

HIGHLINES

August 2020

A publication for members of Pella Cooperative Electric

Congratulations, Annual Meeting Prize Winners!



At its 84th Virtual Annual Meeting, Pella Cooperative Electric held a prize drawing for members who returned their ballot by the June 26 deadline. We would like to congratulate the following members:

Tom Rundle, Pella: \$1,000 gift certificate To Bruxvoort's Decorating Center



Elmer Pearson, Jr., Pella: 55" TV
Dennis Good, Knoxville and **Corey Self**, Harvey: \$25 gift cards
\$25 gift certificates toward Pella Cooperative Electric bill:

- Joyce Stier**, Grinnell
- Jennifer Kruse**, Pella
- David Bower**, Pella
- Bryce Westerkamp**, Pella
- Galen Rozenboom**, Sully
- David De Kock**, Pella

Pictured, top: Lynn and Tom Rundle accept a \$1,000 gift certificate to Bruxvoort's Decorating; Elmer and Marcia Pearson receive a 55" TV won in the drawing.



PCEA & CIPCO Assist with Financing for New Prairie City Medical Facility

Board members and staff of Pella Cooperative Electric attended a groundbreaking event June 30 to launch the construction of a new facility as part of the Pella Regional Health Center in Prairie City. Duane Ver Ploeg, Bob Van Soelen, Steve Inskeep and Doug Stewart were present to celebrate the event.

PCEA and Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO) utilized the USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG) to help finance almost half of the estimated \$3.1 million project. REDLG provides zero-interest loans to rural utility providers that in turn re-lend the money at zero interest to businesses within their communities. Staff from Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) were also present. IADG assists in the application process for the nationally competitive program.

"Access to quality health care is a crucial component to the revitalization and growth of Iowa's small and rural communities," said Doug Stewart, assistant general manager of PCEA. "As a rural electric provider, our cooperative is proud to support this initiative."

The 7,770 square-foot medical office building will be a significant increase in square footage compared to the current location and will allow for additional services and future growth. Services will include primary care and mental health counseling provided by three physicians, one advanced practice provider and one mental health counselor. The new building will also include a retail

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Cooperative Holds First Virtual Annual Meeting

Pella Cooperative Electric held its first “virtual” annual meeting July 6. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and recommendations to limit public events, the board approved postponing the 84th Annual Meeting, originally scheduled for April 2. On July 6, and in accordance with PCEA bylaws, the cooperative videotaped its annual meeting reports and made them available the following day online.

The meeting covered all the required business that constitutes an annual meeting including reports from the board president, management and counsel of the cooperative. Without having an in-person meeting at which members may vote in the board election, mail-in ballots were sent to our membership giving them the chance to cast their vote. A record-breaking 675 ballots were returned by the deadline. Members who returned their ballots by the deadline were eligible for the prize drawing.

As part of the meeting, Board President Duane Ver Ploeg gave special recognition to retiring director Norman Van Zante, who had served on the board for 39 years.

“Norman has been a loyal and dedicated director for Pella Cooperative Electric earning the members’ trust and respect for 39 years,” Ver Ploeg said. “Norman has held many offices including board president before me and I have counted on his advice many times, so Norman, we say thank you with this plaque and wish you and Mary many years of health and enjoyment.”

“I’d like to thank the member-owners of Pella Cooperative Electric Association for trusting me to represent them the last 39 years,” Van Zante said. “I can rest assured that over these 39 years the board and management have had the best interest of the members



Jon Van Woerkom



Duane Ver Ploeg



Bryce Arkema

in their discussions and business practices.” Elected to serve a three-year term on the board were:

District 1 – Jon Van Woerkom

District 4 – Duane Ver Ploeg (incumbent)

At-Large – Bryce Arkema (incumbent)

At the reorganization meeting held after the completion of the Annual Meeting, the officers of the cooperative are:

President – Duane Ver Ploeg

Vice President – Steve Inskeep

Secretary – Bryce Arkema

Treasurer – Bob Van Soelen

Asst. Secretary/Treasurer – Darrell Boot

The 84th Annual Meeting of Pella Cooperative can be viewed at pella-cea.org or on our Facebook page.

Staggering Your Electric Use During Summer Adds Up to Big Savings

Did you know that Pella Cooperative Electric pays our power supplier for the amount of energy used as well as a demand rate for how much energy is being used at a given time? Since electricity can’t be stored, our power supplier must simultaneously ramp up power generation as it is needed, which can be very expensive when we all want to kick on our air conditioners when we return home from work or during the peak heating of the day in the late afternoon.

Unfortunately, those high fees the cooperative pays to the power supplier for high demand must be passed along to you, the cooperative member-owners. There is good news, however. Paying high demand fees can be avoided if our member-owners simply stabilize electric use. Here’s how you can help the co-op avoid peak demand charges during the hours of 4-9 p.m. on summer weekdays:

Shift household chores and activities away from the peak period. For example, wait to run your dishwasher until you go to bed.

If you are gone overnight, cool only the rooms that you are using and use ceiling fans in a counter-clockwise motion to create a wind chill effect when you are in the room.

Use the most energy efficient appliances you can find. For example,



your microwave oven uses considerably less energy than your stove or cook top.

If you’re buying a new appliance or electronic device, consider energy efficiency. Look for the Energy Star label when you’re evaluating different models.

Replace light bulbs with LED bulbs, which use less electricity and do not produce as much heat.

Use our SmartHub online account to track your electric consumption. Be aware of your daily energy use and avoid using several high-consumption appliances at the same time.

Use the energy you need but use it wisely! With your help, your cooperative can minimize peak demand charges.



Contribution to RECare Program

Pella Cooperative Electric recently completed a land purchase with Betty Van Wyk to facilitate the construction of our newest substation. This substation, Thunder Creek Sub, will be located northeast of Pella and will serve the growing area on the north side of Pella as well as tie in with our Peoria and West Pella subs.

Shown in the picture is Member Service Director Stan Eysink receiving a check from Betty to contribute to our RECare program. Thank you, Betty!

Groundbreaking...from pg. 1

pharmacy, providing patients a convenient way to fill prescriptions that may be prescribed during a visit. The project is slated for completion by September 2021.



"This is a very exciting time for both Pella Regional and for the Prairie City community," said Bob Kroese, CEO of Pella Regional.

"This project has been carefully designed to keep the quality of patient care in mind. I'm very proud of the thought and effort our staff has put into creating an environment that puts the needs of our patients first."

Pictured in photo on pg. 1, from left to right: Bill Cherrier, CIPCO CEO; Doug Stewart, Assistant Manager; PCEA, Bob Kroese, CEO, Pella Regional Health Care; Cheri Monahan, CIPCO Director of Growth Strategies; Deb Willyard, Chief Nursing Officer, Pella Regional Health Center; Dr. Gregory Ingle, D.O.; and Chad Alleger, Mayor of Prairie City.

Please Don't Landscape Near Equipment

They're big, They're often green. They generally sit on concrete, often within housing developments. Some folks don't like these "electrical boxes" (a common nickname for pad-mount transformers) and try to hide them with bushes, fences or flower beds. Please don't be tempted to do this because even small additions around pad-mount transformers can create hazards.

Often, developers of housing developments have underground electrical services installed in these areas to eliminate utility poles and overhead wires. The trade-off is installing pad-mounted transformers in some yards. Unfortunately, some homeowners, concerned about curb appeal, attempt to screen pad-mounted transformers from view, creating an unsafe situation for all concerned, including PCEA line crews.

We respect the care our members invest in making their properties attractive, however, landscaping around electric equipment can interfere with our ability to deliver reliable power.

PCEA requires a completely clear space in front of the lid (the side with the lock) of the pad-mount transformer. Linemen often repair units while they are energized so homeowners don't experience an interruption in service. To ensure safety, they use an 8-foot fiberglass hot stick that requires at least 10 feet of "elbow room" in front of the access panel.

In addition, when the cooperative performs routine maintenance on the units or when repairs are necessary, landscaping that interferes with workers' ability to access the transformer or complete required work, may require removal.

In some cases, members may leave the space in front of the transformer clear, but grow vegetation on the other three sides, this invites other problems. For example, plant roots can interfere with its operation. Overheating is another big concern that can cause service interruptions when air circulation is compromised.

Pad-mounted transformers surrounded by vegetation or a structure may over-heat and cause service interruptions when the air circulation around them is compromised.

We also would like to remind our members not to attach signs, birdhouses or anything to power poles. These items can pose a hazard to our line crews working on poles or wires above.



BAD EXAMPLE: Not accessible to utility workers

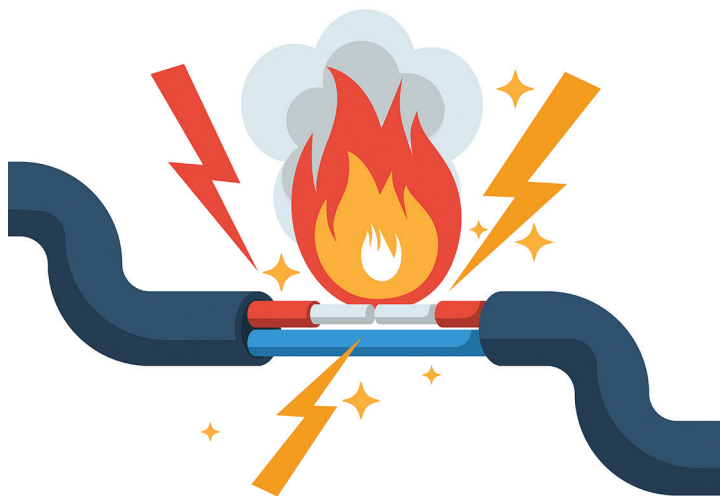


GOOD EXAMPLE: Accessible to utility workers

Bright Idea



Installing a smart power strip is a quick and easy way to start saving money while making your home more energy efficient. Smart power strips can actually cut power off to save energy since they are able to detect when a device is in standby mode.



What's That Hissing Sound?

If you hear a hissing sound and don't have a cat, check your electricity. Damaged wires and outlets can hiss when something's wrong, just like a cat. But hissing electricity is much more dangerous than your pet. Check your cords regularly to prevent an electrical accident. Some tips:

- When electrical cords are damaged, worn, cracked or corroded, the chances of fire or power surges increase significantly. Check for loose or improper connections, cracked wire insulation, chewed electrical wiring or frayed appliance or electrical cords. Call a licensed electrician to fix wiring problems; electricity is not a do-it-yourself project.
- Use common sense: Avoid plugging anything into an electrical outlet near a water source. But did you know that even plugging a cellphone in too close to water can create a hazard if it falls into a tub or sink and you stick your hand in to retrieve it? You could get shocked, or worse!
- Do you have a fire extinguisher in your home? To douse an electrical fire, which usually starts because of faulty wires or outlets, you need one. Never throw water onto an electrical fire, it can electrocute you.
- Child-proof all electrical outlets within reach of small children. Insert outlet covers where the prongs of an appliance go. That will prevent toddlers from sticking fingers and other objects into the sockets.
- Cramping too many plugs into a power strip and plugging it into an outlet that's not sturdy enough for the load can cause the outlet to overheat and the circuit to trip. If you need more outlets, hire a licensed electrician to solve your problems.

Remember, always play it safe around electricity!

Electricity Brings Everyday Value

Since many of us have been spending more time at home over the past few months, we have likely been using more energy. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle, it's a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Cell phones, computers, tablets...many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the average rent increase was nearly 4% (from 2014-2019) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). The cost of medical care was increased 3% during this time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6%. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4%.

The bottom line: electricity brings everyday value and PCEA is continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging for many of our members and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call. Pella Cooperative Electric is your electric co-op and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's everyday value.

- Construction at the Prairie Ridge Development has begun on three apartment complexes, one of which will be served by Pella Cooperative Electric.

- The board reviewed the electric tariffs, no action taken.

- The Otley substation transformer is expected to arrive in mid-July.

Board Briefs

HIGHLIGHTS

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Pella Cooperative Electric is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative. The co-op exists to provide electric service at cost. It is the members (anyone who gets electricity from the cooperative), not outside investors, that own and control the co-op. Cooperatives are governed by a member-elected Board of Directors. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. See pella-cea.org > Nondiscrimination Statement for more information.

Board of Directors: Bryce Arkema, Darrell Boot, Carroll Hoksbergen, Steve Inskeep, Bob Van Soelen, Jon Van Woerkom, Duane Ver Ploeg, and CEO Jon Miles.