



# NEWS *Lines*

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

## SEPTEMBER 2024

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## We're Looking For Students Interested In Public Service And Leadership

**Students who attend our Zoom sessions in October will have a chance to win AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship!**

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, North West REC has a long history of supporting students in the communities we serve through scholarships and leadership opportunities. We've also been sending deserving high school students to our nation's capital every summer for years as part of the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities and the cooperative business model with a three-part webinar series in October. The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is open to any high school student in our service area and they are invited to register at [www.iowaYouthTour.com](http://www.iowaYouthTour.com).

"This new program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, leadership or government," remarked Lyle Korver, "We want to raise students' awareness of how local electric co-ops power people's lives and empower communities. We also want to talk about exciting cooperative career paths that are available in smaller communities."

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their own computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- Tuesday, Oct. 1, 7:00 p.m. – Cooperative Business Model
- Thursday, Oct. 17, 7:00 p.m. – Rural Iowa Advocacy
- Thursday, Oct. 24, 7:00 p.m. – Leadership

At the end of each live session, one lucky attendee will be selected at random to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random drawing for a \$1,000 college scholarship. All students who register online by September 25 will receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our lineup of speakers and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a motivational speaker. Attendees will also hear about Iowa Youth Tour. Students with an interest in government and public service are encouraged to apply for this weeklong trip to Washington, DC. The 2025 Youth Tour is slated for June 15-21 next summer.

Learn more at [www.iowaYouthTour.com](http://www.iowaYouthTour.com) or contact our office at 712-707-4935 or [nwrec@nwrec.coop](mailto:nwrec@nwrec.coop) for more information.





# Local Teens Attend National Tour Program



Elizabeth Arens and Brody Knapp recently participated in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour of Washington, D.C., sponsored by North West REC. They traveled to Washington, D.C., in mid-June with 35 other student leaders from Iowa.

Every summer, this weeklong leadership development program provides high school students opportunities to learn about government, the electric cooperative business model and today's pressing issues in the energy industry. Students meet their elected legislators, tour historic sites and run their very own snack cooperative.

The annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a joint effort of locally owned electric cooperatives, including North West REC, statewide trade associations and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) for over 65 years.

In addition to taking in the sights of the nation's capital, all the state groups convened for the Rural Electric Youth Day, sponsored by NRECA, to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers. This year's Youth Day agenda included Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic Medalist and two-time world Wheelchair Basketball champion. Schlappi shares his inspiring message for every American, young or old: "Just because you can't stand up, doesn't mean you can't stand out."

Since 1958, Iowa's electric cooperatives have sponsored high school students on Youth Tour for visits to their U.S. congressional delegations, energy and grassroots government education sessions, and sightseeing in Washington, D.C.

For more information on how you can participate in North West REC's 2025 Youth Tour program, contact our office at 712-707-4935 or [nwrec@nwrec.coop](mailto:nwrec@nwrec.coop) or visit [www.IowaYouthTour.com](http://www.IowaYouthTour.com). Search for "Iowa Youth Tour" on Facebook or Instagram to see the group's recent adventures from 2024.

## We Pay You To Pull The Plug

If you currently own an older, inefficient refrigerator or freezer unit, North West REC will pay you \$50 to "Pull the Plug" on the unit and recycle it at any certified recycling or de-manufacturing facility, such as a county landfill. Up to three (3) appliances may be recycled per calendar year.

Appliances must be clean, empty and in working order when recycled/dropped off at a certified location. A dated copy of a receipt by the certified vendor/landfill/recycler must accompany the rebate application form which is available from our office or can be found on our website.

Here are a few of the certified recyclers for North West REC members:

**Ida County Sanitation Center**  
2078 US Hwy 59  
Ida Grove, IA 51445  
712-364-4234

**Plymouth County Sanitary Landfill**  
34898 150th St  
Le Mars, IA 51031  
712-546-6071

**Northwest Iowa Landfill**  
4540 360th St  
Sheldon, IA 51201  
712-324-4026



Iowa's member-owned electric cooperatives have been offering cost-effective energy efficiency programs for almost four decades! North West REC provides energy efficiency rebates and incentives for a variety of qualifying energy-efficient products to our members and continues to evaluate our programs on a regular basis to ensure they remain a good value to those we serve.



Lyle D. Korver

# MANAGER'S *Report*

## Business Disaster Loan Program – Another Demonstration of our Commitment to Community

As you well know, many individuals, families and businesses were impacted by the June flooding events in northwest Iowa. Last month we shared a number of pictures and some information about how it also impacted North West REC (NWREC) and our facilities. However, the impact on our facilities was fairly insignificant compared to the widespread damages that occurred in Rock Valley, Hawarden, and other areas. We have been so impressed and inspired by the strong outpouring of help from so many people, churches and organizations during this great time of need in our area.



One of the Touchstone Energy core values is "Commitment to Community" and as a Touchstone Energy electric cooperative, NWREC was pleased to partner with our local communities to provide assistance to a number of small businesses who were impacted by the flooding and suffered damages and loss. The NWREC Board of Directors took quick action following the flooding and approved a Business Disaster Loan program to provide working-capital assistance to small businesses.

The Cooperative has operated a revolving loan fund (RLF) since 1995 to assist new or expanding businesses. The RLF funding has grown over the years through grants from the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant program (REDLG) and matching funds from NWREC. Approval was given to expand the RLF to provide this disaster assistance to our local small businesses who have suffered significant loss from the recent flooding. The loans are providing 0% interest working capital loans for five years to help these businesses recover from the losses they have incurred. We are pleased to share that as of August 1, our Loan Review Committee had

approved 30 loans to small businesses totaling nearly \$500,000.



Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to everyone who has been affected by the recent devastating flooding. Through our ongoing Commitment to Community, we were pleased to be able to provide some assistance through this RLF loan program. We also want to remind other businesses in our four-county service area, that we have an ongoing RLF loan program that is a great economic development tool to assist financially if you have any expansion plans in the future.

# Landowners: Know the facts before signing a solar project lease

We recently received information from our Statewide and wanted to share it with our members

*If you're a landowner in rural Iowa, you may have received solicitations in the mail offering land lease options for proposed solar projects. Often, these letters offer attractive per-acre rental payments for various phases of a long-term proposed project, promising steady and predictable income. However, like with all contracts, the devil is in the details. Before signing an agreement, we encourage you to do some homework and seek legal counsel to protect your rights.*

*Most of these letters are coming from companies outside of Iowa looking to lease land for future solar projects. We have noticed that many of these letters refer erroneously to Iowa law; referencing legislation (Senate File 2356) that did not pass last session. In fact, Iowa's electric cooperatives and other groups registered in opposition to the legislation due to its likely negative impact on electric co-ops and our members.*

*Some solicitations falsely claim local support for their solar initiative or that the electric output would somehow benefit your neighbors or the local electric cooperative. We have also seen letters that deceptively include endorsements attributed to the Iowa Farm Bureau. IFB's legal team is working to remove these perceived endorsements.*

*Please consult your legal counsel before signing any agreement or contract. Your legal counsel can help explain the benefits and disadvantages of these agreements, answer any questions you have, and help negotiate fair and equitable terms. These are long-term agreements that can give the solar company exclusive options and control of your land for decades. Spending some extra time up front to better understand the terms and conditions of the proposed agreement can save you significant time, money and headaches in the future.*

We have had a few members who have contacted us about letters they have received in regards to these types of proposed large scale solar projects. We would be happy to visit with you and answer your questions.



The following is a brief summary of the discussion and decisions from the board meeting that was held on August 1, 2023.

- Received monthly safety meeting reports.
- Membership applications of new members were approved.
- Manager Korver provided an update on operations, kWh sales, staffing and service reliability. kWh sales for the first six months of 2024 are at a record level.
- Received financial reports from Curt Ahrenholz, Finance Director. Margins through six months are higher than budget.
- Heard an update on the Business Disaster loan program that was approved last month to assist small businesses who have been impacted by the flooding.
- Reviewed the CFC Key Ratio Trend Analysis for 2023 and historical years. This report shows 145 comparative operating and financial ratios with the other 800 REC's in the U.S. North West REC compares very favorably with most ratios.
- Heard reports from Director Wagner on the recent NIPCO and Basin Board Meetings.
- Director Rehder gave a CFC Board Report.
- Manager Korver reported on several economic development projects that are underway.
- Plans for the Member Appreciation Day events were reviewed.

# NWREC Members Participate In 35th Energy Trail Tour

This summer marked the 35th annual Energy Trail Tour season. Over 120 electric cooperative member-owners from western and north-central Iowa participated in three motor coach excursions in June and July to learn about electric generation and meet the people responsible for delivering electric power to their homes, farms, and businesses. The tours, which departed from Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) in Le Mars, Iowa, led passengers through the Dakotas to learn about and see, first-hand, where their energy comes from and have some fun along the journey.



North West REC, through its generation and transmission cooperative Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO) receives power from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). The three motor coach tours, which embarked on June 26, July 10, and July 24, included 24 members who participated in tours of electric generation facilities and subsidiaries operated by both Basin Electric and WAPA.

In addition to the educational portion of the tour, members enjoyed good food, great fellowship, and a few surprise stops along the way.

Highlights of the tours include:

## **OAHE POWER PLANT AND DAM**

The first electric-generation stop on the three-day journey brought tour guests to Pierre, South Dakota, to understand the process of hydroelectric generation and the innovation of the rolled-earth dam that created Lake Oahe, the fourth largest reservoir in the United States. Water generated from the Missouri River Dam system served as the original power source for homes and farms in the region until electric demand surpassed generation capacity in the 1970's, leading to the need to source other generation resources.



## **ANTELOPE VALLEY STATION**

The tour included an overview of the model room and a guided walking tour of the coal-fired power plant owned and operated by Basin Electric Power Cooperative. The walking tour included stops at the turbine deck, control room, boiler, and observation deck on the 17th floor. Participants learned the process of electric generation from coal resources and the investments made by Basin Electric in environmental control technologies to reduce emissions at their facilities.



## **COTEAU PROPERTIES COMPANY FREEDOM MINE**

Tour guests learned how lignite coal is produced at a surface mine and how the land is returned to its original state. A guided drive-through tour took members through active mining areas where they witnessed giant earth moving equipment in action. The Freedom Mine delivers approximately 16 million tons of coal and reclaims about 600 acres of mined land annually.

The trip also offered insight into operations at the Great Plains Synfuels Plant and how coal can be refined into synthetic natural gas and a variety of other products, including anhydrous ammonia, carbon dioxide, and diesel exhaust fluid (DEF). Basin Electric owns and

operates the Great Plains Synfuels Plant through its for-profit subsidiary, Dakota Gasification Company.



Energy Trail Tour participants also learn about wind generation and renewable energy resources in America's energy mix. The tour provides a "mobile classroom" on the process of wind generation and how it contributes to an all-of-the-above generation mix that provides reliable and affordable energy to cooperative members.

Over three educational and fun-filled days, members gain a deeper understanding of the cooperative difference, the history of rural electric cooperatives, the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide all cooperatives, and the Touchstone Energy® brand's four foundations of service: Integrity, Accountability, Innovation, and Commitment to Community. Memories and friendships were made while gaining a deeper and more insightful appreciation for how reliable power is generated and delivered to the light switch.



North West REC 2024 tour members were:



Tour #1 Above left to right: Jules Banks, Pam Banks, Kim Wunschel, Lyle Wunschel, Pat Wachtel, Mike Juber



Tour #2 Above left to right: Back - Mike Jungers, Pat Scanlan, Lee Maassen, James Pohlen, Doug Soellner, Front - Susie Jungers, Shirley Scanlan, Emily Maassen, Kathy Pohlen, Sheila Soellner



Tour #3 Above left to right: Garry Goebel, Tim Ymker, Elsie Ymker, Brian Kroeze, Nancy Kroeze, Nevonne Stoker, Andrew Stoker



**MOVE OVER**  
**SLOW DOWN**

## MOVE OVER OR SLOW DOWN

It's that simple, and it's the law in Iowa. By following these two rules of the road, you can help save lives and avoid receiving a traffic ticket – or even losing your driver's license. It's necessary to move over or slow down when approaching stationary emergency, maintenance, and utility vehicles with flashing lights activated.

# THE POWER QUIZ

NORTH WEST REC

1. How much does it cost to replace your security light with a new LED one?
2. What type of appliances do we give a rebate for recycling?
3. Name one of the stops on the Energy Trail Tour:

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](mailto: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 October 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*

JULY 2024

Alex Cosgrove - Le Mars  
 Evelyn Bakker - Hull  
 Thomas Konz - Le Mars  
 Debra Parker - Holstein  
 Marjorie Lucken - Akron

Ronald Popken - Akron  
 Steven Segebart - Sioux City  
 John Reekers - Orange City  
 James Verrips - Sheldon  
 Don Wunschel - Ida Grove



## ARE YOU SWITCH SMART?

What can you buy from NWREC at a rebated price if you have a switch installed?

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](mailto: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 October 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

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