place mixture in a greased 9x13-inch pan. Top with bread crumbs and bake at 350 degrees F for 35-40 minutes.

Mrs. Charles Hanes • Stuart  
Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative Association

WANTED:

## SLOW COOKER RECIPES

THE REWARD:  
\$25 FOR EVERY ONE WE PUBLISH!

Deadline is July 31

Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the recipe category on all submissions. Also provide the number of servings per recipe.

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(Attach your recipe as a Word document or PDF to your email message.)

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# A TRIP OF A LIFETIME DELORES FAGLE THOM RECALLS EXPERIENCE ON 1958 YOUTH TOUR

BY JENNIFER ACHENBACH

Sixty-five years ago, Delores (Reed) Fagle Thom stepped on a bus headed to Washington, D.C., for the first-annual Rural Electric Co-op Youth Tour.

It was a trip that would leave a lasting impression on the recent high school graduate.

At the time, Delores was working at the Iowa State University Extension Office in Independence. As a member of the Buchanan County Rural Electric Cooperative, her boss suggested she complete the application for the tour, writing an essay about why she wanted to be chosen. She was one of the over 30 participants from Iowa selected to go to D.C. in 1958. As a recent Independence High School graduate, Delores was engaged to Dwaine Fagle. In her words, she thought that if she was going to go on a trip like this, she better go before she was married.

On June 14, Delores got on a bus headed to D.C., her first time visiting the nation's capital. The group spent the night in Toledo, Ohio, before arriving in D.C. the next evening. They stayed at the Arva Motor Hotel in Arlington, Virginia.

## **Impactful lineup of tours and conversations**

The first day of the trip, the group had breakfast with members of the Iowa Congressional Delegation, followed by a tour of the U.S. Capitol, led by Sen. Thomas Martin. That was followed by a tour of the Library of Congress, visiting both the House of Representatives and Senate, as well as the Supreme Court Building. Delores recalls the time she spent visiting with her local delegates, as well as posing as a group on the Capitol steps.

On June 17, participants visited the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) building, followed

by a visit to the Bureau of Printing and Engraving and the Department of Justice.

Activities the next day included touring the Rural Electrification Administration headquarters at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), viewing the Washington Cathedral and touring the USDA Research Center in Beltsville, Maryland.

June 19 holds a special place in Delores' memory. That was the day participants got a special tour of the White House.

After the White House tour, the group visited the Washington Monument, including an elevator ride to the top. Next, they



went to the Smithsonian Institute and finished the night with a trip to Glen Echo Amusement Park. On the final full day of the trip, they toured Arlington National Cemetery, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Lee's Mansion, then concluded the visit with a tour of Washington's home at Mt. Vernon.

After five days of learning about government, the group got back on the bus to Iowa on Saturday, June 21. They spent the night in Chicago. Delores recalls feeling a little scared as their hotel room didn't have a lock on the door.

Despite the full schedule of activities, there was also a lot of fun and bonding with her fellow participants.

"We stayed in a motel room with four of us to a room. We filled the bathtub with ice cubes and put watermelon in it. We invited a few people to our room, and we had a watermelon treat," she remembers.

When she returned to Iowa following the tour, Delores presented what she'd learned to her co-op.

**The next chapters of life**

What started as a trip before settling down turned into an experience that shaped the rest of her life. Delores and Dwaine got married the following year. They lived in Independence, then Dewar and Sumner, before settling onto their farmstead three miles west of Fayette. There, the couple raised seven children while operating their dairy farm.

In 1986, Delores decided it was time to go to school and pursue her passion. She started taking accounting classes at Northeast Iowa Community

College (NICC) in Calmar. She finished her degree in 1987 and opened Delores Tax and Accounting. For over 30 years, Delores has built her business, at times with more than 200 tax clients a year, in addition to her accounting jobs.

"I just love it," she says, noting she now has cut back on her tax work but stays busy year-round with accounting. She was recognized by the governor for 25 years of work in 2013. She also was named a 2017 NICC Alumni Shining Star.

Dwaine passed away in 1996 from cancer. After a second marriage, Delores found love with her high school sweetheart, Bill Thom. Delores had reached out to Bill after the death of his wife. Six years later, Bill contacted Delores and they struck up a relationship. The two married. They later divorced but remain in touch today. Delores now resides in Fayette, just three miles from where she and Dwaine farmed.

**Fond memories and advice for future participants**

Although it's been well over half a century since Delores was on the Youth Tour, she still has fond memories of the trip.

Delores is excited for future Youth Tour participants to experience the thrills she had.

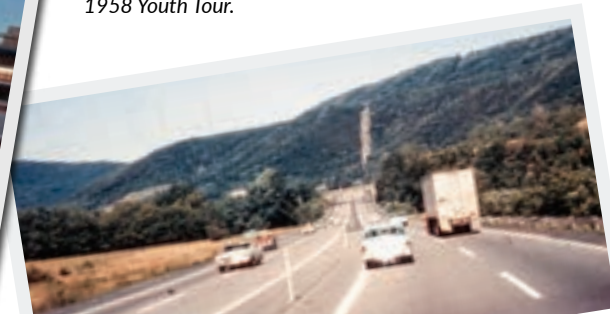
"Make it a learning experience because there's a lot to learn, but still enjoy the time that you're there," she says. "It was a good experience for me, a good learning experience."

*Jennifer Achenbach is the manager of marketing and communications for Allamakee Clayton Electric Cooperative.*



*Delores (Reed) Fagle Thom is pictured with a photo from her Youth Tour experience in 1958.*

*Vintage photos from the 1958 Youth Tour.*



# SEE YOU AT THE POWER PICNIC ON AUG. 15

Harrison County Rural Electric Cooperative's (REC) purpose is to provide safe, reliable and affordable power to its consumer-members (that's you!). Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of all members and to serve the long-term interests of our local communities. This is where you can help. Account number five two three nine zero zero zero one one.

As a member of the community, you have a perspective that is valuable – and we invite you to share it with the co-op at our 2023 Power Picnic on Aug. 15 at 4 p.m. This year's picnic theme is 'Energy for Progress' and at the picnic, co-op leaders will be present to share priorities and challenges, and discuss the financial health and vision for the coming years. Members are also invited to share their concerns and meet the employee team that helps keep your lights on each and every day.

## Uniting the communities we serve

Harrison County REC is one of the few local organizations that is uniquely positioned to bring together all members of the community. It is worth noting that the health of the co-op and the well-being of the community are closely intertwined.

Perhaps you may feel that you have nothing to add to the discussion, so there is no need to attend the annual meeting. However, every energy bill you pay to the co-op helps ensure better service and reliability for the whole community. Your dollars are reinvested locally into improvements that impact the reliability and affordability of your energy, and Harrison County REC is excited to hear from you and to interact with the wonderful members that we serve every day.

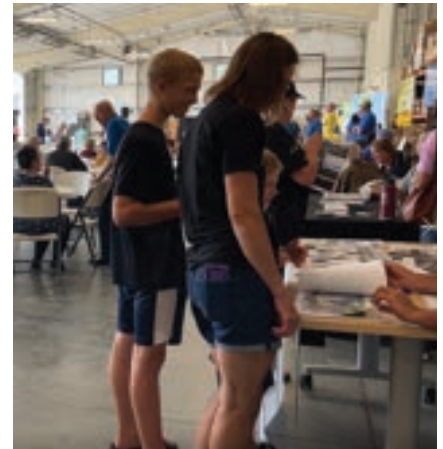
## In-person connections matter

While we provide our membership with convenient electronic options for bill paying and communication,

there are times when there is no substitute for in-person engagement. When members of our community come together for a common purpose, we improve the quality of life for all in our corner of the world.

In addition to learning more about the services your cooperative provides, the Power Picnic also gives our membership an opportunity to enjoy a family-friendly event with a free picnic meal with Staley's Catering serving fried chicken, kids' activities including the "Where's Willie" scavenger hunt, inflatables, bucket truck rides and more, plus spotlights on local economic development and service organizations.

If you've never attended our Power Picnic, or if it's been a while, please stop by. Our co-op family looks forward to visiting with you! Mark your calendar for Aug. 15 beginning at 4 p.m.



# SEAL IN SAVINGS WITH EFFICIENT EXTERIOR DOORS

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

The front door of your home has a lot of meaning. It sets the stage for the home and is the first impression for your guests. Beyond curb appeal, the front door is a good place to look for energy savings.

Efficient exterior doors seal tightly and don't allow air to pass through. Limiting airflow from exterior doors can result in lower heating and cooling costs. Throughout the years, the construction of exterior doors has improved to increase their efficiency. If your door is older, it likely is not insulated.

## Replacing your front door

If you want to replace your front door for aesthetic purposes, make it more functional or improve its efficiency, consider upgrading to an ENERGY STAR®-certified model. This certification ensures the door you buy meets efficiency criteria for your local area. It also means the National Fenestration Rating Council independently tested and verified the door.

Certification requires any windows in the door to be double or triple pane to reduce heat flow, which results in a more efficient home. While windows in doors offer aesthetics, more glass means less efficiency. The most efficient doors have no glass or windows in them.

U-factor is the primary rating for efficiency on doors and windows. U-factor is the inverse of R-value, which is the rating used for insulation. Unlike R-value where higher is better, the lower the U-factor, the more energy efficient the door. Check the U-factor on doors at your local hardware store or online to help choose the most efficient door in your preferred style.

ENERGY STAR-certified doors are made of the most efficient materials, such as fiberglass, wood cladding and steel with polyurethane foam core.

They are built to fit snugly into their frames, reducing drafts and airflow.

When it comes to doors, you don't have to sacrifice style for efficiency. There are many styles available to match the architecture, whether your home is historic or modern.

When completely replacing a door and the frame, you can use expanding foam or caulk to fill the space between the door jamb and structural framing.

## Upgrading the door you have

If a new door isn't in your budget, there are less expensive options to reduce air leakage and improve your home's efficiency.

All of that coming and going throughout the years can wear out weatherstripping. If you can see daylight around the edges of the door or underneath it, it's time to stop those air leaks. Weatherstripping around the door jamb can be adjusted to make a snug seal or if it's too worn, weatherstripping can be replaced completely. Apply one continuous strip along each side, and make sure it meets tightly at the corners.

Adding a storm door can also help with efficiency and is less expensive than replacing the entire door. Most storm doors have options for using a screen or glass. Swapping the screen for the glass insert can help save energy in both the winter and in the summer if you use air conditioning. Consider a storm door that's easy to switch between glass and screen so you can maximize the benefits.

Open the door to energy savings by improving the efficiency of your exterior doors – without compromising the aesthetics of your home.

*Miranda Boutelle writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 electric co-ops.*



Adding a storm door can help seal in your home and is less expensive than replacing the entire door.  
Photo Source: Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources



If you can see daylight around the edges of the door or underneath it, seal in those air leaks with weatherstripping and a door sweep.  
Photo Source: Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources

# PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST UTILITY SCAMS

*"Your electric bill is past due, and we will cut off power to your home in the next hour if you don't pay us over the phone immediately!"*

Have you ever received a threatening call like this from someone claiming to be from your local electric cooperative? Would you know what to do if you received a call like this?

No matter the season, scammers frequently target consumers, and members of Iowa's electric cooperatives are not immune. Phone scammers often appear to be calling from local numbers and claim to be from the local electric cooperative. Sometimes, the calls include prerecorded messages. In almost all the calls, the scammers threaten the innocent person on the other end of the line, demanding immediate payment to prevent disconnection of electric service.

Your local electric co-op will never contact you out of the blue to demand immediate payment or threaten immediate disconnection. If you receive a suspicious call, text or email from someone claiming to be from the co-op, please contact your electric co-op office directly by using the phone number on a recent bill or on the co-op's website to verify the communication. The best

defense against a utility scammer is an educated consumer; follow these tips from Utilities United Against Scams to protect yourself from a potential scam.

## 1 Protect personal information

Never provide or confirm personal information (Social Security number, date of birth) or financial information (banking account information, debit or credit card information) to anyone initiating contact with you and claiming to be from your local electric co-op. Never give out information or provide any payment type to any callers or unexpected individual(s) appearing at your door claiming to represent your co-op. Your local co-op will already have your relevant personal and account information.

## 2 Take your time

Do not be rushed. If you receive a call, text, email or visitor saying you have to pay your bill immediately to avoid disconnection, tell them you would like to verify that they are a legitimate co-op representative by calling a verified number for the local co-op office. Beware if a representative exhibits impatience, annoyance or anger when you question their authority. While a scammer will

discourage you from hanging up and calling the number on your utility bill, a real co-op representative will encourage you to do so for your own peace of mind.

## 3 Always ask questions

Ask the person contacting you to provide you with your account number, your last payment amount, date of payment and their employee identification number. If the individual is a legitimate utility representative, this information will be readily accessible. If not, hang up or shut the door, and call your utility directly to report the suspicious activity.

## 4 Contact your utility directly

If you receive a suspicious call or visit, please contact the local police and your electric co-op immediately. Share details that the scammer told you which might aid in a possible criminal investigation.

For more information on protecting yourself against various scams, visit the Iowa Attorney General's website at [www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov) and click Consumer Tips & Information under the FOR CONSUMERS tab.



# SCOTCHEROOS – AN IOWA DELICACY

BY DARCY DOUGHERTY MAULSBY

One of the highlights of summer events is getting to sample all the tasty, homemade treats at picnics, potlucks, parties and more. Iowans are masters of making these informal meals memorable.

When I attended a local high school graduate's reception in May, I couldn't believe my good fortune. At the end of the buffet line, there was a beautiful sight, sure to warm the heart of an Iowan – a huge tray of homemade scotcheroos, all cut into generous portions.

Since it's important to eat a balanced diet, I put a grilled hamburger on one side of my plate and a big scotcheroo on the other side.

I've been a scotcheroo fan since I was a kid. Well into adulthood, I assumed everyone knew about scotcheroos and loved them. After I published my book "A Culinary History of Iowa," I discovered that a surprising number of non-Iowans have never heard of these delicacies. Say it isn't so! It's hard to imagine life without this incredible concoction of cereal, chocolate, butterscotch and peanut butter that's fun to say (doesn't "scotcheroo" sound like a fancy dog?) and even more fun to create.

## A convenient history

Occasionally, a member of the media asks to interview me about the origins of the famed scotcheroo. At best, the history is unclear. Some reports say the recipe made its first appearance on the side of Rice Krispies® boxes in the mid-1960s, although there's no definitive answer about who invented scotcheroos – or where.

While some food snobs might sneer at something based on convenience foods, let's take a step back to when scotcheroos first hit the culinary scene. I think of the Iowa home cooks I've interviewed through the years, especially those who remember how popular "modern" convenience foods



were in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. At that time, processed, time-saving foods were all the rage. Serving these types of foods was a sign you were on the cutting edge. It would have been trendier to bring a plate of scotcheroos to a party than a freshly made rhubarb crisp or apple pie.

Through the years, the Midwest has become the epicenter of scotcheroo enjoyment, and I, for one, am grateful.

Scotcheroos are a riff on Rice Krispies Treats, minus the marshmallows. This connection is a nice touch, since an Iowan helped create Rice Krispies Treats. After Mildred Ghrist Day earned her degree in home economics from Iowa State University, she landed a job with the Kellogg's cereal company. By 1939, Mildred and a co-worker invented what we know today as Rice Krispies Treats.

## Simple goodness that stands apart

Some say scotcheroos are the Cadillac of Rice Krispies Treats. Even though they incorporate a few great twists, including peanut butter, melted

chocolate and butterscotch chips, scotcheroos don't really taste peanut buttery, nor do they taste quite like butterscotch. More than the sum of their parts, scotcheroos are chewy, crispy and downright addictive.

It's no wonder scotcheroo recipes often turn up in Iowa church cookbooks and community cookbooks – the places where people showcase their culinary "A game." These books abound with proven, practical recipes, meaning you can find most ingredients, if not all, at the local grocery store or your kitchen pantry. The simplicity of scotcheroo ingredients is just one more reason to love them.

Next time you need to bring treats to a picnic or potluck, just whip up a batch of scotcheroos. (Hey, I even learned recently that they freeze well if you want to make them ahead of time.) You're sure to be the hit of the party.

*Darcy Dougherty Maulsby lives near her family's Century Farm northwest of Lake City. Visit her at [www.darcymaulsby.com](http://www.darcymaulsby.com).*



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