



NEWS *Lines*

PUBLISHED MONTHLY FOR THE MEMBER-OWNERS OF NORTH WEST RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

FEBRUARY 2024

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Scholarships Available



North West REC and Basin Electric Power Cooperative will be sponsoring several scholarships to dependents of members of North West REC in 2024. Last year we awarded \$33,000 in scholarships to 75 students!

There will be two \$1,000 scholarship winners from each of the four districts of North West REC (Ida, O'Brien, Plymouth, and Sioux). The selection process for the \$1,000 scholarship winners will be based on a combination of SAT/ACT scores, overall grade-point average, work experience, participation in school and community activities, a personal statement of career goals, and a written reference or appraisal by a third party.

Scholarship applicants, who are not awarded a \$1,000 scholarship award, will be asked to watch an educational video on North West REC and the cooperative model and then complete a questionnaire. This will then enter applicants into a random drawing for a \$500 or \$250 scholarship. All applicants will receive at least a \$250 scholarship. Details of this video and questionnaire will be communicated at a later date.

North West REC members may qualify if their dependent meets the following criteria:

- Must be a U.S. citizen.
- Are current North West REC members.
- Must be a senior in high school in our service territory for the 2023-2024 school year and planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school.
- Submit an application as provided by North West REC.
- Return all completed forms no later than Friday, February 16, 2024.

You can apply online by visiting our website at www.nwrec.coop or you can e-mail the scholarship committee at scholarships@nwrec.coop and they will send you an application. If you have any questions, please call us at 712-707-4935 or 800-766-2099. All entries for the scholarship must be returned to the REC no later than Friday, February 16, 2024!

Annual Meeting **SAVE!** *the* **DATE!**

Tuesday, March 26, 2024
Le Mars Convention Center

Apply Now for the 2024 Youth Tour Trip to D.C.

North West REC will send two high school juniors on an all-expenses paid Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. on June 15-21, 2024!

At North West REC one way we invest in the next generation of rural Iowa leaders is by participating in the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program. We're looking for high school junior students with a passion for government and public service to apply for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to our nation's capital in June.

Two students will be selected from eligible candidates to attend the 2024 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., from June 16-21, with orientation June 15th in Des Moines, along with 40 other student leaders from Iowa. The Iowa Youth Tour group will join with hundreds of students from across the country as they learn more about electric cooperatives and American history and come home with a greater understanding of their role as an American citizen. Students will also learn about U.S. government and meet with their members of Congress. On the trip, students take in the sights of D.C. as they visit monuments, museums, and historical landmarks. Students who go on Youth Tour often call it the trip of a lifetime!

We are accepting Youth Tour applications now through February 16, 2024. Dependents of North West REC member-consumers are eligible to apply. The student must currently be a junior in high school. You can download our youth tour application at www.nwrec.coop. You can also call 800-766-2099, email nwrec@nwrec.coop, or stop by our office and we can get you a copy. Contact our office for more info.

For more than 60 years, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives have been sending deserving students to D.C. This program is a great resume builder for student leaders and a wonderful opportunity to kickstart one's passion for government affairs or advocacy. **Make sure to apply for Youth Tour 2024 by Friday, February 16, 2024!**



Students can apply now for a trip to Washington, D.C., from June 15-21!

High school students interested in public service and government are encouraged to apply! Learn more at IowaYouthTour.com



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills.

Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is required.

Source: energystar.gov

North West REC no longer accepts any type of light bulbs for recycling, contact your local landfill or recycling center for details on their light bulb recycling programs.

Operation Round Up Report



Disbursements made from North West REC's Operation Round Up (ORU) Trust in the fourth quarter of 2023 totaled \$13,900. This brings the total disbursements made from Operation Round Up since its inception in June of 1999 to \$702,095. Many people and organizations have been helped thanks to our members.

- \$4,250 Medical Emergencies – assist families with unusual expenses resulting from serious health problems and accident related injuries
- \$4,500 Nine area hospitals
- \$5,150 ATLAS of Orange City, ATLAS of Sioux Center, Autumn's Center, Food Bank of Siouxland, Hope Haven, Life Skills Training Center, Siouxland Youth for Christ, Trivium Life Services, Village Northwest Unlimited



Operation Round Up funds are generated through a voluntary rounding up of cooperative members' electric bills to the next nearest dollar, and dollars are used to assist worthy causes and organizations right in your local area.

If you are currently not participating in Operation Round Up and would like to become a part of this worthwhile program, please call our office for information or fill out the form available on our website. To receive an application for assistance, please call the office at 707-4935 or 800-766-2099.



ARE YOU SWITCH SMART?

Load Management is one of the easiest ways for members to become active in their cooperative and save some money on their electric bills. The program assists your cooperative by deferring the need to construct additional power plants or purchase power from external sources to meet the energy needs of our members. Load management programs give cooperative members the power to become partners in the effort to positively influence electricity rates.

A few of the ways the Switch Makes Cents program helps our members: Helps stabilize future power costs to your coop, reduces power plant emissions for a cleaner environment, shifts the energy used by electric heating systems, electric water heaters, and other electric appliances to off peak times, and saves North West REC members money by providing more stable rates.

YES, please enter our names in the drawing for the trip. We understand that if our names are drawn, we will be billed \$100.

Our first and second choice of dates:

- | | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|---------------------|
| June 26-28 | 1st | 2nd | 3rd (please circle) |
| July 10-12 | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |
| July 24-26 | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |

I/we have have not participated in this tour in the past.

First Person _____

Second Person _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

Clip this coupon and return to cooperative by April 30, 2024.

Energy Trail Tour 2024

North West Rural Electric Cooperative and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative invite you to join us for one of three Energy Trail Tours being offered this summer. This 3-day adventure will allow you to experience, first-hand, how your power providers convert energy from water, wind, and coal into electricity. View coal being mined and see how those mines are then returned to productive farm and native grass lands. Enjoy interactive walking tours through a hydroelectric and coal-fired energy generation facility and other stops along the way. Meet other cooperative member-owners while traveling together across the Dakotas on-board a motor-coach bound for the North Dakota's Energy Loop. \$100 per couple covers your lodging, meals and entry fees. The remainder of your tour costs are covered by North West Electric Cooperative.

Twelve lucky couples from North West REC will be selected at random from those who sign up.



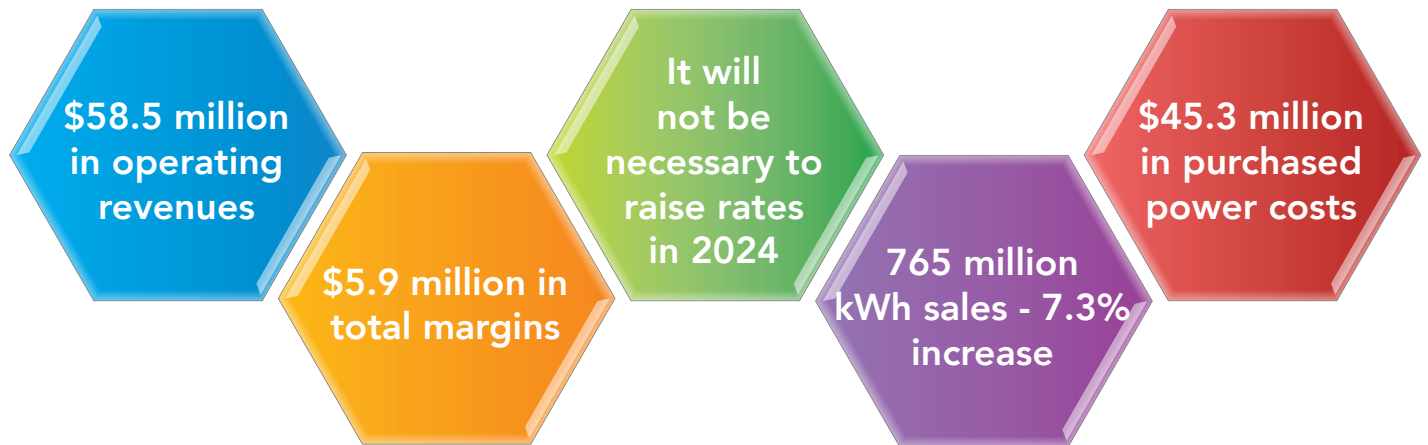
Lyle D. Korver

MANAGER'S *Report*

Board Approves 2024 Operating Budget - Base Electric Rates to Remain Stable

As part of our planning process each year, a detailed operating budget is prepared and reviewed with the board of directors. This budget includes detailed projections on kilowatt-hour (kWh) sales, revenues, expenses, margin levels and financial ratios. The following is a summary of some of the highlights of the 2024 operating budget:

2024 Operating Budget Highlights



The good news is that following the review of the Operating Budget, the board of directors decided to keep our base electric rates the same again in 2024. **As of June 1 of this year, we will be reaching a nine-year period of rate stability.**

There will be a slight change in the power cost adjustment (PCA) in 2024. As a reminder, the PCA is a method of either collecting from or returning to the members the difference in wholesale power costs compared to the base wholesale rate that was used to establish the current electric rate. The PCA was a credit of 1 mill (1/10 of a cent) in 2023 due to the fact that we were passing along \$700,000 in bill credits we had received from our power supplier the previous year. The PCA for 2024 will be 1 mill instead of a credit 1 mill. This is due to the fact that our wholesale purchased power costs, which account for 78% of our total operating expenses, are going up 2024.

We are pleased that we have been able to keep our base electric rates stable for 9 years, especially when you consider how high inflation has been in recent years and how much most other things that our members purchase have gone up. This has been accomplished through increasing kWh sales, relatively stable wholesale purchased power costs, and efficiencies we continue to realize from our previous consolidations.

Post Equipment Company, LLC Recognized with Prestigious Iowa Venture Award

In December, the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG), in collaboration with its Rural Electric Cooperative partners, proudly honored six growing Iowa companies with the Iowa Venture Award. The honorees were recognized at a luncheon held in conjunction with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' Annual Meeting in Des Moines on December 7.

We were very pleased that one of the honorees of this legacy award was one of our members - **Post Equipment Company, LLC, of Rock Valley.**

Established just outside Rock Valley, Iowa, Post Equipment has evolved into a thriving farm equipment supply company since moving its operations from the family farm in 2008. Witnessing continuous growth, they've consistently expanded their offerings.

With a vast inventory of new and used feed mixers, manure spreaders, bale processors, and diverse farm equipment, Post Equipment is a hub for replacement parts and specialized livestock equipment. Custom augers, skid loader attachments, and equipment repair and rebuilding add to their comprehensive solutions.

Beyond equipment, the company extends its reach with Post Metal Recycling, offering industrial and on-site scrap metal recycling services, while Ironwood 53 specializes in designing and producing agricultural and industrial parts, recently manufacturing the "Herd-Boss Feeders" line of OEM cattle feeding equipment for further diversification.

In the last 18 months, a significant 54,000 sq ft expansion underscores their commitment to growth, accompanied by a boost in employment with 15 new hires. Owned by Mike and Ruth Post, the company's success is propelled by an 80-member team, cementing its position as an industry leader in farm equipment and innovation.

North West REC provides power and support for the ever-growing Post Equipment and family of companies.

"Post Equipment's remarkable journey from a family farm to becoming a thriving hub for farm equipment and innovation is truly commendable," said IADG President/CEO Bruce Nuzum. "Their recent 54,000 sq. ft. expansion and commitment to growth, accompanied by significant job creation, exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit and excellence we celebrate with the Iowa Venture Award."

We are proud to be the electric service provider for Post Equipment. They are another example of a growing commercial and industrial customer of North West REC, which helps to contribute to our increasing kWh sales and rate stability for all of our members. Congratulations Mike and Ruth Post for receiving this Venture Award. We wish you continued success in the future!



Photo Caption (left to right); David Miller, City of Rock Valley; Steve Abma, NW REC Board; Mike Naig, Iowa Sec. of Agriculture; Bruce Nuzum, President/CEO, IADG; Mike Post, Owner, Post Equipment Company; Ruth Post, Post Equipment Company; Lyle Korver, CEO, NW REC; Jeff Rehder, Board President, NW REC; Stephen Brown, NW REC Board; and Rob Driesen, Member Services Director, NW REC.

Galloping power lines

How can galloping lines impact power transmission and distribution? Galloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Freezing rain creates icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to start to bounce.

Once the lines get going, they can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage or even fall to the ground.

There is not much a power company can do to alleviate galloping lines since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. To help prevent this, many power lines have special mechanisms, such as twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal, attached to the line. While they can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and wind.

Aside from ice storms, year-round storms can cause damaging winds, which can knock down power lines and blow trees and limbs onto power lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility or 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that are sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the types of lines —stay away from all lines.
- Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.
- Keep in mind that a dead line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.
- Never drive over a downed line. It could start a chain reaction and cause additional poles or other equipment to collapse.
- If you are in a car that has contacted or is near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and de-energized the line. Warn others not to approach the car.
- Only exit a car or cab near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away at least 50 feet or more while continuing to keep both feet together.

Normal power line **Lines weighed down by ice** **Top line melted after bottom line**

ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

Safe Electricity.org

Source: Jerri Imgarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative

Employee Highlight

Get to know your cooperative's employees



Name: Holly Van Roekel

Title/Position: Customer Service/Operations & Safety Program Assistant

Years at NWREC: 1 year

Family: husband – Brandon; son – Brecken (8) and daughter – Brynlee (5)

Interests/hobbies: I enjoy being outside, working on lawns, coaching ball, reading, camping, and just being with my family.

What I enjoy about working at North West REC: My favorite part of working at NWREC is that I get to learn something new and do something different every day. Our team collaborates well and is always ready to help one another whenever needed.



Name: Tracy Bahrenfuss

Title/Position: Journeyman Lineman - Primghar

Years at NWREC: 13 years

Family: Wife – Tiffany; sons – Traven (19) & Teagan (16)

Interests/hobbies: camping, hunting & fishing

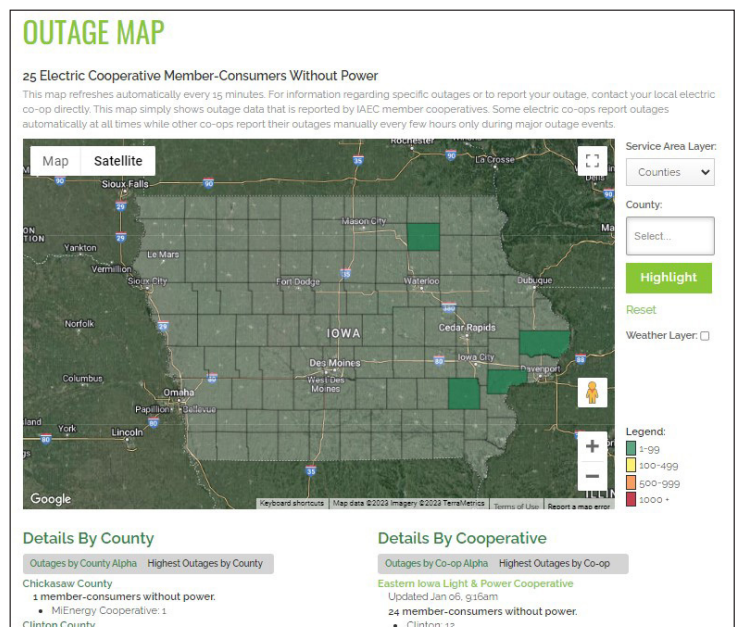
What I enjoy about working at North West REC: working outside, cooperation between outpost on outages and everyday operations

Statewide Outage Map

Information about power outages effecting homes, businesses and farms served by North West REC is available online at www.iowarec.org, the website of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

This web resource, developed by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, provides a statewide view of power outages at electric cooperatives that deliver electricity in each of the state's 99 counties to approximately 650,000 Iowans. When you log onto the power outage tool, you will see a map of Iowa, and you can view the information from a county-by-county view of Iowa or electric co-op-by-electric co-op view, including North West REC. At the website, you also will be able to obtain safety information as well as link to North West REC. In addition to going to the statewide association's website to view the maps, you can check out the information at <http://outages.iowarec.org>.

When there are widespread power outages in Iowa or isolated power outages impacting large numbers of Iowans, North West REC will enter information onto the website. The map will automatically refresh every 15 minutes, so it will reflect the most recently entered information from the electric co-ops. When only a few North West REC member-consumers are without power, the website may not necessarily reflect that information.



THE POWER QUIZ

NORTH WEST REC

1. What website shows an outage map for all the REC's in Iowa?
2. Name an organization that received an Operation Round-Up donation:
3. What amount are all qualifying scholarships applicants guaranteed?

Name _____ Acct. # _____

Find the answers within the content of this newsletter, our website or Facebook posts and you could win a prize of \$10 off your electric bill. Send your answers to powerquiz@nwrec.coop or you can send your written answers to North West REC, PO Box 435, Orange City, IA 51041. You may mail your entry along with your electric bill payment, but remember the deadline is March 4. Each month, ten names will be randomly drawn from all correct entries for a \$10 bill credit. Members who answer the questions correctly and participate at least three times throughout the year will be eligible for 2 - \$250 bill credits, through a random drawing, at the end of the year.

POWER QUIZ *Winners* DECEMBER 2023

Doug Carlson - Orange City
 Lloyd Cleveringa - Orange City
 Sharon Junck - Hinton
 Susie Jungers - Hospers
 Sue Madsen - Galva

Patrick Redenius - Ida Grove
 Dennis Van Roekel - Maurice
 Ben Wiest - Hartley
 Marie Divis - Sioux City
 Grant Kleinhesselink - Hull

\$250 winners for 2023: Brian Cronin - Holstein & Galen Beyer - Sanborn



ARE YOU SWITCH SMART?

Name a way Switch Makes Cents helps our members?

Answer: _____

Name _____ Acct. # _____

What do you know about the Switch Makes Cents program? Find the answers within the content of this newsletter, our website or Facebook posts and you could win a prize. Send your answers to switchsmart@nwrec.coop, fill out the question form online, or send your written answers to North West REC, PO Box 435, Orange City, IA 51041. You may mail your entry along with your electric bill payment, but remember the deadline is March 4. Each month, one name will be randomly drawn from all correct entries for a \$25 bill credit.

North West Rural Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 435
 1505 Albany Place SE
 Orange City, IA 51041-0435

OFFICE HOURS:
 Monday through Friday
 7:30 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.

Orange City office open during noon hour

Le Mars office closed 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.

Ida Grove office open 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
 Wednesdays only

PHONE:
 (800) 766-2099

24/7 outage reporting using the SmartHub app or nwrec.smarthub.coop Or call 800-766-2099 anytime

Pay your bill online any-time using SmartHub



Outside Depository Box Available For After Hours Payments

This institution is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

Lyle D. Korver
 CEO & General Manager

Curt Ahrenholz
 Finance & Office Services Director

Emily Vander Velde
 Editor



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