



MAY 2022

HIGHLINES

NEWS FOR THE MEMBERS OF PELLA COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

Pella High School Junior Wins Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Pella Community High School junior Maddie Schmitz has been selected to represent Pella Cooperative Electric on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

Schmitz will join nearly 40 other Iowa students from June 18-24 in Washington, D.C. On the weeklong tour, students will learn about electric cooperatives, American history, and the U.S. government and walk away with a greater understanding of their role as an American citizen. They will participate in National Youth Day, visit with their elected legislators, and explore the sights around the nation's capital.



"I'm honored and delighted to be selected as Pella Cooperative Electric's Youth Tour representative," said Schmitz. "I love history and believe this tour will be a great opportunity to learn how to help shape our community."

A junior at Pella High School, Schmitz is active in the student council, National Honor Society, and the Gifted and Talented Program. As an honor roll student, she serves as a liaison for the Dollars for Scholars Program, is a member of the Pella High Marching Dutch, and participates in track, cross country, softball, and bowling. Schmitz also volunteers at Saint Mary's Church and helps teach a first-grade class on Wednesday evenings. Schmitz is the daughter of Gene and Janece Schmitz of Pella, Iowa.

"We believe Maddie embodies the character and leadership skills to represent our Cooperative in Washington, D.C.," said Doug Stewart, CEO of Pella Cooperative Electric. "We're excited to provide her with this opportunity to not only serve as the Cooperative's delegate but enhance her leadership skills and learn about our nation's capital."

Pella Cooperative Electric

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Open weekdays: 7:30 am - 4:30 pm;
excluding holidays



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Pella Cooperative Electric is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative, governed by an elected Board of Directors. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. See pella-cea.org > Nondiscrimination Statement for more information.

Thank You for Attending the 2022 Annual Meeting

After two years of virtual annual meetings, 2022 was a year to finally be back in person with all our great members! Thank you for attending on April 5th! Over 370 meals were served to our members and their families.

Nearly 400 ballots were cast for the 2022 PCEA Director Election. Two positions on the Board were elected: incumbent Steve Inskeep, representing District 3 and incumbent Bob Van Soelen serving At-Large. Board officer positions had no change.

Thank you again for attending and we look forward to seeing you at the 2022 Member Appreciation Day on Saturday, September 17th!



Thank You for Your Service to the Cooperative



Matt Ainsworth

PCEA Journeyman Lineman has reached his 15 year milestone at the Cooperative on May 29. Thank you Matt, for your dedication to the co-op and its membership.



- The Board of Directors approved the 2021 Form 990 Tax return, the meeting minutes for the Annual Meeting and set the date for the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 4, 2023.
- The operations department reported on ongoing construction and maintenance in the Pleasantville area.
- The Board of Directors finalized plans for a strategic planning session in June.

Member Spotlight

#DutchFix

By: Emma Henning | PCEA Communications Coordinator

From poffertjes, to a Dutch mess, ice cream of all flavors, to burgers topped with seared gouda cheese, you can really get your fix of all the Dutch food favorites at #DutchFix.

Originally planned to be an ice cream shop, Jason and Valerie Bandstra established the #DutchFix drive-thru in west Pella in April of 2018. Over time, with trying new recipe ideas, their menu grew into a full Dutch style menu.

Establishing #DutchFix

“When we were going through the process of getting the business up and running, it occurred to us that we have all these amazing, different types of food at Pella’s Tulip Time, and then it disappears,” explains Valerie. “Tourists come year-round, so they’re going to want these things when they come.”

Entrepreneurialism runs through the Bandstra’s veins. Before they were chefs and restaurant owners, the Bandstra’s owned and operated Frisian Farms Cheese House that they established in 2008 while also operating their dairy farm.

The couple continued to work full-time on their dairy farm while the drive-thru remained a hobby. As it grew, they wanted to continue to expand and offer more for their demand.

“A lot of our customers made the comment that they wished they could come in and sit down and eat,” said Valerie. “So, we thought about adding onto the drive-thru to accommodate more room, but we also realized most of the foot traffic was in downtown Pella.”

Surviving COVID

Nearly a year after opening their drive-thru location, the opportunity arose to purchase a building that became their current downtown location in April of 2019. The couple spent the summer renovating the location before their opening in November of 2019.

“We sold the cheese business and dairy cows to Jason’s brother, Mike, who currently owns and operates it with his wife Jill,” said Valerie. “That really gave us more time to focus on the restaurant and not having to milk cows every day.”

Just four months after opening their second location, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down their indoor sales in March of 2020. The governor had prohibited gatherings of more than 10 people indoors as a safety measure of the pandemic.



“Since we had the drive-thru location, we quickly pivoted to allow our business to remain open through the drive-thru,” explains Valerie. “We were able to survive COVID and did what we had to do but we survived because of our loyal customers.”

Creating one of the top 10 best burgers in Iowa

“In January of 2021, I was messing around with menu ideas and came up with our Dominie Burger,” explains Jason. “Which is our biggest and best burger.” A few months later, Jason was urged to submit his new creation in the competition for Iowa’s Best Burger, a statewide competition to find the best tasting burger in 2021.

“Since it’s a statewide competition, we really didn’t think much of it until we got a phone call a few weeks later that we made the top 10,” said Jason. “So, we went from low visibility to a really high visibility in a short amount of time. Even locals didn’t know we served burgers!”

Both Valerie and Jason agree, the establishment of #DutchFix has been a learning experience. “Neither of us come from restaurant backgrounds so learning an entire new industry has been challenging but also very rewarding,” said Valerie. “We love being able to provide the atmosphere and experience. We do this because we love it.”

#DutchFix in 2022

Due to overwhelming demand and the shortage of labor most businesses are currently facing, the #DutchFix drive-thru location will be serving ice cream, coffee, and their famous poffertjes instead of their full food menu. They’ve partnered with Jaarsma Bakery to offer dutch pastries as well for the summer of 2022.

As far as their downtown location, the Bandstra’s will be serving their full menu. However, during the week of Tulip Time, they downsize their menu to their most popular options to streamline their demand.

“We are hiring at both locations for the summer,” said Valerie. “Call us or stop in to get an application anytime!”

A Busy Month of Upholding our Commitment to Community

It's been a busy month of presenting to youth students about electrical safety, service, and reliability.

On April 19, Pella Cooperative Electric welcomed an area cub scout troop to tour the office and shop. Member Relations Manager Stan Eysink lead students through the shop, our mapping system when outages occur, and our board room to view an educational video on rural electric cooperatives. The 4th-6th graders had great questions!

On April 22, Stan was also invited to present a short course on electrical safety to nearly 150 Oskaloosa 4th graders.



Cub Scouts get a tour of the PCEA shop while learning about all the equipment used for rural power.



Member Services Manager Stan Eysink presents to a group of Oskaloosa fourth-graders on electrical safety.



Cub Scouts view the PCEA outage center map and learn how linemen work to get power restored for members.

Honoring Memorial Day

Our office will be closed May 30 in Observance of Memorial Day